

COMMENTARY ON DANIEL AND REVELATION

FROM THE

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BIBLE COMMENTARY

A VERSE-BY-VERSE

Commentary on the BOOK of DANIEL



A SECTION OF

VOLUME IV OF THE

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To the Reader



As stated on the title page, the following material is a section of Volume IV of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.* The same printing plates are used and therefore the paging is the same as that in the *Commentary.*

It is not the custom of publishers to break up a large work by separately printing a small section of it. The reason why this has been done in the present instance is explained by the action of the General Conference Committee at its meeting on August 18, 1955: "VOTED, To request the Review and Herald Publishing Association to make available in textbook form for use in our denominational colleges *The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary* material on Daniel."

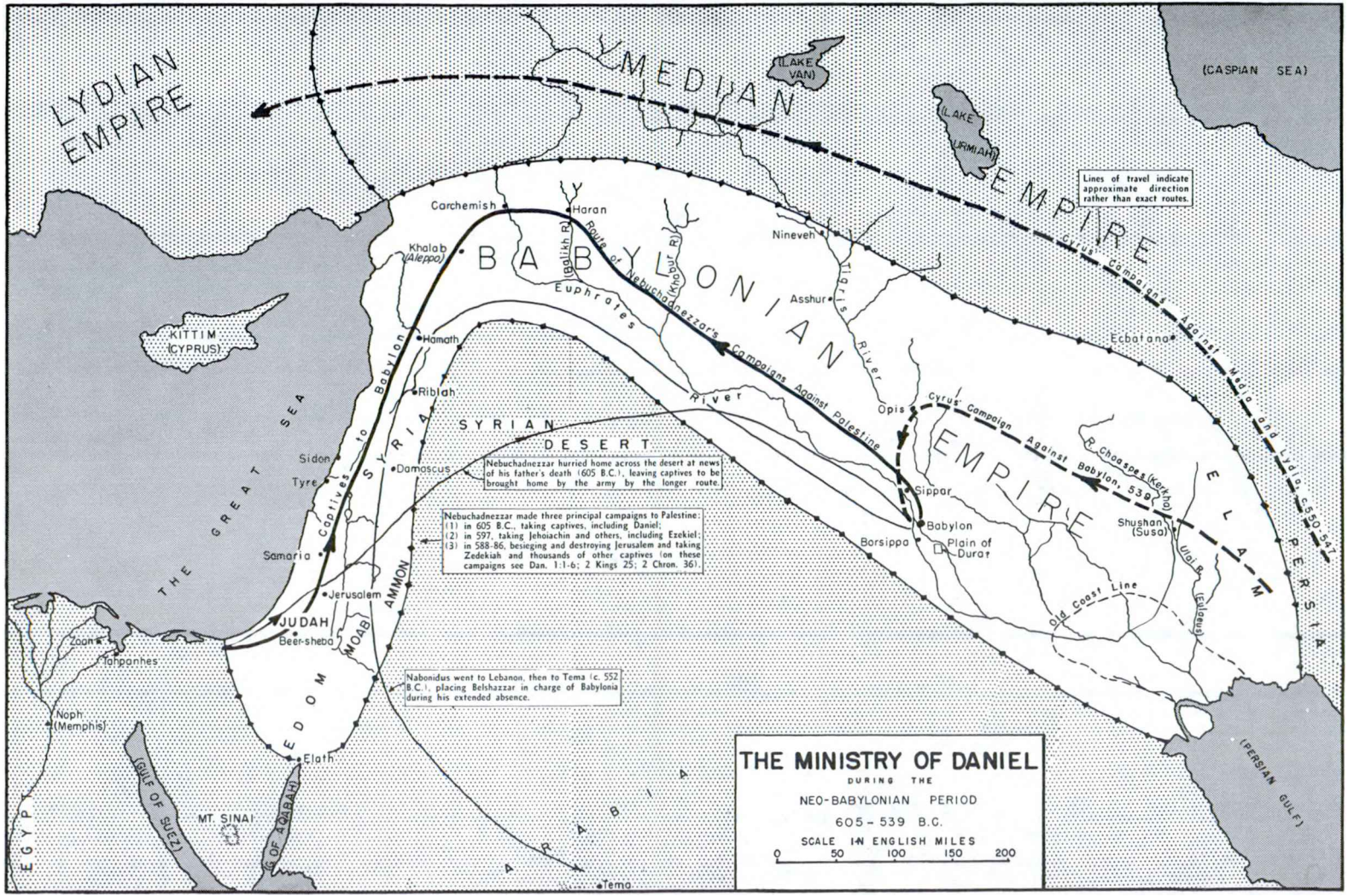
This verse-by-verse commentary on Daniel represents the labors of a group of contributors, plus extended time spent by the editors in providing special notes, maps, et cetera, in addition to general editing. It is made available to our readers in the devout hope that it may aid them in their study of this most important of the Old Testament prophetic books.

THE PUBLISHERS

The Book of

DANIEL




LYDIAN EMPIRE
MEDIAN EMPIRE
(LAKE VAN)
(LAKE URMIAH)
(CASPIAN SEA)
Lines of travel indicate approximate direction rather than exact routes.
Carchemish
Haran
Khalab (Aleppo)
(Balikh R.)
(Khabur R.)
Nineveh
BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
Euphrates River
Route of Nebuchadnezzar's Campaigns Against Palestine
Tigris River
Asshur
Cyrus' Campaign Against Media and Lydia, c. 550 B.C.
Ecbatana
KITTIM (CYPRUS)
Hamath
Babylon
Riblah
SYRIAN DESERT
Opis
Cyrus' Campaign Against Babylon, 539 B.C.
R. Choaspes (Kerkha)
ELAM
PERSIA
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Nebuchadnezzar hurried home across the desert at news of his father's death (605 B.C.), leaving captives to be brought home by the army by the longer route.
Sippar
Babylon
Shushan (Susa)
Nebuchadnezzar made three principal campaigns to Palestine: (1) in 605 B.C., taking captives, including Daniel; (2) in 597, taking Jehoiachin and others, including Ezekiel; (3) in 588-86, besieging and destroying Jerusalem and taking Zedekiah and thousands of other captives (on these campaigns see Dan. 1:1-6; 2 Kings 25; 2 Chron. 36).
Borsippa
Plain of Dura
Samaria
Jerusalem
Captives to Babylon
THE GREAT SEA
SYRIA
AMMON
Ulai R. (Eulaeus)
Old Coast Line
JUDAH
Beer-sheba
MOAB
Zoan
Tahpanhes
Nabonidus went to Lebanon, then to Tema (c. 552 B.C.), placing Belshazzar in charge of Babylonia during his extended absence.
Noph (Memphis)
EDOM
Elath
(PERSIAN GULF)
EGYPT
(GULF OF SUEZ)
MT. SINAI
(G. OF AQABAH)
ARABIA
Tema
THE MINISTRY OF DANIEL
DURING THE
NEO-BABYLONIAN PERIOD
605-539 B.C.
SCALE IN ENGLISH MILES
0 50 100 150 200

The Book of

DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The book is named after its principal character, Daniel. The practice of naming OT books for their main hero is demonstrated by other books such as Joshua, Samuel, Esther, Job, etc. Such a title does not necessarily indicate authorship, although that may be included as well, as is the case with the book of Daniel.

2. Authorship. The traditional view of both Jews and Christians is that the book was written in the 6th century B.C., and that Daniel was its author. In favor of the correctness of this traditional view are the following points of evidence:

a. The claims of the book. The prophet Daniel speaks in the first person in many passages (chs. 8:1-7, 13-19, 27; 9:2-22; 10:2-5; etc.). He states that he personally received the divine order to preserve the book (ch. 12:4). The fact that there are sections in which the author refers to himself in the third person (chs. 1:6-11, 17, 19, 21; 2:14-20; etc.) is not strange, for in works of antiquity such a usage is frequently observed (see on Ezra 7:28).

b. The author well acquainted with history. Only a man of the 6th century B.C., well versed in Babylonian affairs, could have provided some of the historical facts found in the book. The knowledge of these facts was lost after the 6th century B.C., not being recorded in other ancient literature after that time (see p. 748). Relatively recent archeological finds have once more brought these facts to light.

c. The testimony of Jesus Christ. Quoting a passage from the book, Jesus Christ mentions Daniel as author (Matt. 24:15). For every Christian believer this testimony should be convincing evidence.

The book falls into two clearly distinguishable parts, the first (chs. 1-6) mainly historical, and the second (chs. 7-12) mainly prophetic; yet the book is a literary unit. In support of such unity the following arguments can be listed:

1. The various parts of the book are mutually related, one to the other. The use of the Temple vessels at Belshazzar's feast can be understood in the light of the record of how they came to Babylon (ch. 5:3; cf. ch. 1:1, 2). Chapter 3:12 refers back to the political action of Nebuchadnezzar described first in ch. 2:49. In ch. 9:21 reference is made to an earlier vision (see ch. 8:15, 16).

2. The historical part contains a prophecy (ch. 2) closely related in theme to the prophecies found in chs. 7-12. Chapter 7 develops further the theme of ch. 2. Also the historical and prophetic elements are related. The historical section (chs. 1-6) narrates God's dealings with one nation, Babylon, and its role in the divine plan. This illustrates God's dealings with all nations (see Ed 175-177). Like Babylon, each successive world power portrayed in the prophetic portion had an opportunity to know the divine will and cooperate with it, and each was measured by its fulfillment of the divine purpose. Thus each nation's rise and fall in chs. 7-12 is to be understood in terms of the principles set forth in the historical portion as they related to Babylon. This unifies the book and illuminates the role played by each empire.

The literary unity of the book, demonstrated in the composition, general channel of thought, and expressions used in the two languages (see p. 748), is generally recognized. The arguments adduced for two authors for the book appear pointless.

In *Qumrân* Cave 1 (see pp. 86-88) were three fragments from the book of Daniel. They were published by D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert I: Qumran Cave I* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 150-152. The fragments came either from two scrolls or from one scroll in which chs. 1 and 2 were written by one scribe and ch. 3 by another, containing parts of chs. 1:10-17; 2:2-6; 3:22-30. A comparison of this text with the Masoretic text shows 16 variants, none of which affects the meaning of the passage. Nine of these 16 variations are spelling variants, each affecting only one letter; two of these seem to be spelling errors; the other seven are variously spelled also in the Masoretic text. Four additions are found: one of the conjunction "and," and one of the particle "that" before an "if"; two words have a vowel letter added. Once, a vowel letter occurring in the Masoretic text is not found in the fragments. Two verbal endings seem to be scribal errors. The list shows that the differences are so insignificant that they would not be noticeable in a translation. This is a strong proof that the Masoretic text of Daniel is now in substantially the same form as it was at least in the time of Christ.

It is of further interest that the fragment of ch. 2 covers the passage in which the transition occurs from Hebrew to Aramaic (see on ch. 2:4). At that point a space is left between the last Hebrew word and the first Aramaic word, thus making a distinct break between the language sections. It is also noteworthy that, in agreement with the Masoretic text, these fragments do not contain the apocryphal Song of the Three Children (see on ch. 3:23).

Qumrân Cave 4 has produced leather fragments from three Daniel MSS (not yet published in 1976) reported to be well preserved and representing sizable portions of the book. F. M. Cross, in *Biblical Archaeologist,* 19 (1956), 85, 86; Cross, in *Revue Biblique,* 63 (1956), 58.

From *Qumrân* Cave 6 come several papyrus fragments of Daniel, representing chs. 8:20, 21; 10:8-16; and 11:33-38 (containing nine minor spelling variants), published by M. Baillet in *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert III: Les "Petites Grottes" de Qumrân* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 114-116.

3. Historical Setting. The book of Daniel contains (1) a record of certain historical incidents from the life of Daniel and his three friends, who were Jewish exiles in Babylonian government service, and (2) a record of a prophetic

dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, interpreted by Daniel, together with records of visions the prophet himself had received. Although the book was written in Babylonia during the Exile and shortly thereafter, its purpose was not to provide either a history of the Jewish exile or a biography of Daniel. The book relates high-light experiences of the statesman-prophet and his associates and was compiled with specific objectives in mind.

First of all Daniel presents brief information concerning the reason for his being found in the public service of the Babylonian king (ch. 1). Having been taken to Babylon in the first captivity in 605 B.C., during the course of Nebuchadnezzar's first Syrian campaign, Daniel and other princes of royal blood were chosen to be trained for government service. The initial 19 years of Daniel's stay in Babylonia were the last years of Judah's existence as a kingdom, albeit subject to Babylon. The futile anti-Babylonian policies of Judah's last kings brought one catastrophe after another upon the Jewish nation.

King Jehoiakim, during whose reign Daniel had gone into captivity, remained loyal to Babylon for a few years. Eventually, however, he acceded to the policy of the pro-Egyptian party in Judah, and rebelled. As a result the country suffered military invasions, its citizens lost their liberty and were taken into captivity, and the king lost his life. His son and successor, Jehoiachin, after a brief reign of only three months, saw the armies of Babylon return to mete out punishment for disloyalty. He, together with thousands of the upper-class citizens of Judah, went into captivity in 597 B.C. His successor, Zedekiah, apparently attempted to remain loyal to Babylon. However, being weak and vacillating, he could not long withstand the overtures of Egypt and the anti-Babylonian sentiment of his chief advisers. As a result Nebuchadnezzar, weary of the repeated revolts in Palestine, decided to put an end to the kingdom of Judah. For two and a half years the Babylonian armies ravaged Judah, took and destroyed the cities, including Jerusalem, with its Temple and its palaces, and led the majority of the inhabitants of Judah into captivity in 586 B.C.

Daniel was in Babylon during these eventful days. He must have seen the Babylonian armies depart for their several campaigns against his homeland, and witnessed their victorious returns and the arrival of captured Jews. Among the captives were the young king Jehoiachin with his family (2 Kings 24:10-16), and later the blinded king Zedekiah (2 Kings 25:7). During these years Daniel must also have been aware of the political agitation that was going on among the exiled Jews, which resulted in Nebuchadnezzar's burning to death some of the chief instigators. It was this agitation that caused Jeremiah to send a letter to his captured compatriots urging them to lead a quiet and peaceful life in Babylonia (Jer. 29).

During all these years Daniel and his three friends quietly and loyally performed their duties as royal officers and subjects of the realm. After their scholarly training they became members of the elite group called wise men, who served the king as advisers. It was then that Daniel had the unique opportunity of explaining to Nebuchadnezzar the dream of future empires (Dan. 2). As a result Daniel was appointed to a position of exceptionally high rank, which he seems to have held for many years. This office gave him the opportunity of acquainting the king with the power of the God of heaven and earth, whom Daniel and his friends served. How long Daniel retained this position is not known. He seems to have lost it before 570 B.C., since his name is not found in

a contemporary "Court and State Almanac," written in cuneiform, which lists the chief officers of Nebuchadnezzar's government holding office at that time. No other court and state almanacs for the reign of Nebuchadnezzar are extant. In fact, Daniel is not mentioned in any contemporary non-Biblical source.

The absence of Daniel's name in this document is not strange, since we do not know how long Daniel remained in public office. Only four principal events during Nebuchadnezzar's reign are recorded in the book of Daniel, and Daniel played a role in three of them: (1) the education of the Jewish princes during the king's first three years of reign, including his accession year (ch. 1), (2) the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in the king's second regnal year (ch. 2), (3) the dedication of the image in the plain of Dura, with the resulting experience of Daniel's friends in an unspecified year (ch. 3), and (4) Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, announcing that the king would suffer madness for a period of seven years, which probably occurred during the king's last years (ch. 4).

Nothing is known of Daniel's activities during the years of Nebuchadnezzar's incapacity. We likewise do not know what Daniel did after the king regained his faculties and throne, or whether his services were demanded during the reigns of the succeeding kings, Amel-Marduk (the Biblical Evil-Merodach), Nergal-shar-usur, Labashi-Marduk, and Nabonidus. However, he was permitted to observe the mighty empire of Nebuchadnezzar become morally weak and corrupt under kings who were assassins of their predecessors. He also must have watched with more than ordinary interest the cometlike rise of King Cyrus in Persia to the east, since a man by that name had been mentioned in prophecy as Israel's liberator (Isa. 44:28; 45:1). In 553 B.C. (the year in which Cyrus probably became master over the Median Empire) it is also possible that Daniel saw Nabonidus appoint his son Belshazzar to rule over Babylonia, while Nabonidus himself set out to conquer Tema in Arabia. It was during the first three years of Belshazzar that great visions were given to Daniel (chs. 7; 8), and the man who so far had been known only as an interpreter of dreams and visions became one of the great prophets of all time.

The Babylonians demanded Daniel's services once more, during the night of Babylon's fall, in 539 B.C., to read and interpret the handwriting of doom on the wall of Belshazzar's festal hall. After the Persians became masters over Babylon and its empire, the new rulers made use of the talents and experience of the old statesman of a past generation. Daniel again became a chief counselor of the crown. It was presumably he who brought the prophecies of Isaiah to the notice of the king (see PK 557), which prophecies influenced the Persian ruler to issue the decree that ended exile for the Jews and restored to them a homeland and a Temple. During this later term of Daniel's public office there was an attempt on his life by his envious colleagues, but the Lord marvelously intervened and delivered His servant (ch. 6). Additional important visions were received during these last years of Daniel's life, first under Darius the Mede (ch. 9; see Additional Note on Chapter 6), and then under Cyrus (chs. 10-12).

In any study of the book of Daniel two points call for special examination:

a. The historicity of Daniel. Since the first major attacks on the historicity of Daniel were made by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry (A.D. 233–c. 304), the book has been under the fire of critics, at first only sporadically, but during the past two centuries, constantly. As a result the majority of Christian scholars

today consider the book of Daniel the product of an anonymous author who lived about the time of the Maccabean revolt, in the 2d century B.C.

These scholars set forth two main reasons for ascribing so late a date to the book of Daniel: (1) Since, as they assert, certain prophecies point to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–c. 163 B.C.), and since, according to their concept, most prophecies—at least those that have been demonstrated to have had an accurate fulfillment—were written after the events described had occurred, Daniel's prophecies, according to their claims, must be dated in the time following the reign of Antiochus IV; and (2) since, according to their contentions, the historical sections of Daniel record certain events that disagree with historical facts known from available sources, these disagreements can best be explained by assuming that the author was removed from the actual events so much in space and time that he possessed but a limited knowledge of what had actually happened in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., 400 years earlier.

The first of the two arguments has no validity for one who believes that the inspired prophets of old actually made accurate predictions concerning the course of history. The second argument deserves more detailed attention because of the seriousness of the claim that Daniel contains historical inaccuracies, anachronisms, and misconceptions. For this reason a brief discussion of the historical trustworthiness of Daniel is here presented.

It is true that Daniel describes some events that even today cannot be verified by means of available ancient source material. One such event is the madness of Nebuchadnezzar, which is not mentioned in any extant ancient records. The absence of verification for a temporary incapacity of the greatest king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire is not a strange phenomenon in a time when royal records contain only praiseworthy narratives (see on Dan. 4:36). Also enigmatic is Darius the Mede, whose real place in history has not been established by reliable non-Biblical source material. Hints as to his identity are found in the writings of Greek authors and fragmentary information from cuneiform sources (see Additional Note on Chapter 6).

The other so-called historical difficulties that puzzled conservative commentators of Daniel a hundred years ago have been solved by the increase of historical knowledge provided by archeology. Some of the more important of these now-solved problems are here listed:

1. The supposed chronological discrepancy between Dan. 1:1 and Jer. 25:1. Jeremiah, who, scholars generally agree, is a trustworthy historical source, synchronizes the 4th year of Jehoiakim of Judah with the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. However, Daniel speaks of King Nebuchadnezzar's first conquest of Jerusalem as taking place in Jehoiakim's 3d year, apparently implying that Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year coincided with the 3d year of Jehoiakim. Before the discovery of contemporary records revealing various systems of reckoning the regnal years of ancient kings, commentators found it difficult to explain this seeming discrepancy. They tried to solve the difficulty either by supposing a coregency of Nebuchadnezzar with his father Nabopolassar (see Vol. III, p. 91), or by assuming that Jeremiah and Daniel dated events according to different systems of reckoning, Jeremiah using a Jewish and Daniel the Babylonian system. Both explanations are today out of date.

The whole difficulty has been solved by the discovery that Babylonian kings, like those of Judah at the time, counted their regnal years according to

the "accession-year" method (see Vol. II, p. 138). The year in which a Babylonian king came to the throne was not reckoned as his official 1st year, but merely the year of his accession, and his 1st year, meaning his 1st full calendar year, did not begin until the next New Year's Day, when, in a religious ceremony, he took the hands of the Babylonian god Bel.

We also know from Josephus (citing Berosus) and a Babylonian chronicle that Nebuchadnezzar was on a military campaign in Palestine against Egypt when his father died and he succeeded to the throne (see p. 756; also Vol. II, pp. 95, 96, 161; Vol. III, p. 91). Hence Daniel and Jeremiah completely agree with each other. Jeremiah synchronized Nebuchadnezzar's 1st regnal year with Jehoiakim's 4th year, whereas Daniel was taken captive in Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, which he identifies with Jehoiakim's 3d year.

2. Nebuchadnezzar the great builder of Babylon. According to the Greek historians, Nebuchadnezzar played an insignificant role in the affairs of ancient history. He is never referred to as a great builder or as the creator of a new and greater Babylon. That this honor is usually ascribed to Queen Semiramis, who is given a prominent place in the history of Babylonia, is evident to every reader of classical Greek histories.

Yet the contemporary cuneiform records, unearthed by the archeologist during the last hundred years, have entirely changed the picture derived from classical writers, and have corroborated the account of the book of Daniel, which credits Nebuchadnezzar with the building (rebuilding) of "this great Babylon" (ch. 4:30). Semiramis, called *Sammu-ramat* in cuneiform inscriptions, it has now been discovered, was a queen mother of Assyria, regent for her infant son Adad-nirari III, and not a queen over Babylonia as the classical sources claimed. The inscriptions have shown that she had nothing to do with any building activity in Babylon. On the other hand, numerous building inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar prove that he became, in a sense, the creator of a new Babylon by rebuilding the palaces, temples, and temple tower of the city, and by adding new buildings and fortifications (see Additional Note on Chapter 4).

Such information none but a writer of the Neo-Babylonian age could have, for it had been completely lost by the time of the Hellenistic era. The presence of such information in the book of Daniel greatly puzzles critical scholars who do not believe that Daniel was written in the 6th century, but rather in the 2d. A typical example of their dilemma is the following statement of R. H. Pfeiffer, of Harvard University: "We shall presumably never know how our author learned that the new Babylon was the creation of Nebuchadnezzar . . . , as the excavations have proved" (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [New York, 1941], pp. 758, 759).

3. Belshazzar, king of Babylon. On the amazing story of the discovery by modern orientalists of the identity of Belshazzar, see Additional Note on Chapter 5. The fact that the name of this king had not been found in any non-Biblical writings of antiquity, while Nabonidus always appeared as the last Babylonian king prior to the Persian conquest, was regularly used as one of the strongest arguments against the historicity of the book of Daniel. But discoveries since the mid-nineteenth century have refuted all critics of Daniel in this respect and vindicated the trustworthiness of the prophet's historical narrative with regard to Belshazzar in a most impressive way.

b. The languages of the book. Like Ezra (see Vol. III, p. 320), Daniel was written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic. Some have accounted for the use of two languages in the case of Ezra by assuming that the author took over Aramaic documents with their accompanying historical descriptions, and incorporated them into his books, otherwise written in Hebrew, the national tongue of his people. Such an interpretation does not fit the book of Daniel, where the Aramaic section begins with ch. 2:4 and ends with the last verse of ch. 7.

Following is a partial list of the many explanations of this problem offered by scholars, together with some observations in parentheses that seem to speak against the reasonableness of these explanations:

1. That the author wrote the historical stories for the Aramaic-speaking people and the prophecies for the Hebrew-speaking scholars. (Yet the Aramaic in chs. 2 and 7, both great prophecies, speaks against the correctness of this view.)

2. That the two languages point to two sources. (This view cannot be correct, because the book bears a strong stamp of unity, as even many radical critics have acknowledged; see p. 743.)

3. That the book was written originally in one language, either Aramaic or Hebrew, and parts of it were later translated. (This view leaves unanswered the question as to why only sections were translated into the other language and not the whole book.)

4. That the author issued the book in two editions, one in Hebrew and another one in Aramaic, so that all classes of people could read it; that in the time of the Maccabean persecution parts of the book were lost, and those parts that were salvaged from both editions were put together without any changes. (This view suffers from the fact that it cannot be proved to be correct, and that it deals with too many uncertainties.)

5. That the author began to write in Aramaic at the point where the Chaldeans addressed "the king in Syriack [literally, Aramaic]" (ch. 2:4), and continued in this language as long as he was writing at that time, but that when he resumed writing (with ch. 8:1) he used Hebrew.

The last view appears to lead in the right direction, for the various sections of the book seem to have been written at different times. As a trained government official Daniel spoke and wrote in several languages. He probably wrote some of the historical narratives and visions in Hebrew and others in Aramaic. On the basis of this assumption, ch. 1 was written in Hebrew, probably in the 1st year of Cyrus, and the narratives of chs. 3-6 in Aramaic at various times. The prophetic visions were recorded mostly in Hebrew (chs. 8-12), although the vision of ch. 7 was written in Aramaic. The account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the future monarchies (ch. 2), on the other hand, was written in Hebrew up to the point where the Chaldeans' speech was quoted (ch. 2:4), and then continued in Aramaic from this point to the end of the narrative.

When, at the end of his life, Daniel collected all his writings into one book, he may not have deemed it necessary to translate certain parts in order to unify the book linguistically, knowing that most of his readers were bilingual—a fact evident from other sources.

It may further be noted that the existence of two languages in Daniel cannot be used as an argument for a late date of the origin of the book. Those who date the origin of Daniel in the 2d century B.C. also have the problem of explaining why a Hebrew author of the Maccabean period wrote part of the book in Hebrew and part of it in Aramaic.

It is true that the orthographic (spelling) peculiarities of the Aramaic sections of Daniel are related most closely to those of the 4th-3d century Aramaic of Western Asia. This would seem to be due to a modernization of the language, a characteristic noticeable also in most of the Hebrew books of the Bible. Orthography cannot reveal the date of writing any more than the latest revision of the English Bible can be taken as proof that the Bible was originally written or translated in the 20th century A.D. The orthographic peculiarities can at most indicate at what time the latest revisions in spelling took place.

Among the Dead Sea scrolls (see Vol. I, pp. 31-34) there are several fragments of Daniel dating from the 2d century B.C. At least two of these preserve that section of ch. 2 where the change is made from Hebrew to Aramaic, and show clearly the bilingual character of the book at that time (see p. 744).

4. Theme. The book of Daniel might appropriately be called a handbook on history and prophecy. Predictive prophecy is a preview of history; history is predictive prophecy passing in review. The element of prediction enables God's people to see the things of time in the light of eternity, alerts them for effective action at appropriate times, facilitates personal preparation for the final crisis, and provides a firm basis for faith upon fulfillment of the prediction.

The four major lines of prophecy in the book of Daniel set forth in brief outline, against the background of world history, the experiences of God's people from the days of Daniel down to the close of time. "The curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (PK 500). Each of the four lines of prophecy reaches a climax when "the God of heaven" sets "up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed" (ch. 2:44), when the "Son of man" receives "everlasting dominion" (ch. 7:13, 14), when opposition to the "Prince of princes" is "broken without hand" (ch. 8:25), and when God's people are delivered forever from their oppressors (ch. 12:1). The prophecies of Daniel thus provide a divinely constructed bridge from the precipice of time to the boundless shores of eternity, a bridge over which those who, like Daniel, purpose in their hearts to love and serve God, may pass by faith from the uncertainty and distress of the present life to the peace and security of life everlasting.

The historical section of the book of Daniel reveals, in most striking manner, the true philosophy of history (see Ed 173-184). This section stands as a preface to the prophetic section. By providing a detailed account of God's dealings with one nation, Babylon, the book enables us to understand the meaning of the rise and fall of other nations outlined in the prophetic portion of the book. Without a clear understanding of the philosophy of history as revealed in the narrative of the role of Babylon in the divine plan, the role of the other nations that succeeded Babylon on the screen of prophetic vision cannot be fully understood or appreciated. For a summary of the divine philosophy of history as set forth by inspiration, see on ch. 4:17.

In the historical section of the book we find Daniel, God's man of the hour, brought face to face with Nebuchadnezzar, the genius of the Gentile world, that the king might have opportunity to know Daniel's God, the Arbiter of history, and to cooperate with Him. Nebuchadnezzar not only was monarch of the greatest nation of the time but was also eminently wise, and had an innate sense of justice and right. He was, in fact, the leading personality of the Gentile world, "the mighty one of the heathen" (Eze. 31:11), raised to power for a specific role in the divine plan. Of him God said, "Now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, *my servant*" (Jer. 27:6). As the Jews went captive to Babylon it was desirable that they be held under a hand that was firm without being cruel (according to the standards of that day). Daniel's mission at the court of Nebuchadnezzar was to secure the submission of the king's will to the will of God in order that the divine purpose might be realized. In one of the dramatic moments of history God brought together these two great personalities. See p. 569.

The first four chapters of Daniel narrate the means by which God secured the allegiance of Nebuchadnezzar. First of all, God needed a man who would be a fit representative of the principles and policies of heaven at the court of Babylon, so He chose Daniel to be His personal ambassador to Nebuchadnezzar. The means God employed to bring Daniel, a captive, to the favorable attention of Nebuchadnezzar, and the means by which Nebuchadnezzar came to have confidence, first in Daniel and then in Daniel's God, illustrate the manner in which God uses men today to accomplish His will on earth. God could use Daniel because Daniel was a man of principle, a man of sterling character, a man whose chief business in life was to live for God.

Daniel "purposed in his heart" (ch. 1:8) to live in harmony with all the revealed will of God. First, God brought him "into favour and tender love" with the officials of Babylon (v. 9). This prepared the way for the second step, the demonstration of the physical superiority of Daniel and his companions (vs. 12-15). Then followed a demonstration of intellectual superiority. "God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom" (v. 17), with the result that they were considered "ten times better" than their closest competitors (v. 20). Thus in personality, physique, and intellect Daniel proved to be markedly superior to his fellow men, and thereby won the confidence and respect of Nebuchadnezzar.

These events prepared Nebuchadnezzar to meet Daniel's God. A series of dramatic experiences—the dream of ch. 2, the striking deliverance from the fiery furnace (ch. 3), and the dream of ch. 4—demonstrated to the king's satisfaction the knowledge, power, and authority of Daniel's God. The inferiority of human knowledge, exhibited in the experience of ch. 2, led Nebuchadnezzar to admit to Daniel, "Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets" (ch. 2:47). He freely acknowledged that the wisdom of God was superior, not only to human wisdom, but even to the supposed wisdom of his own gods. The incident of the golden image and the fiery furnace led Nebuchadnezzar to admit that the God of heaven "delivered his servants" (ch. 3:28). His conclusion was that no one in all his realm should "speak any thing amiss against the God" of the Hebrews, in view of the fact that "no other God" can "deliver after this sort" (v. 29). Nebuchadnezzar now recognized that the God of heaven was not only wise but

powerful, that He was not only omniscient but omnipotent. The third experience—the seven years during which his own vaunted wisdom and power were temporarily removed—taught the king not only that "the most High" is wise and powerful but that He exercises that wisdom and power to rule in human affairs (ch. 4:32). He has wisdom, power, and authority. It is significant that the first act Nebuchadnezzar performed after his reason returned to him was to "praise and extol and honour the King of heaven" and to acknowledge that "those that walk in pride" as he had done for so many years, God "is able to abase" (v. 37).

But the lessons Nebuchadnezzar personally learned over a period of many years largely failed to benefit those who succeeded him upon the throne of Babylon. The last ruler of Babylon, Belshazzar, openly defied the God of heaven (ch. 5:23) in spite of the fact that he was acquainted with the experience of Nebuchadnezzar (v. 22). Instead of working in harmony with the divine plan, "Babylon became a proud and cruel oppressor" (Ed 176), and in the rejection of the principles of heaven wrought its own ruin (Ed 177). The nation was weighed and found wanting (ch. 5:25-28), and world dominion passed to the Persians.

In delivering Daniel from the lions' den, God demonstrated His power and authority before the rulers of the Persian Empire (see ch. 6:20-23; PK 557) as He had previously before those of Babylon. An edict of Darius the Mede acknowledged "the living God" and admitted that He is "stedfast for ever" (v. 26). Even "the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not" (v. 8), was obliged to yield before the decrees of "the most High," who "ruleth in the kingdom of men" (ch. 4:32). Cyrus was favorably impressed by the miraculous evidence of divine power exhibited in the deliverance of Daniel from the lions' den (PK 557). The prophecies outlining his role in the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple (Isa. 44:26 to 45:13) also made a deep impression upon him. "His heart was profoundly moved, and he determined to fulfill his divinely appointed mission" (PK 557).

Thus the book of Daniel gives a demonstration of the principles according to which God's wisdom, power, and authority operate through the history of nations for the eventual accomplishment of the divine purpose. "God exalted Babylon that it might fulfil" His "purpose" (Ed 175). It had its period of test; it "failed, its glory faded, its power departed, and its place was occupied by another" (Ed 177; see on ch. 4:17).

All four visions of the book of Daniel are concerned with the struggle between the forces of good and evil on this earth from the time of Daniel to the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ. Inasmuch as Satan uses the powers of earth in his effort to thwart God's plan and to destroy God's people, these visions introduce those powers through which he has been most active.

The first vision (ch. 2) deals primarily with political changes. Its primary objective was to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar his role as ruler of Babylon, to make known to him "what should come to pass hereafter" (v. 29).

As if to supplement the first vision, the second (ch. 7) emphasizes the experiences of God's people during the sovereignty of the powers mentioned in the first vision, and forecasts the ultimate victory of the saints and God's judgment upon their enemies (see vs. 14, 18, 26, 27).

The third vision (chs. 8; 9), supplementing the second, emphasizes Satan's attempts to do away with the religion and people of Christ.

The fourth vision (chs. 10-12) summarizes the preceding visions and covers the ground with more detail than any of the others. It amplifies the subject of the second vision and that of the third vision. The focus of its emphasis is on "what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days" (ch. 10:14), and "the time appointed was long" (v. 1). The narrative outline of history covered in ch. 11:2-39 leads up to "the latter days" (ch. 10:14) and the events of "the time of the end" (ch. 11:40).

The prophecies of Daniel are closely related to those of the book of Revelation. In large measure Revelation covers the same ground but gives particular emphasis to the role of the Christian church as God's chosen people. Thus details that may be obscure in the book of Daniel are often clarified by comparison with the book of Revelation. That part of his "prophecy which related to the last days, Daniel was bidden to close up and seal 'to the time of the end' " (GC 356), when, through a diligent study of the book, "knowledge" of its import would be "increased" (ch. 12:4). Though "that portion of the prophecy of Daniel relating to the last days" was sealed (ch. 12:4; AA 585), John was specifically instructed to "seal not the sayings of the prophecy" of his book, "for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). Thus, for a clearer interpretation of any portions of the book of Daniel that tend to be obscure, we should search carefully the book of Revelation for light to dispel the darkness.

5. Outline.

I. Historical Section, 1:1 to 6:28.
- A. The education of Daniel and his companions, 1:1-21.
  1. The first transportation of captives from Judah to Babylon, 1:1, 2.
  2. Daniel and his friends selected to be trained for royal service, 1:3-7.
  3. Daniel procures permission to live according to his law, 1:8-16.
  4. Successful education and acceptance into the royal service, 1:17-21.
- B. Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great image, 2:1-49.
  1. Nebuchadnezzar disturbed by a dream, 2:1-11.
  2. Execution of wise men commanded and countermanded, 2:12-16.
  3. Daniel receives knowledge and expresses gratitude, 2:17-23.
  4. Daniel communicates the dream to the king, 2:24-35.
  5. Daniel interprets the dream, 2:36-45.
  6. Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges God's greatness, 2:46-49.
- C. Deliverance of Daniel's friends from the fiery furnace, 3:1-30.
  1. Nebuchadnezzar erects an image and demands its worship, 3:1-7.
  2. The three faithful Hebrews refuse to worship, 3:8-18.
  3. The deliverance from the furnace by divine intervention, 3:19-25.
  4. Nebuchadnezzar's confession and decree; the Hebrews promoted, 3:26-30.
- D. Nebuchadnezzar's second dream, humiliation, and restoration, 4:1-37.
  1. Nebuchadnezzar's confession of God's knowledge and power, 4:1-9.
  2. Description of the dream, 4:10-18.
  3. Daniel's interpretation of the dream, 4:19-27.
  4. Nebuchadnezzar's fall and restoration, 4:28-36.
  5. Nebuchadnezzar praises the God of heaven, 4:37.

E. Belshazzar's banquet and the loss of the monarchy, 5:1-31.
1. Belshazzar's desecration of Temple vessels, 5:1-4.
2. The mysterious handwriting on the wall, 5:5-12.
3. Daniel's interpretation, 5:13-28.
4. Daniel receives honor, Babylon falls, 5:29-31.

F. Daniel's deliverance from the lions' den, 6:1-28.
1. Daniel's elevation and the jealousy of his colleagues, 6:1-5.
2. Darius' decree restricting prayers, 6:6-9.
3. Daniel's transgression of the decree and his condemnation, 6:10-17.
4. Daniel's deliverance and the punishment of the accusers, 6:18-24.
5. Public recognition of the greatness of Daniel's God, 6:25-28.

II. Prophetic Section, 7:1 to 12:13.

A. Daniel's second prophetic message, 7:1-28.
1. The four beasts and little horn, 7:1-8.
2. Judgment and eternal reign of the Son of man, 7:9-14.
3. Interpretation of the vision by an angel, 7:15-27.
4. Impression on Daniel, 7:28.

B. Daniel's third prophetic message, 8:1 to 9:27.
1. The ram, he-goat, and horns, 8:1-8.
2. The little horn and its wickedness, 8:9-12.
3. The time prophecy concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary, 8:13, 14.
4. Gabriel interprets the first portion of the vision, 8:15-26.
5. Daniel's sickness as the result of the vision, 8:27.
6. Daniel prays for restoration and confesses his people's sin, 9:1-19.
7. Gabriel interprets the remaining portion of the vision, 9:20-27.

C. Daniel's fourth prophetic message, 10:1 to 12:13.
1. Daniel's fast, 10:1-3.
2. The appearance of "a certain man" and the effect on Daniel, 10:4-10.
3. The "man's" preliminary talk with Daniel, 10:11 to 11:1.
4. A vision concerning future historical events, 11:2 to 12:3.
5. The duration of the "wonders"; personal promises to Daniel, 12:4-13.

CHAPTER 1

1 *Jehoiakim's captivity.* 3 *Ashpenaz taketh Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.* 8 *They refusing the king's portion do prosper with pulse and water.* 17 *Their excellency in wisdom.*

IN the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.

2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

3 ¶ And the king spake unto Ashpenaz the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring *certain* of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes;

4 Children in whom *was* no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as *had* ability in them to stand in the king's

palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans.

5 And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.

6 Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah:

7 Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel *the name* of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abed-nego.

8 ¶ But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.

9 Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.

10 And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which *are* of your sort? then shall ye make *me* endanger my head to the king.

11 Then said Daniel to Melzar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah,

12 Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink.

13 Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants.

14 So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat.

16 Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

17 ¶ As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar.

19 And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king.

20 And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers that *were* in all his realm.

21 And Daniel continued *even* unto the first year of king Cyrus.

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1. **The third year.** On the basis of Biblical synchronisms that correlate the reigns of several kings of Judah with that of Nebuchadnezzar, whose Babylonian regnal years have been astronomically established, Jehoiakim's 3d regnal year lasted, by the Jewish calendar, from the autumn of 606 to the autumn of 605 B.C. (see Vol. II, p. 160; Vol. III, p. 91). Hence the events recorded in this and the following verse must have taken place sometime during the Jewish civil year that began in the fall of 606 and ended in the fall of 605 B.C. Before the ancient systems of regnal reckonings were understood, this verse presented commentators with a seemingly insuperable problem because of the apparent contradiction with Jer. 25:1. As a result of modern archeological discoveries all historical and chronological difficulties on this point have vanished, and the evidence provides a completely harmonious pattern (see p. 747). The integrity of the Sacred Record has once more been vindicated (see p. 746).

Jehoiakim was the second son of Josiah. When Josiah lost his life at Megiddo the people made Jehoahaz, fourth son of Josiah (see on 1 Chron. 3:15), king in his father's stead. After Jehoahaz had reigned for a period of three months Necho of Egypt, on his return from his first Mesopotamian campaign, deposed him and placed Jehoiakim on the throne (2 Kings 23:29-34). The new ruler of Judah, whose name was changed by the Egyptian king from Eliakim, "My God raises up," to Jehoiakim, "Jehovah raises up," was forced to pay a heavy tribute to Egypt (2 Kings 23:34, 35), but seems to have been content to be loyal to his Egyptian overlord.

Nebuchadnezzar. Heb. *Nebukadne'ṣṣar,* the common Hebrew transliteration of the Babylonian *Nabû-kudurri-uṣur,* meaning "May [the god] *Nabû* protect the son," or "May *Nabû* protect my boundary stone." The form *Nebukadne'ṣṣar* (Nebuchadnezzar) occurs more frequently in the Hebrew Bible than the more correct spelling *Nebukadre'ṣṣar* (Nebuchadrezzar) (see Jer. 21:2; Eze. 26:7; etc.). The Greek sources show the same interchange of *n* and *r*. The LXX spells the name *Nabouchodonosor;* but it is spelled *Nabokodrosoros* in Strabo's works and as a manuscript variant in Josephus. Strangely, Herodotus never mentions Nebuchadnezzar. Because of this historian's silence some hypercritical scholars formerly doubted the existence of this king, but the witness of the cuneiform tablets has shown these scholars to be wrong, and has again substantiated the correctness of the Biblical records.

Nebuchadnezzar's presence in Palestine in the early summer of 605 B.C., as Dan. 1:1 indicates, is confirmed by the Babylonian historian Berosus, whose original work has been lost, but whose statement pertaining to this event is quoted by Josephus (*Against Apion* i. 19). Berosus relates that Nebuchadnezzar was ordered by his father Nabopolassar to quench a rebellion in Egypt, Phoenicia, and Coele-Syria. Having completed his mission but still being in the west, he received word of his father's death. Leaving the captives—among whom Jews are mentioned—in the hands of his generals, he hurried back to Babylon by the short desert route as quickly as possible. This haste was doubtless due to a desire to prevent any usurper from taking the throne. His father died in July or early August, 605, as attested by clay-tablet business documents from Babylonia (see Vol. III, pp. 86, 87). The last such document dated in Nabopolassar's name bears the date corresponding to August 8, 605 B.C., whereas the first tablet bearing Nebuchadnezzar's name is dated in the month *Duzu* (the day number is not preserved), which began on July 9 and ended on August 7, 605. This evidence makes clear that at least by August 7, 605, some had knowledge of the fact that Nebuchadnezzar had succeeded his father on the throne. That the news of Nabopolassar's death had not yet reached all places of Babylonia is apparent from the fact that as late as August 8 there still was a scribe who dated records in the old king's name.

It is thus evident that Nebuchadnezzar was in the west in July or August, 605 B.C. That he had already campaigned against Jehoiakim of Judah at that time can be seen from Berosus, who informs us that Nebuchadnezzar left Jewish captives with his generals when he hurriedly returned to Babylon. Daniel and his friends must have been among these captives. The statement of Dan. 1:1, 2 and that of Berosus are the only ancient records extant that speak of this campaign of Nebuchadnezzar. But the established chronology of the general events of that time accord perfectly with the Scripture account. It should be remembered in this connection that only a few contemporary historical records of Nebuchadnezzar's reign are now extant, and that no cuneiform documents have thus far been found that mention the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

King of Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem in Jehoiakim's 3d year, a few weeks or, at the most, a few months before his father's death, he was not yet king. But Daniel, recording these events, probably in the 1st year of Cyrus (v. 21), some 70 years after the events described had taken place, calls Nebuchadnezzar "king of Babylon." When Daniel arrived at Babylon as a young captive, Nebuchadnezzar was already king. From then on he saw Nebuchadnezzar reigning for 43 years. Hence, it seems entirely natural that Daniel would refer to him as "king." On the other hand, it is not impossible, though it hardly seems likely, that Daniel was taken during the short interval between Nabopolassar's death and Nebuchadnezzar's receipt of the news and return to Babylon.

2. Part of the vessels. Nebuchadnezzar doubtless took the most valuable and finest Temple vessels for use in the service of his god Marduk. He naturally left no more than were absolutely necessary to carry on the daily ritual in the Temple at Jerusalem. There were three occasions on which the Chaldeans carried away sacred vessels

to Babylon: (1) in the campaign recorded in this passage, (2) when Jerusalem was taken at the close of Jehoiachin's reign in 597 B.C. (2 Kings 24:13), and (3) at the end of the reign of Zedekiah, when, in 586 B.C. after a long siege, Jerusalem was taken and destroyed (2 Kings 25:8-15). The spoiling of Jerusalem's treasures by the Babylonian forces was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy pronounced almost a century earlier (Isa. 39:6). On the fate of the ark see on Jer. 37:10.

Land of Shinar. Earlier commentators identified this term with *mât Sumêri,* "the land of Sumer," or southern Babylonia, but this interpretation has now been generally discarded. In most of the OT references Shinar is simply a term for Babylonia. The origin of the word "Shinar" is still obscure (see on Gen. 10:10). However, in Gen. 14:1, 9, Shinar seems to be the name of an area in northern Mesopotamia called *Sanḫar* in cuneiform texts. As in Gen. 11:2, Isa. 11:11, and Zech. 5:11, the Shinar mentioned in Daniel is definitely Babylonia.

His god. The chief god of the Babylonians was Marduk, who, since the time of the First Dynasty, more than a thousand years earlier, had popularly been called *Bêl,* "lord." His main temple, called *Esagila,* in the court of which stood the great temple tower, *Etemenanki,* was in the heart of Babylon (see Additional Note on Chapter 4; see also map p. 796).

Treasure house. Babylonian cuneiform documents frequently mention the treasures of *Esagila,* the great temple of Marduk. Which of the many auxiliary buildings belonging to that temple complex might have housed these treasures is not known. However, a treasure house of a secular nature has been excavated within the palace compound. Excavators have called this building the Palace Museum because they found there many sculptures and inscriptions collected from conquered cities. As in a modern museum, objects from different parts of the empire were also exhibited. Though the building was open to the public, admission was prohibited to "evil people," according to a contemporary inscription. It is not impossible that many treasures from Jerusalem, especially such as came from the royal treasury, were housed in this Palace Museum and were viewed by many visitors.

3. Ashpenaz. A name appearing in the cuneiform texts from Nippur of the 5th century in the slightly different form *Ashpazanda,* but in Aramaic incantation texts, also from Nippur, in the form *Aspenaz.* Though the meaning is still obscure the name has been thought to indicate Persian origin. It is possible that this high officer was a Persian. Many foreigners won rank and honor in the service of the Chaldeans.

Master of his eunuchs. The Hebrew title *rab-saris,* "chief eunuch," appears also in an Aramaic text written in 682 B.C. In Babylonian inscriptions we find as its equivalent the title *rab sha rēshi,* literally, "the chief of the one on the head [of the king]." The title was applied to the royal confidant.

It has frequently been debated whether the term *saris* was used to designate only officers who were eunuchs in the literal, physical sense of the word, that is, castrated, or whether *saris* was used in a general way for any type of royal officer. A clear-cut answer to this question cannot be given. However, Assyrian pictorial representations of court life indicate clearly, by showing a distinction of facial features, such as the absence or presence of beards, that the king was surrounded by officers who were literal eunuchs as well as by those who were not. They indicate furthermore that the literal eunuchs seem to have been in the majority. Some of the greatest men in Assyrian history belonged to this class, as, for example, *Daiân-Ashshur,* the grand vizier of Shalmaneser III, along with many military commanders and other high officers. Isaiah prophesied that some of Hezekiah's descendants would become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (Isa. 39:7). Some commentators have held that Daniel and his three companions were included in this prophecy.

Israel. After the destruction of Samaria in 723/722 B.C., when the ten northern tribes ceased to exist as a separate nation, the kingdom of Judah remained the sole representative of the descendants of Jacob or Israel. Hence, the name Israel is frequently employed during the Exile and in

the postexilic period to designate the representatives of the southern kingdom (see Eze. 14:1; 17:2; etc.; Ezra 3:1, 11; etc.).

King's seed. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 605 B.C. he took hostages from the royal house of Judah as well as from the first families of that unhappy country. It was an old custom of conquerors to carry away princely hostages to guarantee the loyalty of the conquered foe. Such a practice is reported in the annals of Thutmose III of Egypt, who, after defeating an alliance of Syrian and Palestinian rulers at the battle of Megiddo in the 15th century B.C., allowed the defeated kings to retain their thrones, but carried to Egypt one prince from each of his defeated enemies. In Egypt they were educated in the Egyptian way of life, and when one of the satellite kings of Palestine or Syria died, one of the deceased's sons, educated in Egypt and friendly to the Pharaoh, was put on the vacant throne.

Princes. Heb. *partemim*, a loan word from Old Persian *fratama*, "nobles," basically meaning "foremost." *Partemim* occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Esther (chs. 1:3; 6:9). The presence of this and other Persian loan words in Daniel can easily be accounted for on the reasonable assumption that the first chapter of Daniel was written in the 1st year of Cyrus, when Persian influence had become strong (see Dan. 1:21).

4. Children. Heb. *yeladim*, here designating a word covering a much wider range of age than the English word "children." Here it designates "youth," "young men." The young counselors who had been brought up with King Rehoboam are called *yeladim* (1 Kings 12:8). The word is translated "young men" (KJV) because it is obvious that they were not children in the English sense of the word. The same term is applied to Benjamin at about the age of 30, shortly before he went down to Egypt, and when he was the father of 10 sons (Gen. 44:20; cf. ch. 46:21). Hence it is not strange to see the word for "children" applied to youth, of whom one at least, Daniel, had reached the age of 18 years (4T 570). It is worth noticing in this connection that Xenophon, speaking of a later time, says that no young men could enter the service of the Persian kings before they had attained their 17th year (*Cyropaedia* i. 2).

No blemish. Physical soundness and a handsome form were considered indispensable to officers of high rank among the ancient Orientals, and are considered highly desirable qualities in the modern East.

Chaldeans. This term (Akkadian, *Kaldu*) designates the members of an Aramaean tribe whose early settlement was in Lower Mesopotamia and who had taken over the rulership of Babylonia when Nabopolassar founded the Neo-Babylonian dynasty. The term applies also to a class of scholars at the Babylonian court who were the foremost astronomers of their day. These scholars were equally proficient in other exact sciences, such as mathematics, although they included magic and astrology in their activities. Commentators have been divided in their interpretation of the phrase "learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans." The older view, found among the church Fathers, sees in the phrase a study of Aramaic language and literature, while many modern commentators are inclined to interpret it as meaning the combined scientific and linguistic knowledge of the Chaldeans. All known scientific writings of that time were inscribed on clay tablets in cuneiform script in the Babylonian language. It must therefore be concluded that "the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans" included a thorough training in the classical language and script of the country—that is, in the Babylonian language and in cuneiform writing—in addition to colloquial Aramaic. Since proficiency in the cuneiform script, with its hundreds of characters, was not easy to acquire, a good educational background, a natural ability to learn easily, and the gift of picking up a new language readily would be deemed desirable prerequisites for acceptance into the royal school for future courtiers (see PK 480).

5. Appointed. Being members of the royal school for courtiers, the youth were given rations from the royal household. The custom is attested in the later Persian period, for which time we have more contemporary records than for the Neo-Babylonian period.

Provision of . . . meat. Heb. *pathbag,* a loan word from the Old Persian *patibaga,* "portion," or "delicacies." For the use of such loan words see on v. 3. *Pathbag* occurs 6 times in Daniel (chs. 1:5, 8, 13, 15, 16; 11:26).

Three years. That is, by inclusive reckoning (see Vol. II, pp. 136, 137), from the accession year of Nebuchadnezzar, when Daniel was taken captive (see on v. 1), to the 2d year of the king's reign (see on v. 18).

6. Among these. This expression shows that other young men were selected for training in addition to the four mentioned by name. These four are doubtless mentioned because of the uniqueness of their experience. Their unwavering loyalty to God earned for them great rewards in worldly honor and spiritual blessing (see chs. 2:49; 3:30; 6:2; 10:11).

Daniel. Meaning, "God is my judge." In the OT the name appears first as that of one of David's sons (1 Chron. 3:1), and then as the name of a priest in the 5th century (Ezra 8:2; Neh. 10:6). However, the name was already known in Ugarit (Ras Shamrah) in the middle of the second millennium B.C. as that of a legendary, righteous king, whom some scholars have erroneously identified with the Daniel mentioned by Ezekiel (see Eze. 14:14; 28:3). That the name Daniel was very common among Semitic people is evident from the fact that it is found among the Babylonians, the South Arabic Sabeans, as well as among the Nabataeans—the successors of the Edomites—and among the Palmyrenes of northern Arabia.

Hananiah. Meaning, "Yahweh is gracious." Hananiah was a common Hebrew name borne by at least 14 different individuals mentioned in the OT. The name is also found in the Akkadian transliteration, *Hananiyama,* as that of a Jew living in Nippur in the 5th century. On another cuneiform document from Nippur the name is scratched in clay in Aramaic characters. It is also found in later Jewish inscriptions, and in the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine.

Mishael. Meaning, probably, "who belongs to God?" The name was borne by several Biblical characters before and after the Exile (see Ex. 6:22; Neh. 8:4).

Azariah. Meaning, "Yahweh helps." The name appears frequently in the Bible. Outside of the Bible it is found incised on jar handles excavated in Palestine, and is found also in cuneiform sources in the form *Azriau.*

7. Gave names. The new names given to the Hebrew youth signified their adoption into the Babylonian court, a custom that has several parallels in Biblical history. Joseph received an Egyptian name when entering court life in Egypt (Gen. 41:45), and Hadassah's name was changed to Esther (Esther 2:7), probably when she became queen. This custom is also attested among the Babylonians from ancient sources. The Assyrian king Tiglathpileser III adopted the name Pulu (Biblical Pul) when he became king of Babylon (see on 1 Chron. 5:26; see Vol. II, pp. 156, 157), and Shalmaneser V seems to have borne the name Ululai in the same office.

Belteshazzar. The Hebrew and Aramaic transliteration, representing the later, Masoretic pronunciation of a Babylonian name. Though scholars have proposed various identifications with Babylonian forms, none is entirely satisfactory. In view of Nebuchadnezzar's remark made many years later, that Daniel's Babylonian name had been given "according to the name of my god" (ch. 4:8), it appears evident that the first syllable, "Bel," refers to Bel, the popular name of Babylon's chief god, Marduk. For this reason the identification with either *Balâṭ-sharri-uṣur,* "protect the life of the king," or *Balâṭsu-uṣur,* "protect his life," must be rejected, although both interpretations have found strong support among Assyriologists as the closest equivalent to the Hebrew form. R. D. Wilson's suggestion, of identifying Belteshazzar with *Bêl-liṭ-shar-uṣur,* "Bel, protect the hostage of the king," can hardly be correct, inasmuch as it is highly unlikely that the Babylonians would have given such a name to a captive, as we would judge from the thousands of Babylonian names found in cuneiform documents. The best identification seems still to be that given by Delitzsch, namely, that of seeing in this name an abbreviation of *Bêl-balâṭsu-uṣur,* "Bel protect his [the king's] life."

Shadrach. The name is inexplicable in Babylonian. Some scholars have conjectured that the name is a corruption of *Marduk,* whereas others have tried to explain it with the help of Sumerian words. Jensen suggested it was the name of the Elamite god *Shutruk,* but it is difficult to explain why an Elamite name should have been given by the Babylonians.

Meshach. A satisfactory explanation as to the origin of this name has not yet been found. Like Shadrach (see above), Meshach is not a Babylonian name.

Abed-nego. It is generally agreed that this name stands for *'Ebed-Nebo,* "servant of [the god] Nabu," a name that is attested by an Aramaic papyrus found in Egypt.

8. Not defile himself. There were several reasons why a pious Jew would avoid eating of the royal food: (1) the Babylonians, like other pagan nations, ate unclean meats (see CD 30); (2) the beasts had not been properly killed according to Levitical law (Lev. 17:14, 15); (3) a portion of the animals eaten was first offered as a sacrifice to pagan gods (see Acts 15:29); (4) the use of luxurious and unhealthful food and drink was contrary to strict principles of temperance; (5) for Daniel and his friends there was the added desire to avoid a flesh-food diet (see EGW, Supplementary Material on Dan. 1:8). The Hebrew youth determined to do nothing that would interfere with physical, mental, and spiritual development.

9. Into favour. Compare the experience of Joseph (Gen. 39:4, 21), of Ezra (Ezra 7:28), and of Nehemiah (Neh. 2:8). It was doubtless the gentleness, courtesy, and fidelity displayed by these men that won for them the favor of their superiors (see PP 217; CD 31). At the same time they attributed their success to the blessing of God. God works with those who cooperate with Him. See p. 750.

10. Endanger my head. The sentence reads literally, "Ye make my head punishable with the king." The expression does not imply capital penalty, but, as James A. Montgomery has shown, simply means that the chief eunuch would be held responsible if those who had been committed to him deteriorated physically.

11. Melzar. Heb. *melṣar,* which, according to recently recovered Babylonian cuneiform records, was obviously derived from the Akkadian *maṣṣaru,* which means "guardian," or "warden." The presence of "the" in the Hebrew is further indication that a proper name was not intended. Hence, the name of the lower official who acted as immediate tutor of the Hebrew apprentices is not known. Although Ashpenaz had been friendly and sympathetic to Daniel's request, he nevertheless hesitated to help the young captive. Hence, Daniel went to the official who was the immediate tutor and placed before him a specific request.

12. Ten days. This seems a short period of time in which to produce any appreciable change in appearance and physical vigor. But habits of strict temperance had already provided Daniel and his companions with fundamentally sound constitutions (see PK 482) that responded to the benefits of a proper diet. Their recuperation from the rigors of the long march from Judea was, without doubt, more pronounced than that of other captives who had not already formed abstemious habits. Now, in the case of Daniel and his three companions, divine power was united with human effort, and the result was truly remarkable (cf. PP 214). The blessing of God attended the noble resolution of the youths not to defile themselves with the king's dainties. They knew that indulgence in stimulating foods and drinks would prevent them from securing the highest physical and mental development. The Melzar felt certain that "an abstemious diet would render these youth pale and sickly in appearance . . . , while the luxurious food from the king's table would make them ruddy and beautiful, and would impart superior physical activity" (CD 31), and he was surprised when the results were quite the opposite.

God honored these young men because of their unswerving purpose to do what was right. The approbation of God was dearer to them than the favor of the most powerful earthly potentate, dearer even than life itself (see CD 31). Nor had the firm resolution been born under the pressure of immediate circumstances. From

childhood these young men had been trained in strict habits of temperance. They knew of the degenerating effects of a stimulating diet, and had long ago determined not to enfeeble their physical and mental powers by indulgence in appetite. The end of the period found them superior in physical appearance, physical activity, and mental vigor.

Daniel did not refuse the viands of the king in order to be singular. Many might reason that under the circumstances there was plausible excuse for departing from strict adherence to principle and that consequently Daniel was narrow, bigoted, and too particular. Daniel sought to live at peace with all and to cooperate to the fullest extent possible with his superiors as long as such cooperation did not require him to sacrifice principle. When fealty to Jehovah was involved, he was willing to sacrifice worldly honor, wealth, position, yea, even life itself.

Pulse. Heb. *zero'im,* "food derived from plants," such as cereals and vegetables. According to Jewish tradition, berries and dates were also comprehended in the term. Since dates are a part of the staple food of Mesopotamia, they seem likely to have been included here. See on v. 8.

17. These four children. See on v. 4.

Knowledge and skill. The instruction that Daniel and his three friends received was for them also a test of faith. The wisdom of the Chaldeans was allied with idolatry and pagan practices, and mixed sorcery with science, and learning with superstition. From these things the Hebrew learners kept themselves aloof. How they avoided conflicts we are not told, but despite the corrupting influences they held fast to the faith of their fathers, as later tests of loyalty clearly show. The four young men learned the skills and sciences of the Chaldeans without adopting the heathen elements mingled with them.

Among the reasons why these Hebrews preserved their faith unsullied may be noted the following: (1) Their firm resolution to remain true to God. They had more than a desire or a hope for goodness. They *willed* to do right and to shun evil. Victory is possible only by the right exercise of the will (see SC 48). (2) Their dependence on the power of God. Though they valued human capabilities and recognized the necessity of human effort, they knew that these things of themselves would not guarantee success. They recognized that in addition to this there must be humble dependence and full reliance on God's power (see CD 154). (3) Their refusal to blunt their spiritual and moral natures by indulgence in appetite. They realized that a single departure from principle would have weakened their sense of right and wrong, which in turn would probably have led to other wrong acts, and in the end to complete apostasy (see CD 155). (4) Their consistent prayer life. Daniel and his youthful companions realized that prayer was a necessity, especially because of the atmosphere of evil that constantly surrounded them (see SL 20).

Visions and dreams. While Daniel's three friends were, like him, endowed with exceptional mental qualities, and equaled him in loyalty to their God, he was chosen as God's special messenger. Some modern scholars who deny that there is a genuine gift of prophecy have advanced the notion that this verse indicates that Daniel had a special gift for learning the Chaldean way of interpreting dreams and visions, and that in school contests on this subject he excelled his fellow students. Daniel did not belong to this type of dream interpreters. His prophetic gift was not the product of a successful training in the school of the royal soothsayers, sorcerers, and magicians. He was called of God to do a special work, and became the recipient of some of the most important prophecies of all time (see chs. 7-12).

18. At the end of the days. Some expositors have thought that when the king required his wise men to interpret his dream in his 2d year (ch. 2:1), Daniel was not called to the meeting because his schooling was not yet completed, and that he and his friends were condemned to share the fate of the wise men because they belonged to the profession, although they were not yet full-fledged members of it. This view cannot be regarded as correct. The young apprentices were to be trained three years in order to "stand before the king" (ch. 1:5); and it was "at the end of the days"

specified that they were brought before the king for examination. Then "stood they before the king" (see on v. 19). This statement indicates that the three-year training period ended before the king examined them and "found" that Daniel and his three friends were better than all the other candidates. This could hardly have taken place after one of them, Daniel, had already received high honors and had been promoted to the rule of the province and supervision over all the wise men, and after the other three had been given high office (ch. 2:46-49). The logical sequence, as well as the narrative order, requires that Daniel's three-year course end before Nebuchadnezzar's famous dream in his 2d year.

All this leads to the conclusion that these three years must be counted inclusively; they represent (1) Nebuchadnezzar's accession year (see on v. 2), in which the Hebrew captives arrived in Babylon and entered their training; (2) Nebuchadnezzar's year 1, which was the calendar year beginning at the next New Year's Day after his accession; and (3) Nebuchadnezzar's year 2, in which Daniel graduated and stood "before the king," and the year in which he interpreted the dream (see ch. 2:1; also PK 491).

By applying the commonly used ancient method of inclusive reckoning, which is attested in numerous cases as the usual way of counting time (see Vol. II, pp. 136, 137), there is no need to assert, as modern commentators have done, that ch. 1 stands chronologically in contradiction to ch. 2, or to take recourse in the fanciful or forced explanations that are found in many commentaries. For example, Jerome declared that the 2d year of ch. 2:1 refers to the 2d year after the conquest of Egypt; and the Jewish scholar Ibn Ezra thought that the dream took place in the 2d year after Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem.

19. Communed with them. When, at the end of the training period, the chief eunuch presented his graduates to the king, an examination conducted personally by Nebuchadnezzar proved the four young Hebrews to be superior to all the others. "In physical strength and beauty, in mental vigor and literary attainment, they stood unrivaled" (PK 485). The manner of examination is not indicated. From a later description of Daniel's abilities given by Belshazzar's mother, who was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, we learn that Daniel was known to her as a man able to "explain riddles, and solve problems" (ch. 5:12, RSV). The questions asked may have required the explanation of riddles, which has always been a favored sport in the court life of Oriental countries. Furthermore, the examination may have included the solving of mathematical and astronomical problems, in which the Babylonians were masters, as their documents reveal, or a demonstration of ability to read and write the difficult cuneiform script.

The superior wisdom of Daniel and his youthful companions was not the result of chance or destiny, or even of a miracle, as that word is usually understood. The young men applied themselves diligently and conscientiously to their studies, and God blessed their endeavors. True success in any undertaking is assured when divine and human effort are combined. Human effort alone avails nothing; likewise divine power does not render human cooperation unnecessary (see PK 486, 487; cf. PP 214).

Among them all. This may refer to the other Israelite youths (v. 3) brought to Babylon along with Daniel and his friends, but doubtless also to the young noble captives from other lands who had received the same training as the Hebrews.

Stood they before the king. Compare v. 5 with ch. 2:2. That is, they entered the royal service. For similar usage of the words "stand before," see Gen. 41:46; 1 Sam. 16:21, 22; 2 Chron. 9:7; 10:6, 8 (cf. Num. 16:9; 27:21; Deut. 10:8; 2 Chron. 29:11).

20. Wisdom and understanding. Literally, "wisdom of understanding." Along with most other translations the KJV follows the ancient versions, which have an "and" between the words "wisdom" and "understanding." Certain commentators have explained the Hebrew construction to be the result of a desire on the part of the author to express the highest form of understanding or science, or to convey to his readers the thought that wisdom de-

termined, or regulated, by understanding is meant; hence there was no magical knowledge or supernatural science. This would suggest that Daniel and his friends excelled the men of their profession in matters of exact science, such as astronomy and mathematics, and in matters of linguistic studies. They had mastered cuneiform writing, the Babylonian and Aramaic languages, and the Aramaic square script.

Magicians. Heb. *charṭummim,* a word occurring only in the Pentateuch (Gen. 41:8, 24; Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18) and in Daniel (here and in ch. 2:2). It is borrowed from the Egyptian *cheri-dem,* in which *cheri* means "chief," or "outstanding man," and *dem,* "to mention a name in magic." Hence a *cheri-dem* is a "chief of magic," or "chief magician." According to our present knowledge this word was not used in Babylonia, and is nowhere found in cuneiform sources. Obviously Daniel had become acquainted with the term from his reading of the Pentateuch, and need not necessarily have been conversant with Egyptian technical terms. Daniel was well acquainted with the books of Moses and was a keen student of the sacred writings of his people (see ch. 9:2). The use of this Hebrew loan word from the Egyptian is an illustration of how his style and choice of words were influenced by the vocabulary of the portion of the Bible then available.

Astrologers. Heb. *'ashshaphim,* a loan word from the Akkadian *ashipu,* "exorciser."

Divination, magic, exorcism, and astrology were widespread among the ancient peoples, but in some countries, like Babylonia, they were practiced by the men of science. Future events were divined by looking for signs in the entrails of sacrificed animals or in the flight of birds. Divination was especially practiced by inspecting the livers of sacrificed animals (hepatoscopy), and comparing them with inscribed "model" livers of clay. These models, like a modern manual of palmistry, contained detailed explanations of all form differences and directions for interpretation. Numerous clay liver models have come to light in the excavations of Mesopotamian sites. Ancient diviners had many methods. Sometimes they sought advice by pouring oil on water and interpreting the form of the spreading oil (lecanomancy), or by shaking arrows in the quiver and looking for the direction in which the first one falls (belomancy). See Eze. 21:21.

The diviner also interpreted dreams, worked out incantation formulas by which evil spirits or sicknesses allegedly could be banished, and asked advice from the supposed spirits of the dead (necromancy). Every Oriental potentate had many diviners and magicians in his service. They were at hand on every occasion, and followed their king on military campaigns, hunting expeditions, and state visits. Their counsel was sought for various decisions, such as the route to be followed, or the date for an attack on the enemy. The life of the king was largely regulated and ruled by these men.

It is a mistake to assume that the wise men of Babylon were only diviners and magicians. Though skilled in these arts, they were also scholars in the true sense. As in the Middle Ages alchemy was practiced by men of true scholarly education and astrology was frequently practiced by otherwise scientifically working astronomers, so the exorcisers and diviners of ancient times engaged also in strictly scientific studies. Their astronomical knowledge had attained to a surprisingly high degree of development, although the peak of Babylonian astronomy came after the Persian conquest. Astronomers were able to predict both lunar and solar eclipses by computation. Their mathematical skill was highly developed. They employed formulas whose discovery is erroneously but generally attributed to Greek mathematicians. Furthermore, they were good architects, builders, and acceptable physicians, who had found by empirical means the cure for many ailments. It must have been in these branches of knowledge and skill that Daniel and his three friends exceeded the Babylonian magicians, astrologers, and scholars.

21. Unto the first year. Some commentators have held that there is an apparent contradiction between this verse and the statement of ch. 10:1 that Daniel received

a vision in the 3d year of Cyrus. But the text does not necessarily imply that Daniel's life did not extend beyond the 1st year of Cyrus. Daniel may have referred to that date because of some special event that took place during that year. Some have suggested the event to be the decree of the first year of King Cyrus that marked the end of the Babylonian exile (2 Chron. 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1-4; 6:3). That decree brought the fulfillment of an important prophecy that Daniel had carefully studied, namely, the prophecy of Jeremiah that the Exile would last 70 years (Jer. 29:10; Dan. 9:2). Daniel lived throughout the Exile from the first captivity, in 605 B.C., to the time when the decree was given by Cyrus, probably as late as the summer of 537 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 96, 97). Daniel may have desired to inform his readers that though he had been carried away in the first captivity, he was still alive at the time the Exile ended about 70 years later. Also, the conclusion seems warranted that ch. 1 and perhaps also some of the other chapters were not written until the 1st year of Cyrus. Such a date explains the use of loan words from the Persian. Daniel again occupied an official position, under the Persian rule, shortly after the fall of Babylon (Dan. 6:1, 2), and from his contact with Persian officials doubtless added to his vocabulary some of the Persian words he used in the composition of his book.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-21 Ed 54, 55; FE 77-81; PK 479-490
1, 2 PK 422
1-4 PK 428
2 Ed 54; PK 479
3, 4 PK 480
3-5 SL 18
3-6 MH 148; PP 592
4 FE 77; PK 484
4, 5 Te 271
5 CD 29; PK 481; 4T 570
6 PK 480
7 PK 481
8 CD 28, 30, 154; CE 43; CG 166; CH 50, 65; CT 478, 496; Ed 54; FE 78, 86, 227; ML 75, 120, 147, 254; MM 276; SL 19; Te 35, 101, 151, 189, 237, 271; 4T 515, 570; 5T 448; 9T 157, 165
8-12 CH 64; PK 483
9 PK 546
10 SL 21
12 CD 31; FE 79
12-20 SL 22
15-17 PK 484
15-20 CH 65; FE 80
17 CD 31, 154; CH 50, 65; COL 357; CT 456; FE 87, 225, 247, 339, 358; MM 89
17-20 FE 193
18-20 CH 65
19 CD 32; Te 271
19, 20 Ed 55; ML 147; MYP 241; PK 485
20 CH 50; FE 247, 358, 374; MM 276; Te 191; 6T 220

CHAPTER 2

1 *Nebuchadnezzar, forgetting his dream, requireth it of the Chaldeans, by promises and threatenings.* 10 *They acknowledging their inability are judged to die.* 14 *Daniel obtaining some respite findeth the dream.* 19 *He blesseth God.* 24 *He staying the decree is brought to the king.* 31 *The dream.* 36 *The interpretation.* 46 *Daniel's advancement.*

AND in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

2 Then the king commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

3 And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream.

4 Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriack, O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation.

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the

dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill.

6 But if ye shew the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and great honour: therefore shew me the dream, and the interpretation thereof.

7 They answered again and said, Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will shew the interpretation of it.

8 The king answered and said, I know of certainty that ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.

9 But if ye will not make known unto me the dream, *there is but* one decree for you: for ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me, till the time be changed: therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that ye can shew me the interpretation thereof.

10 ¶ The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean.

11 And *it is* a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh.

12 For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon.

13 And the decree went forth that the wise *men* should be slain; and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain.

14 ¶ Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, which was gone forth to slay the wise *men* of Babylon:

15 He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, Why *is* the decree *so* hasty from the king? Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

16 Then Daniel went in, and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would shew the king the interpretation.

17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions:

18 That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret; that Daniel and his fellows should not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon.

19 ¶ Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

21 And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

22 He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.

23 I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast *now* made known unto us the king's matter.

24 ¶ Therefore Daniel went in unto Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon: he went and said thus unto him; Destroy not the wise *men* of Babylon: bring me in before the king, and I will shew unto the king the interpretation.

25 Then Arioch brought in Daniel before the king in haste, and said thus unto him, I have found a man of the captives of Judah, that will make known unto the king the interpretation.

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, Art thou able to make known unto me the dream which I have seen, and the interpretation thereof?

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise *men*, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king;

28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these;

29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came *into thy mind* upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.

30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for *any* wisdom that I have more than any living, but for *their* sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart.

31 ¶ Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness *was* excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof *was* terrible.

32 This image's head *was* of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass,

33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay.

34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet *that were* of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36 ¶ This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

37 Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold.

39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth.

40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things:* and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.

41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay.

42 And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken.

43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.

44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

46 ¶ Then the king Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel, and commanded that they should offer an oblation and sweet odours unto him.

47 The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth *it is,* that your God *is* a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.

48 Then the king made Daniel a great man, and gave him many great gifts, and made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise *men* of Babylon.

49 Then Daniel requested of the king, and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, over the affairs of the province of Babylon: but Daniel *sat* in the gate of the king.

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1. Second year. On the identification of the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign and for an explanation of how the three years of Daniel's training (ch. 1:5, 18) were completed before the end of the king's 2d year see on ch. 1:18.

Dreamed dreams. Possibly the plural is intended to describe the series of incidents in the dream. The singular occurs in vs. 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. The records of ancient Mesopotamia tell of many royal dreams. In one of these Gudea saw a man with a kingly crown upon his head whose stature reached from earth to heaven. The ancients regarded dreams with awe, treated them as revelations from their deities, and sought to discover their true interpretation.

The Lord in His providence gave Nebuchadnezzar this dream. God had a message for the king of the Babylonian realm. There were representatives in the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar through whom God could communicate a knowledge of Himself. God is no respecter of men or of nations. His object is to save as many as are

willing, of whatever tribe or nation. He was as anxious to save the ancient Babylonians as He was to save Israel.

The dream was intended to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar that the course of history was ordained by the Most High and subject to His will. Nebuchadnezzar was shown his place of responsibility in the great plan of Heaven, in order that he might have the opportunity of cooperating effectively with the divine program.

The lessons of history given to Nebuchadnezzar were designed for the instruction of nations and men till the close of time. Other scepters than those of Babylon have held sway over the nations of men. To every ancient nation God assigned a special place in His great plan. When rulers and people failed in their opportunity, their glory was laid in the dust. Nations today should heed the lessons of past history. Above the fluctuating scene of international diplomacy the great God of heaven sits enthroned "silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (PK 500). Eventually stability and permanence will come when God Himself, at the end of time, sets up His kingdom, which shall never be destroyed (v. 44). See on ch. 4:17.

God approached King Nebuchadnezzar through a dream because, evidently, that was the most effective means by which to impress his mind with the importance of the message thus imparted, win his confidence, and secure his cooperation. Like all ancient peoples, Nebuchadnezzar believed in dreams as one of the means by which the gods revealed their will to men. Divine wisdom always meets men where they are. In communicating a knowledge of His will to men today God may use means that are less spectacular, yet as certainly ordained for the accomplishment of His beneficent purposes. He ever adapts His modes of working with men to the capacity of each individual and to the environment of the age in which each lives. See further on ch. 4:10.

Was troubled. Or, "was disturbed." The Hebrew verb thus translated occurs also in Gen. 41:8 and Ps. 77:4. The dream experience had greatly impressed King Nebuchadnezzar.

2. Magicians. Heb. *charṭummim,* an Egyptian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Astrologers. Heb. *'ashshaphim,* an Akkadian loan word (see on ch. 1:20).

Sorcerers. Heb. *mekashshephim,* from a root meaning "to use enchantments." The Babylonians called them by the cognate word *kashshapu.* The *mekashshephim* professed to be able to produce magic spells (see on Ex. 7:11). The Mosaic law pronounced the death penalty upon those who practiced this black magic (Lev. 20:27; cf. 1 Sam. 28:9).

Chaldeans. Heb. *Kaśdim* (see on ch. 1:4).

3. To know the dream. Though the king had been deeply impressed by the dream, when he awoke he found it impossible to recall the particulars (see PK 491). Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar had not forgotten his dream and that he was putting to the test the reputed skill of the supposedly wise men. But the king appears too concerned about gaining a knowledge of the dream and its interpretation to use the occasion to test his would-be interpreters.

4. Syriack. Heb. *'aramith,* "Aramaic." The royal family and the ruling class of the empire were Aramaic-speaking Chaldeans originating from southern Mesopotamia. It is therefore not surprising to find that the king's courtiers spoke to him in Aramaic and not in Babylonian, the tongue of the native population of Babylon. The Aramaeans were an important branch of the Semitic peoples, and their language included many dialects.

From this verse on to the end of ch. 7 the record is in Aramaic and not in Hebrew, as is the remainder of the book. On the possible reasons for this see p. 749.

O king, live for ever. The Babylonian formula found in contemporary inscriptions reads somewhat like this: "May Nabu and Marduk give long days and everlasting years to the king my lord." Compare 1 Sam. 10:24; 1 Kings 1:31; Neh. 2:3; Dan. 3:9; 5:10; 6:21.

5. The thing is gone from me. Some scholars translate this expression so as to give it the meaning "the thing is certain with me," or "the word is promulgated by me." The RSV reads, "the word from me is sure." These alternative translations

are based on the assumption that the Aramaic word *'azda'* is an adjective rather than a verb, as the translators of the KJV considered it. The translation of the KJV is supported by the LXX and by Rashi, who translates *'azda'* "has gone." Whatever meaning is adopted there is no question about Nebuchadnezzar's being unable to recall the particulars of the dream (see on v. 3). The dream was purposely taken from the king, that the wise men should not place upon it a false interpretation (see FE 412).

Cut in pieces. Literally, "dismembered." They were to be cut limb from limb (see 2 Macc. 1:16; Josephus *Antiquities* xv. 8. 4). Such cruelty as is here depicted was common in the ancient world. The Assyrians and Babylonians were notorious for the severity and barbarity of their treatment of offenders. Ashurbanipal reports that he cut in pieces rebel rulers.

Dunghill. Aramaic *newali,* which, from a similarity with an Akkadian root, some interpret as meaning "ruins." Others retain the definition "dunghill," or "refuse heap," and interpret the clause as meaning that the houses would be turned into "public privies" (see 2 Kings 10:27). The LXX supports neither interpretation, but reads, "your houses shall be spoiled."

8. Gain the time. Literally, "buy the time." The wise men were temporizing, and their repeated request aroused the suspicion of the king that they were seeking to gain an advantage by delay. It is doubtful whether at this point he was already seriously questioning their ability to give him the requested information. The whole fabric of his faith was built around a belief that the gods communicated with men through the various channels represented by these men. Their hesitancy to comply immediately with his request may at first have aroused his suspicion that they had conspired together to take advantage of him. If the dream contained a communication concerning action to be taken at an auspicious moment, delay would result in tragic loss. Certain communications through divinations demanded that action be undertaken at a precise moment, such as a particular conjunction of the planets. The expressions, "gain the time," and "till the time be changed" (v. 9), may have reference to such a supposed opportune moment.

9. One decree for you. Literally, "your law is one." The word for "decree" may also be rendered "sentence," or "penalty."

Time be changed. Either until the king should forget the whole affair or till they could invent some form of reply. "Time" here may also refer to the auspicious moment for carrying out the alleged communication of a god (see on v. 8).

10. Not a man. The Chaldeans were compelled to acknowledge their inability to reveal the dream. They told the king that he was asking for something that was beyond human power to reveal, and that no king had ever made such an unreasonable request of any of his subjects.

King, lord, nor ruler. Literally, "king, great and powerful." "Great king" (see 2 Kings 18:28) is an old Babylonian title. Such an expression as "Great King, Mighty King, King of Assyria [or, of Babylon]" is common in the inscriptions.

11. Rare. Better, "difficult."

Gods. Some see a hint here of two classes of gods. They suggest that these wise men claimed to be in communication with certain gods, such subordinate deities as were supposed to maintain contact with men, but that the higher gods were unapproachable. In any case the Chaldeans were revealing the limitations of their art.

Others suggest that the plural *'elahin,* "gods," even as the Hebrew plural *'elohim* (see Vol. I, pp. 170, 171), could be used of a single deity, and that, in common with other polytheists, the Chaldeans recognized some supreme deity. In any case the wise men were frank to admit that they recognized a higher intelligence, some master mind or minds, that had knowledge beyond that possessed by human beings. This confession of failure provided a remarkable opportunity for Daniel to reveal something of the power of the God whom he served and worshiped.

12. Commanded to destroy. The severity of the sentence was not out of keeping with the customs of the times. It was, however, a bold step on the part of the king, because the men whose death he had ordered were the learned classes of society.

Babylon. Possibly only the city and not the whole realm of Babylonia.

13. They sought Daniel. Daniel and his friends would not have been "sought" had they not already become members of the profession of "wise men." Thus the view that they were still in training seems unfounded (see on ch. 1:18). The fact that they had but recently graduated is sufficient to explain why they had not been called to interpret the dream. The monarch would have summoned only the highest ranking leaders, representative of all the knowledge of their craft. Neither the king nor the leading wise men would have thought of calling on Daniel and his three friends any more than the top specialists of the land, baffled by a royal ailment, would consult fledgling doctors just out of medical school. Nor is it necessary to suppose that Daniel's training included courses in exorcism and soothsaying, as modern critics suggest (see on ch. 1:20).

14. Wisdom. Aramaic *ṭe'em,* which may also be translated "taste," or "discretion." Daniel showed great tact in approaching his superior.

15. Hasty. The LXX has *pikros,* which means "bitter," or "harsh." Some scholars also assign this meaning to the Aramaic, whereas others insist that the original has the basic idea of urgency.

16. Give him time. One of the things that infuriated the king was that the wise men were seeking to postpone their answer (see on v. 8). Obviously the king was still troubled over the dream, and may have been happy over the new prospect of finding a solution to the mystery that was harassing his spirit. Since Daniel had not been consulted previously, the king may have thought it only fair to give him an opportunity. In his previous contact with this young Judean captive, Nebuchadnezzar had evidently been favorably impressed with Daniel's sincerity and ability. Daniel's previous faithfulness in lesser things now opened the door to greater things.

Interpretation. Daniel's request differed from that of the Chaldeans. The wise men demanded that the king relate to them the dream. Daniel simply requested time, and assured the king that the interpretation would be provided.

18. Desire mercies. Daniel and his companions could approach God with strong faith and implicit confidence because, to the best of their knowledge and ability, they were living up to His revealed will (see 1 John 3:22). They had the consciousness that they were in the place where God wanted them to be, and were doing the work that Heaven designed. If in their earlier experience they had compromised principle and had yielded to the temptations that constantly surrounded them in the royal court, they could not have expected such marked divine intervention in this crisis. Contrast their experience with that of the prophet of Judah who forfeited divine protection by his rash disobedience (1 Kings 13:11-32; see on 1 Kings 13:24).

19. Night vision. Aramaic *chezu,* akin to the Heb. *chazon* (see on 1 Sam. 3:1).

Daniel blessed. Upon receiving the divine revelation, Daniel's first thought was to return due praise to the Revealer of secrets, a worthy example of what all should do who receive signal blessings from the Lord.

On the meaning of the expression "blessed the God" see on Ps. 63:4.

20. Name of God. The expression is frequently used to denote the being, power, and essential activity of God. "Name" is often used in the Bible synonymously with "character."

Wisdom. Those who lack wisdom may receive it from its true source in response to the prayer of faith (James 1:5). The boasted claim of the Babylonians that their deities possessed wisdom and insight had been demonstrated to be false. Heathen deities continually disappoint their devotees.

21. And he. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The effect may be shown in the English by the translation, "It is he that changeth," etc.

Times and the seasons. The two words are almost synonymous. The latter may refer to a more specific point of time; the former seems to stress more the idea of a period of time.

Removeth kings. Here is portrayed the true philosophy of human history. Kings and rulers are ultimately under the direc-

tion and control of an almighty Potentate (see Ed 173; see on v. 1 and on ch. 4:17).

Unto the wise. The Lord delights to bestow wisdom upon those who will use it wisely. He did this for Daniel, and He will do it today for every one who trusts fully in Him.

22. He revealeth. God reveals Himself in nature (Ps. 19), in personal experience, through the prophetic gift and other gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12), and in His written Word.

Deep. Things beyond human comprehension until revealed.

Darkness. That which man is unable to see is not hidden from the eye of God (see Ps. 139:12; 1 John 1:5).

23. Thank thee. The pronoun is emphatic in the Aramaic. The word order in the original is as follows: "To thee, O God of my fathers, I give thanks."

What we desired. Although the dream has been revealed to Daniel, he does not take all the credit to himself, but includes his companions who prayed with him.

24. Destroy not the wise men. Daniel's first concern was to plead for the wise men of Babylon, that the sentence of death upon them might be canceled. They had done nothing to earn their reprieve, but they were saved because of the presence of a righteous man in their midst. It has often been thus. The righteous are "the salt of the earth." They have a preserving quality. Because of Paul's presence in the ship the sailors and all aboard were saved (Acts 27:24). The wicked know not how much they owe to the righteous. Yet how often the wicked ridicule and persecute the very ones whom they should thank for the preservation of their lives.

25. In haste. Possibly because of his great joy that the secret had been discovered. He might now be spared the gory task of executing all the wise men, an assignment for which obviously he had no heart.

I have found. Arioch appears to take undeserved credit to himself, for his statement seems to imply that through strenuous efforts on his part he had discovered someone who could interpret the dream. However, Arioch may not have known of Daniel's interview with the king (v. 16). In this case his statement would be the natural way of announcing the discovery.

26. Belteshazzar. For the meaning of this name and the reason why it was given to Daniel see on ch. 1:7. In Nebuchadnezzar's presence Daniel naturally assumed his Babylonian name.

27. Cannot the wise men. Daniel had no desire to exalt himself above the wise men. He aimed, rather, to impress upon the king the futility of trusting his wise men for counsel and help. He hoped to turn the king's eyes to the great God in heaven, the God whom Daniel worshiped, the God of the Hebrews, whose people had been conquered by the king.

The astrologers, the magicians. See on ch. 1:20.

Soothsayers. Aramaic *gazerin*, from a root meaning "to cut," "to determine." Hence the generally accepted meaning is "the deciders," or "the determiners [of destiny]." From the position of the stars, by various arts of computation and divining, these soothsayers thought they could determine the future (see on ch. 1:20).

28. Latter days. See on Isa. 2:2. The message of the dream was for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar as well as of rulers and people to the end of time (see on v. 1). The outline of prophecy carries us from Nebuchadnezzar's day (see on v. 29) down to the end of the world and the second coming of Christ (see vs. 44, 45). Nebuchadnezzar had been looking forward with anxious forebodings to the future (see SL 34). God revealed to him the future, not to satisfy his curiosity, but to awaken in his mind a sense of personal responsibility toward the program of heaven.

29. Hereafter. In this dream are depicted future developments beginning with the time of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar and extending to the end of the world.

30. Their sakes. "Their" is a supplied word. The clause reads literally, "but on account of the thing that they may make known to the king the interpretation." "They" appears to be used impersonally. The LXX probably gives the simplest meaning of the passage, "Moreover, this mystery has not been revealed to me by reason of wisdom which is in me beyond all living, but for the sake of making

known the interpretation to the king, that thou mightest know the thoughts of thine heart."

31. Image. Aramaic *ṣelem,* "a statue," corresponding to the Heb. *ṣelem,* which also may be translated "statue." In every instance except one (Ps. 39:6, where it is translated "vain shew") the KJV translates *ṣelem,* "image," though statue would be an appropriate translation in a number of instances, such as 2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chron. 23:17; Amos 5:26.

Whose brightness was excellent. Or, as in the LXX, "whose appearance was extraordinary."

Terrible. Or, "dreadful." The word occurs again in Dan. 7:7, 19.

32. Fine gold. That is, "pure gold."

Brass. Rather, "bronze," or "copper" (see on 2 Sam. 8:8; 1 Kings 7:47).

33. Legs. The word thus translated seems here to refer to the lower part of the legs. The word translated "thighs" (v. 32) refers to the upper part of the hips. Precisely where on the leg the transition from brass to iron occurred is not clear from these words.

Clay. Aramaic *chasaph.* From an examination of the cognate languages *chasaph* seems to designate an earthen vessel or a potsherd rather than the clay itself from which these objects are formed. The word for "clay," Aramaic *ṭin,* occurs in vs. 41, 43, in connection with *chasaph,* and is there translated "miry." It seems better, therefore, in v. 33 to translate *chasaph* "molded clay," or "earthenware," rather than simply "clay."

34. Cut out. Or, "quarried," or "broken out."

Without hands. That is, unaided by human agencies.

35. Chaff. For a description of threshing as carried out in ancient Oriental lands, see on Ruth 3:2; Matt. 3:12. Inasmuch as Inspiration has attached no particular significance to the "chaff" and the "wind" that blows it away (see on Matt. 13:3), it is best to consider them simply details added to complete the picture. For a description of the threshing floor as a common illustration, see on Ps. 1:4 (cf. Matt. 13:3; see Vol. III, p. 1111).

36. We will tell. The plural may indicate that Daniel classed his companions with himself. They had joined him in earnest prayer that the interpretation might be revealed, and Daniel may have wished to acknowledge their part in the matter (vs. 17, 18).

37. King of kings. This same title is found in the inscription of the Persian king Ariaramnes, a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar.

God of heaven hath given. In his inscriptions Nebuchadnezzar attributes his regal success to his god Marduk, but Daniel, in a kindly manner, corrects this mistaken idea. He affirms that it is the God of heaven who has bestowed such power upon him.

A kingdom. The territory that Nebuchadnezzar ruled had had a long and checkered history and had been under the varied leadership of different peoples and kingdoms. According to Genesis, the city of Babylon was part of the kingdom founded by Nimrod, the great-grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:8-10). A number of city-states existed in the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates at a very early period. Later, some states were grouped together into several Sumerian kingdoms. Following the first period of Sumer's domination came the kingdom of Akkad, with its great Semitic kings Sargon I and Naram-Sin. However, these Semites were again replaced by various nations, such as the Guti, Elamites, and Sumerians. They in turn had to give way to the Semites who founded the Old Babylonian Empire, which flourished in the time of the later patriarchs. This Amorite Empire, of which Hammurabi was the most important king, came to include all of Mesopotamia and expanded into Syria, like the Akkadian Empire of Sargon I. Later, Mesopotamia was taken over by Hurrians and Kassites, and Babylonia became less important than the powerful Hittite and Egyptian empires. Then in northern Mesopotamia arose another world power, the Assyrian Empire, which again united Mesopotamia and Western Asia to the Mediterranean. After a period of Assyrian domination Babylon became independent again under Chaldean rule, and took over once more the leadership of the world. Nabopolassar

(626-605 B.C.) was the founder of what is termed the Chaldean, or Neo-Babylonian, Empire, which had its golden age in the days of King Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), and lasted until Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 (see Vol. II, pp. 92-94; Vol. III, pp. 45-50).

38. Beasts of the field. See Jer. 27:6; 28:14; cf. Gen. 1:26. A fitting representation of Babylon's dominion in the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The manner in which ancient kings included the animal world in their sphere of domination is illustrated by a statement by Shalmaneser III: "Ninurta and Palil, who love my priesthood, have given me all the beasts of the field."

The following passage from the so-called East India House inscription is typical of archeological evidence which substantiates Daniel's description of Nebuchadnezzar's conquests:

"In his [Marduk's] exalted service I have traversed distant countries, remote mountains from the Upper Sea [Mediterranean] to the Lower Sea [Persian Gulf], steep paths, blockaded roads, where the step is impeded, [where] no foothold is possible, [also] uncharted routes, [and] desert paths. The disobedient I subjugated; I captured the enemies, established justice in the land; exalted the people; the bad and evil I removed far from the people."

Thou art this head. Nebuchadnezzar was the Neo-Babylonian Empire personified. The military conquests and the architectural splendor of Babylon were, in large measure, due to his prowess.

Gold. An abundance of gold was used in embellishing Babylon. Herodotus describes in lavish terms how gold sparkled in the sacred temples of the city. The image of the god, the throne on which he sat, and the table and the altar were made of gold (Herodotus i. 181, 183; iii. 1-7). The prophet Jeremiah compares Babylon to a golden cup (Jer. 51:7). Pliny describes the robes of priests as interlaced with gold.

Nebuchadnezzar was outstanding among the kings of antiquity. He left to his successors a great and prosperous kingdom, as may be gleaned from the following inscription:

"[From] the Upper Sea [to] the Lower Sea (one line destroyed) . . . which Marduk, my lord, has entrusted to me, I have made . . . the city of Babylon to the foremost among all the countries and every human habitation; its name I have [made, or elevated] to the [most worthy of] praise among the sacred cities. . . . The sanctuaries of my lords Nebo and Marduk (as a) wise (ruler) . . . always. . . .

"At that time, the Lebanon (*La-ab-na-a-nu*), the [Cedar] Mountain, the luxurious forest of Marduk, the smell of which is sweet, the hi[gh] cedars of which, [its] pro[duct], another god [*has not desired,* which] no other king has *fe[lled]* . . . my *nábû* Marduk [had desired] as a fitting adornment for the palace of the *ruler* of heaven and earth, (this Lebanon) over which a foreign enemy was ruling and robbing (it of) its riches—its people were scattered, had fled to a far (away region). (Trusting) in the power of my lords Nebo and Marduk, I organized [my army] for a[n expedition] to the Lebanon. I made that country happy by eradicating its enemy everywhere (lit.: below and above). All its scattered inhabitants I led back to their settlements (lit.: collected and reinstalled). What no former king had done (I achieved): I cut through steep mountains, I split rocks, opened passages and (thus) I constructed a straight road for the (transport of the) cedars. I made the Arahtu flo[at] (down) and carry to Marduk, my king, mighty cedars, high and strong, of precious beauty and of excellent dark quality, the abundant yield of the Lebanon, as (if they be) reed stalks (carried by) the river. Within Babylon [*I stored*] mulberry wood. I made the inhabitants of the Lebanon live in safety together and let nobody disturb them. In order that nobody might do any harm [to them] I ere[cted there] a stela (showing) me (as) everlasting king" (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* p. 307).

39. Another kingdom inferior. As silver is inferior to gold, the Medo-Persian Empire was inferior to the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Some commentators have explained the term "inferior" as meaning "lower down in the image," or "below." The expression correctly means "downward," "earthward," but in this verse Daniel is speaking, not

of the relative position of metals, but of nations. As we contrast the two kingdoms, we find that though the latter covered more territory, it certainly was inferior in luxury and magnificence. The Median and Persian conquerors adopted the culture of the complex Babylonian civilization, for their own was far less developed.

This second kingdom of Daniel's prophecy is sometimes called the Medo-Persian Empire, because it began as a combination of Media and Persia. It included the older Median Empire and the newer acquisitions of the Persian conqueror Cyrus. The second kingdom cannot be the Median Empire alone, as some contend, with Persia as the third. The Median Empire was contemporary with the Neo-Babylonian, not its successor. Media fell to Cyrus the Persian before Babylon did. The fact that after Belshazzar's death Darius the Mede "was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (ch. 9:1) does not mean that there was a separate Median Empire after the Babylonian and before the Persians took over (see Vol. III, pp. 48-56, 94-96). Darius the Mede ruled in Babylon by permission of the real conqueror, Cyrus (see Additional Note on Chapter 6), as Daniel obviously knew. The book of Daniel repeatedly refers to the nation that conquered Babylon, and that Darius represented, as that of "the Medes and Persians" (see on chs. 5:28; 6:8, 28), and it pictures that dual empire elsewhere as a single beast (see on ch. 8:3, 4).

The origin of the Medes and Persians is not clear, but it is believed that around 2000 B.C. a number of Aryan tribes, led by the Madai (Medes) began to migrate from what is now southern Russia into what later became northern Persia, where they first appear in history in the 9th century (see on Gen. 10:2; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51). Among these Aryans were also the Persians, who settled in the Zagros Mountains bordering on Elam late in the 9th century B.C. Probably by 675 their ruler established himself as king of the city of Anshan. There he and his descendants ruled in comparative obscurity. At the beginning of the 6th century they were vassals of the Median king, ruling a relatively insignificant border state in the large Median Empire, which stretched from eastern Asia Minor around the north and east of the Babylonian Empire (see map facing p. 417; see Vol. III, pp. 50, 51).

In 553 or 550 B.C. Cyrus, who had become king of Persia as a vassal of the Median Empire, defeated Astyages of Media. Thus the formerly subordinate Persians became the dominant power in what had been the Median Empire. Since the Persians were the ruling power from the time of Cyrus on, it is now generally referred to as the Persian Empire. But the older prestige of Media was reflected in the phrase "Medes and Persians" applied to the conquerors of Babylon in Daniel's day and even later (Esther 1:19; etc.). The honorary position of Darius the Mede after the conquest of Babylon demonstrates Cyrus' deference to the Medes even after he himself wielded the actual power (see Vol. III, pp. 51-53, 95, 96).

Years before, under prophetic guidance, the prophet Isaiah had described the work of Cyrus (Isa. 45:1). This conqueror of Media soon defeated the neighboring tribes and ruled from Ararat in the north to southeastern Babylonia and the Persian Gulf in the south. To round out his empire, he defeated the rich Croesus of Lydia in 547 B.C. and took Babylon by strategy in 539 B.C. (see Vol. III, pp. 51-55). Cyrus recognized that the Lord had given him all these kingdoms (2 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2). For parallel prophecies concerning this empire, see on chs. 7:5; 8:3-7; 11:2.

Third kingdom. The successor of the Medo-Persian Empire was the "Greek" (more properly Macedonian or Hellenistic) Empire of Alexander and his successors (see ch. 8:20, 21).

The Hebrew word for Greece is *Yawan* (Javan), which is the name of one of the sons of Japheth. Javan is mentioned in the genealogy immediately after Madai, the progenitor of the Medes (see on Gen. 10:2). About the time the Israelites were settling in Canaan, those Indo-European tribes later called Greeks were migrating in successive waves into the Aegean region (mainland Greece, the islands, and the western coasts of Asia Minor), conquering or driving out the earlier Mediterranean inhabitants. These displacements were

connected with the movement of the Peoples of the Sea (including the Philistines) into the eastern Mediterranean coastlands (see Vol. II, pp. 27, 33, 34). Ionian Greeks were found in Egypt in the time of Psamtik I (663-610 B.C.) and in Babylonia during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 B.C.), as attested by written records.

Greece was divided into small city-states with a common language but little concerted action. When we think of ancient Greece we think chiefly of the golden age of Greek civilization, under the leadership of Athens, in the 5th century B.C. This flowering of Greek culture followed the period of the greatest united effort of the divided city-states—the successful defense of Greece against Persia about the time of Queen Esther. On the Persian wars, see on ch. 11:2; see also Vol. III, pp. 59-62.

The "Grecia" of ch. 8:21 does not refer to the divided city-states of classical Greece, but rather to the later Macedonian kingdom that conquered Persia. The Macedonians, a kindred nation north of Greece proper, conquered the Greek cities and incorporated them for the first time into a strong, united state. Alexander the Great, inheriting his father's newly expanded Greco-Macedonian kingdom, set out to extend Macedonian dominion and Greek culture eastward, and conquered the Persian Empire. The prophecy represents the kingdom of Greece as following Persia, because Greece never became united into a kingdom until the formation of the Macedonian Empire, which replaced Persia as the leading world power of that time (for parallel prophecies see on chs. 7:6; 8:5-8, 21, 22; 11:2-4).

The last reigning king of the Persian Empire was Darius III (Codomannus), who was defeated by Alexander at the battles of Granicus (334 B.C.), Issus (333 B.C.), and Arbela, or Gaugamela (331 B.C.). For comments on the period of Alexander and the Hellenistic monarchies see on ch. 7:6; see also historical article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

Brass. That is, bronze (see on 2 Sam. 8:8). The Greek soldiers were noted for their brazen armor. Their helmets, shields, and battle-axes were made of brass. Herodotus tells us that Psamtik I of Egypt saw in invading Greek pirates the fulfillment of an oracle that foretold "men of bronze coming from the sea" (Herodotus i. 152, 154).

Rule over all the earth. History records that the rule of Alexander extended over Macedonia, Greece, and the Persian Empire, including Egypt and extending eastward to India. It was the most extensive empire of the ancient world up to that time. Its dominion was "over all the earth" in the sense that no power on earth was equal to it, not that it covered the whole world, or even the known world of that time. A "world power" may be defined as the one that stands above all the rest, invincible, not necessarily actually governing the whole known world. Superlative statements were commonly used by ancient rulers. Cyrus called himself "king of the world, . . . king of the four rims [quarters of the world]." Xerxes styled himself "the great king, the king of kings, . . . the king of this big and far [reaching] earth."

40. Fourth kingdom. This is not the later, divided stage of Alexander's empire, but the next empire, which conquered the Macedonian world. Daniel elsewhere represents the Hellenistic monarchies, the divisions of Alexander's empire, by the Grecian goat's four horns (ch. 8:22), not by a separate beast (compare the four heads of the leopard; see on ch. 7:6).

It is obvious that the kingdom that succeeded the divided remnants of the Macedonian Empire of Alexander was what Gibbon has aptly called the "iron monarchy" of Rome, though it was not a monarchy at the time it first became the leading world power. Early Rome was settled, long before the traditional date of 753 B.C., by Latin tribes who had come into Italy in successive waves about the time other related Indo-European tribes had settled in Greece. From about the 8th to the 5th century the Latin city-state was ruled by neighboring Etruscan kings. Roman civilization was strongly influenced by the Etruscans, who came to Italy in the 10th century, and especially by the Greeks, who arrived two centuries later.

About 500 B.C. the Roman state became a republic, and remained a republic for nearly 500 years. By 265 B.C. all Italy was under Roman control. By 200 B.C. Rome

had emerged victorious from the life-and-death struggle with her powerful North African rival Carthage (originally a Phoenician colony). Henceforth Rome was mistress of the western Mediterranean, and more powerful than any of the states in the east, although she had not yet come to grips with them. From then on Rome first dominated and then absorbed, in turn, the three surviving kingdoms of Alexander's successors (see on ch. 7:6), and thus became the next great world power after Alexander's. This fourth empire was the longest lived and most extensive of the four, stretching in the 2d Christian century from Britain to the Euphrates. For a parallel prophecy see on ch. 7:7.

Breaketh in pieces. All that we have been able to reconstruct of Roman history confirms this description. Rome won her territory by the force or the fear of her armed might. At first she intervened in international affairs in a struggle for her life against her rival, Carthage, and was drawn into war after war. Then, crushing one opponent after another, she finally became the aggressive, irresistible conqueror of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe. At the beginning of the Christian Era and a little later, the iron might of the Roman legions stood back of the Pax Romana—the Roman peace. Rome was the largest and strongest empire the world had hitherto known.

41. Toes. Though mentioning the toes, Daniel does not specifically call attention to their number. He does mention that the kingdom was to be divided (see 1T 361). Many commentators have held that the toes, of which there were presumably 10, correspond to the 10 horns of the fourth beast of ch. 7 (see on ch. 7:7).

Miry clay. See on v. 33. Rome had lost its iron tenacity and strength, and its successors were manifestly weak, like the admixture of clay with the iron.

42. Partly strong. These barbarian kingdoms differed greatly in military prowess, as Gibbon states when he refers to "the powerful monarchies of the Franks and the Visigoths, and the dependent kingdoms of the Sueves and Burgundians."

Broken. Literally, "fragile," "brittle."

43. With the seed of men. Many commentators refer this to royal intermarriages, though the intent of the statement may be wider. The word for man is *'enash,* "mankind." "Seed" means descendants. Hence there may also be a general indication of a shifting back and forth of populations, but with nationalism continuing strong. The original LXX version has several variations from the Masoretic text, vs. 42, 43 reading: "And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of earthenware, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and a certain part shall be broken. And as you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings among nations [or, among generations] of men, but they shall not agree [literally, "be like-minded"], nor be friendly with one another even as it is impossible to mix iron with clay." Theodotion's translation of Daniel, which practically displaced the original Greek translation, known as the LXX, is more like the Masoretic text, but even it shows variations: "And the toes of the feet a certain part of iron and a certain part of clay, a certain part of the kingdom shall be strong and from it [a part] shall be broken. Because you saw the iron mixed with earthenware, there shall be mixings in the seed of men and they shall not cleave this one with this one according as iron is not mixed with earthenware."

It is difficult to evaluate the authority of the LXX in any given statement; hence it is impossible for us to know to what extent the above readings may have preserved Daniel's original words. Interestingly, the recently discovered Chester Beatty Papyri, in the Daniel section dating from the beginning of the 3d century A.D., contain the original LXX version rather than the translation of Theodotion.

Shall not cleave. Daniel's prophecy has stood and will stand the test of time. Some world powers have been weak, others strong. Nationalism has continued strong. Attempts to unite into one great empire the various nations that grew out of the fourth empire have ended in failure. Temporarily certain sections have been united, but the union has not proved peaceful or permanent.

There have also been many political

alliances among the nations. Farseeing statesmen have tried in various ways to bring about a federation of nations that would operate successfully, but all such attempts have proved disappointing.

The prophecy does not specifically declare that there could not be a temporary union of various elements, through force of arms or political domination. It does declare, however, that the constituent nations, should such a union be attempted or effected, would not become organically fused, and that they would remain mutually suspicious and unfriendly. A federation created on such a foundation is doomed to crumble. The temporary success of some dictator or nation must, therefore, not be labeled a failure of Daniel's prophecy. In the end Satan will actually be able to achieve a temporary union of all nations (Rev. 17:12-18; cf. Rev. 16:14; GC 624), but the federation will be brief, and in a short time the elements composing this union will turn on one another (GC 656; EW 290).

44. Set up a kingdom. Many commentators have attempted to make this detail of the prophecy a prediction of the first advent of Christ and the subsequent conquest of the world by the gospel. But this "kingdom" was not to exist contemporaneously with any of those four kingdoms; it was to succeed the iron-and-clay phase, which had not yet come when Christ was here on earth. The kingdom of God was still future at the time, as He clearly stated to His disciples at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:29). It is to be set up when Christ comes at the last day to judge the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1; cf. Matt. 25:31-34).

45. Stone. Aramaic *'eben,* identical with the Heb. *'eben,* "a single stone," used of slabs, sling stones, hewn stones, stone vessels, precious stones. The word "rock," frequently used of God (Deut. 32:4, 18; 1 Sam. 2:2; etc.), is from the Heb. *ṣur* rather than *'eben.* It cannot be established that there is any necessary connection between Daniel's symbol for the kingdom of God and the figure of a rock or stone used elsewhere. The interpretation offered by Daniel is of itself sufficient to identify the symbol.

Without hands. This kingdom has a superhuman origin. It is to be founded, not by the ingenious hands of man, but by the mighty hand of God.

46. Fell upon his face. A mark of respect and reverence. Such expressions of respect are frequently noted in the OT (Gen. 17:3; 2 Sam. 9:6; 14:4).

Worshipped. Aramaic *segad,* a word that normally seems to imply actual worship. The king was already upon his face; so it may mean more than "bow down" (see Vol. II, facing p. 49, for an illustration of a suppliant prostrating himself before a king). *Segad* is used throughout ch. 3 to describe the worship of the golden image demanded by the king but refused by the Hebrews. The Hebrew words for "oblation" and "sweet odours," combined with the word for "offer," also strongly imply worship. Whether Daniel permitted these acts without remonstrance we are not told. The record says only that Nebuchadnezzar commanded that an oblation and sweet odors should be offered to Daniel, but does not say that the actions were carried out. Daniel may have tactfully called attention to what he had already positively affirmed, that the revelation came from the God of heaven and that he had not received it because of any superiority in wisdom (see on v. 30).

In the light of Peter's refusal of the worship of Cornelius (Acts 10:25, 26), of Paul and Barnabas' rejection of the adoration of the men of Lystra (Acts 14:11-18), and of the angel's reproof of John when he fell at his feet to worship him (Rev. 19:10), many think it unlikely that Daniel would have permitted the king to worship him. Others reason that, inasmuch as God accepts sincerity of motive when men follow the best light they have, Daniel may have been directed not to interfere in the matter at this time. Many commentators follow the suggestion of Jerome that Nebuchadnezzar was not worshiping Daniel, but through Daniel was adoring Daniel's God. They also call attention to Josephus' record of how Alexander the Great bowed before the Jewish high priest, and when Parmenio, the king's general, inquired concerning the meaning of this act, Alexander replied, "I did not

adore him but that God who hath honored him with his high priesthood" (*Antiquities* xi. 8. 5). However, a strict reading of the second commandment of the Decalogue brings all such acts under most serious question.

As yet Nebuchadnezzar knew but little of the true God, and even less of how to worship Him. Thus far his acquaintance with God was limited to what he had seen of the divine character reflected in the life of Daniel and to what Daniel had told him of God. It is entirely possible that Nebuchadnezzar, seeing in Daniel the living representative of "the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh" (v. 11), intended the acts of worship he accorded Daniel to be in honor of Daniel's God. With his limited knowledge of the true God, Nebuchadnezzar was doubtless doing the best he knew at the time to express his thankfulness and to honor the One whose wisdom and power had been so impressively demonstrated.

An oblation. The Hebrew word corresponding to the Aramaic word here used generally denotes a bloodless offering (see on ch. 9:21).

Sweet odours. That is, incense.

47. Your God is a God of gods. Better, "your God is God of gods." The expression is in the superlative degree. Nebuchadnezzar, who called his patron god Marduk "lord of gods," here acknowledges that Daniel's God is infinitely superior to any of the so-called gods of the Babylonians.

Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar evidently knew that this was a title applied to Marduk in the Babylonian creation story; he himself annually received his kingship anew from Marduk in the New Year festival. Further, he was named for Nabu, the son of Marduk, the scribe who wrote the Tablets of Fate.

Nebuchadnezzar was himself a man of superior intelligence and wisdom, as his provision for the professional training of court officials (ch. 1:3, 4) and his ability to evaluate their "wisdom and understanding" (vs. 18-20) make clear. Imperfect as was Nebuchadnezzar's concept of the true God, he now had irrefutable proof that Daniel's God was infinitely wiser than either the wise men or the gods of Babylon. Later experiences were to convince King Nebuchadnezzar with respect to additional attributes of the God of heaven (see on chs. 3:28, 29; 4:34, 37; see also p. 751).

48. Chief of the governors. Better, "chief prefect." Daniel did not interpret the dream with a view to obtaining any reward from the king. His one aim was to exalt God before the king and all the people of Babylon.

49. Daniel requested. Daniel did not become intoxicated by the great honors that had been conferred upon him. He remembered his comrades. They had shared in the prayer (v. 18); they shared also in the reward.

Gate. The place where Oriental kings sat as judges and where chief councils convened (see on Gen. 19:1).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-49 FE 410-413; PK 491-502; 7T 151
1, 2 FE 410
1-4 PK 491
1-5 SL 34
4-12 FE 410
5-11 PK 492
12 SL 34
12-18 PK 493
13-19 FE 374
16-18 FE 411
16-19 SL 35
19-26 PK 494
20-22 FE 411
20-28 FE 374
21 Ed 175
22 MH 433; 8T 282
24-30 AA 13; 6T 227
27, 28 SL 36
27-36 PK 497
28 FE 411
37 PK 514
31-49 7T 161
37-43 PK 498, 548
38 Ed 175; PK 504
42, 43 1T 361
44 DA 34; 1T 360
44, 45 PK 503
44-49 PK 499
46-49 FE 412
47 Ed 56; PK 503, 513; SL 36; 6T 220

CHAPTER 3

1 *Nebuchadnezzar dedicateth a golden image in Dura.* 8 *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are accused for not worshipping the image.* 13 *They, being threatened, make a good confession.* 19 *God delivereth them out of the furnace.* 26 *Nebuchadnezzar seeing the miracle blesseth God.*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon.

2 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages,

5 *That* at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up:

6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

7 Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down *and* worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

8 ¶ Wherefore at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews.

9 They spake and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever.

10 Thou, O king, hast made a decree, that every man that shall hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, shall fall down and worship the golden image:

11 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, *that* he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

12 There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

13 ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar in *his* rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the king.

14 Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, *Is it* true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?

15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; *well:* but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who *is* that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter.

17 If it be *so,* our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king.

18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.

19 ¶ Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated.

20 And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace.

21 Then these men were bound in

their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonied, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.

25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26 ¶ Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28 *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.

30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

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1. Nebuchadnezzar. No date is given for the events of this chapter. The name of the king is the only indication as to when these events occurred. The LXX and Theodotion's Greek translation date the events in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year. Some scholars regard this as an interpolation. They reason that the translators believed that the colossal statue was erected to mark the final capture of Jerusalem. However, that city was not destroyed in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year, but rather in his 19th (2 Kings 25:8-10). The date 580 B.C., long given in the margin of the KJV, is derived from Ussher's chronology (see Vol. I, pp. 179, 195) and has no adequate historical basis. Some commentators have even placed the narrative in the period following Nebuchadnezzar's madness described in ch. 4, but this position is untenable, as will be shown.

This much is certain, the events narrated in this chapter occurred later than those of the 2d chapter, because ch. 3:12, 30 refers to ch. 2:49. Further, a comparison of Nebuchadnezzar's addresses of praise in ch. 3:28, 29 and ch. 4:34-37 indicates that the king's madness was a later event. Secular history is of no help in dating this event, since extra-Biblical records of that time nowhere mention the incident. However, a court almanac written in the year 570/569 B.C. excludes that year from consideration as a possible date and makes it highly improbable that the event had taken place recently. This almanac gives a list of all the highest state officials in office during that year. Neither Daniel nor his three friends are mentioned. Since the event described in Dan. 3 resulted in a promotion of the three Hebrews, and since it is unlikely that they were removed from office soon after their promotion—at least all three of them—a considerable time may have elapsed between the experience narrated in ch. 3 and the date of the court almanac.

The influence of the dream of ch. 2 on the events of ch. 3 (see PK 504, 505) strongly suggests that the events of ch. 3 cannot be dated in the latter part of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Some have suggested the date 594/593, for the following reasons: This date coincides with the 4th year of Zedekiah, who in that year made a journey to Babylon (Jer. 51:59). It is possible that the journey was undertaken in

reply to the summons of Nebuchadnezzar that all his governors and vassal "rulers of the provinces" (Dan. 3:2) appear in Babylon to give homage to the image the king had erected. Zedekiah, a weak and vacillating character, would hardly be expected to have religious scruples such as made it impossible for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the king's command. However, the dating of this event in the time of Zedekiah is no more than a possibility. See further SL 27.

Why Daniel is not mentioned in the narrative is a question that cannot be answered. Whether he was ill or absent on an important mission cannot be known. Some have conjectured that because of embarrassment at having rejected the message of the dream, the king arranged to have Daniel away on important business for the crown. However, of one thing we may be certain: had the test come to him, Daniel would have stood as loyal as his three companions.

Image of gold. The image of ch. 2 represented Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom by a golden head (v. 38). Not satisfied with this symbol, the king devised an image made of gold from the head to the feet, by which he desired to symbolize the perpetual and universal glory of his empire, and a kingdom that would not be followed by one of inferior quality.

Threescore cubits. The figures giving the measurements of the image witness to the use of the sexagesimal system (a system founded on the number 60) in Babylonia, a use attested also by cuneiform sources. The sexagesimal system of reckoning was an invention of the Babylonians. The system has certain advantages over the decimal system. For example, 60 is divisible evenly by 12 factors, whereas 100 is divisible evenly by only 9 factors. The system is still in use for certain measurements, such as of seconds, minutes, hours. It was therefore natural for the Babylonians to construct this image according to measurements of the sexagesimal system. The mentioning of this detail gives a true Babylonian color to the narrative.

Critics have pointed to the proportions of the image, 60 x 6 cu., about 87½ by 8¾ ft. (26.7 by 2.7 m.), as evidence of the legendary character of the story, because the proportions of the human figure are less than 5 to 1. However, we do not know the appearance of the image. It is quite possible that the human portion itself was less than half of the total height and stood on a pedestal 30 or more cu. high, so that the whole structure, pedestal and image, was 60 cu. high. The modern Statue of Liberty has a total height of 305 ft., but more than half of this is the pedestal; the human figure is only 111 ft. from heel to top of head. J. A. Montgomery observes that the Aramaic word *ṣelem,* here translated "image," is used in a 7th century B.C. Aramaic inscription from Nerab, near Aleppo, to describe a stele that is but partly sculptured. Only the top is decorated with the relief of the bust of a human body. Hence *ṣelem,* "image," is not limited to a description of a human figure or other likeness but may include a pedestal as well.

Parallels to this enormous image are easily found in history. Pausanias describes the Amyclaean Apollo, a slender column provided with head, arms, and feet, in the human form. The so-called Colossi of Memnon at ancient Thebes in Upper Egypt, in reality representations of King Amenhotep III, were built of stone. The ruins still stand, one being 65 ft. (19.8 m.) high. The best ancient parallel is perhaps the Colossus at Rhodes representing the god Helios. It was built from the war material left behind when Demetrius Poliorcetes raised his unsuccessful siege of the island in 305-04 B.C. The Colossus was 12 years in building. It was built of metal sheets covering a supporting framework, and reached a height of 70 cu., 10 cu. higher than Nebuchadnezzar's image. About 225 B.C. an earthquake demolished the Colossus. It then lay in ruins for nearly 900 years, until the Saracens sold it for scrap metal. The Jew who purchased it broke it up and probably turned the metal back into war weapons.

Plain of Dura. The name of this plain survives in the name of a tributary of the Euphrates called *Nahr Dūra,* which enters the Euphrates 5 mi. (8 km.) below Hilla. Some neighboring hills also bear the name Dura. According to a tradition

current among the inhabitants of Iraq today, the events described in ch. 3 took place at Kirkuk, which is now the center of the Iraqian oil fields. The tradition may have originated because burning gases formerly escaped from fissures in the ground at several places in the area, also because great amounts of combustible material like oil and asphalt were found there. The tradition, of course, must be rejected. The incident occurred near Babylon. Dura lay "in the province of Babylon."

2. Princes. The Aramaic *'achashdarpan,* "prince," or "satrap," was formerly considered as being of Persian origin. This view has now been abandoned, for cuneiform sources show that under the form *satarpanu* the word was used as early as the time of Sargon II (722-705 B.C.). A Hurrian origin has now been suggested. The Persians evidently took over this official title from the west. Hence the use of this title in the time of Nebuchadnezzar is by no means out of place. See further on Esther 3:12.

In Persian times this title designated officials at the head of satrapies, the largest divisions of the empire.

Governors. The Aramaic word *segan* is correctly translated "governors," but also means "prefects." It comes from the Akkadian *shaknu,* which has the same meaning. These officials administered provinces, the sections into which the satrapies were divided.

Captains. Aramaic *pechah,* a synonym of *signin* (see the preceding comment under "governors").

Judges. The Aramaic word *'adargazar,* "judge," has so far been found only in the middle-Persian form *andarzaghar,* meaning "counselor." That it has not been attested in earlier texts does not prove that it was not in existence before the Persian period, because practically every discovery of a new inscription reveals words previously not known to have existed so early.

Treasurers. The origin of the Aramaic word *gedabar* has not as yet been determined.

Counsellors. The Aramaic *dethabar* literally means "lawbearer," hence, "judge." The word is found in cuneiform sources in the cognate form *databari.*

Sheriffs. Aramaic *tiphtay,* "sheriff," or "police officer." The word is found in the same form and with the same meaning in Aramaic papyri from Elephantine (on these papyri see Vol. III, pp. 79-83).

Rulers. The Aramaic *shilṭon,* "ruler," from which the title sultan is derived. The term designates all the lower officials of any importance.

3. Then the princes. The repetition of all the titles, so characteristic of Semitic rhetoric, like the subsequent fourfold listing of the orchestral instruments (vs. 5, 7, 10, 15), is not found in the original LXX translation, possibly because such repetitions were objectionable to the classical taste. However, the later Greek translation of Theodotion preserves the repetition.

4. Herald. Aramaic *karoz,* generally considered to be of Greek origin (cf. the Gr. *kerux*). Years ago critics offered this as one of the proofs for the late origin of the book of Daniel. H. H. Schaeder, however, has shown that the word is of Iranian origin (*Iranische Beiträge* I [Halle, 1930], p. 56).

5. Cornet. For a general discussion of Hebrew musical instruments see Vol. III, pp. 29-42. Here, however, a Babylonian orchestra is described, in which several instruments vary from those in use among the ancient Hebrews.

Flute. Aramaic *mashroqi,* which designates the flute or pipe, as does the same word in Syriac and Mandaean.

Harp. Aramaic *qithros,* "harp." *Qithros* is generally considered to have come from the Greek *kitharis,* or *kithara,* "zither." Thus far there is no known evidence from the inscriptions for an Akkadian or Iranian derivation. However, it would not be strange to find certain Greek loan words in a book written in Babylonia. We know from cuneiform texts of Nebuchadnezzar's time that Ionians and Lydians were among the many foreigners employed on royal building projects. These carpenters and artisans may have introduced into Babylonia certain musical instruments formerly unknown there. It would be only natural that, with their acceptance by the Babylonians, the Greek

names for these instruments would be taken over. In this way the existence of Greek names for certain musical instruments can easily be explained.

Sackbut. A mistransliteration of the Aramaic *sabbeka'* (in vs. 7, 10, 15 *śabbeka'*), probably through a similarity of sounds. The English word denotes an early form of slide trombone. The *sabbeka'* was a triangular instrument with four strings and a bright tone. Although the name appears in Greek as *sambukē* and in Latin as *sambuca,* it is not of Western origin, as Lidzbarski has shown. The Greeks and Romans took over the name, along with the musical instruments, from the Phoenicians, a fact also attested by Strabo, who says (*Geography* x. 3. 17) that the word is of "barbarian" origin.

Psaltery. Aramaic *pesanterin,* which the LXX renders *psalterion.* The English "psaltery" is derived from the Greek through the Latin. The *psalterion* was a stringed instrument of triangular shape, with the sounding board above the strings.

Dulcimer. Aramaic *sumponeyah.* The word appears in Greek (*sumphonia*) as a musical term and as the name of a musical instrument, a bagpipe. The first reference to this instrument in literature outside of Daniel is found in Polybius (xxvi. 10; xxxi. 4), who describes the *sumphonia* as an instrument playing a role in anecdotes connected with King Antiochus IV. However, the instrument is depicted on a Hittite relief of Eyuk, a town about 20 mi. north of Boghazköy in central Anatolia, as early as the middle of the second millennium B.C. The relief seems to indicate that, as in later times, the bagpipe was made of the skin of a dog.

Worship the golden image. So far the narrative has said nothing concerning the fact that worship of the image would be demanded. The invitation sent to all leading officials in Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom to gather in the plain of Dura, as far as the record goes, spoke only of the dedication of the image (v. 2), although people accustomed to the idolatrous practices of the time may have had no doubt as to the reason for the erection of the image. The payment of homage to the image would give proof of subjection to the power of the king, but at the same time show a recognition that the gods of Babylonia—the gods of the empire—were supreme over all local gods.

6. Whoso falleth not down. The king and his counselors, apparently expecting instances of refusal, threatened with the most cruel punishment any who refused to obey the command. Exclusive of the Jews, whose religious convictions prohibited their bowing down before any image (Ex. 20:5), ancient peoples did not object to worshiping idols. Hence the refusal to bow down before Nebuchadnezzar's image would be regarded as proof of hostility toward Nebuchadnezzar and his government. Whether the king had anticipated the difficult position into which he forced his loyal Jewish servants, we do not know. It may be that he sent Daniel on a journey, to spare him the embarrassment (see on v. 1). From his contacts with Daniel the king must have known that a faithful Jew would refuse to worship the image, and that such a refusal could not be interpreted as a sign of disloyalty.

Fiery furnace. Although there are not many ancient examples of this kind of death penalty on record, a few are attested. One comes from the 2d millennium B.C., in which servants are threatened with this punishment. It is noteworthy that the same word that Daniel used for furnace (*'attun*) is also found in the Babylonian cuneiform text (*utûnum*). The second example comes from Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law Nergal-sharusur. In one of his royal inscriptions he claims to have "burned to death adversaries and disobedient ones." Compare Jer. 29:22.

The fiery furnace was probably a brick-kiln. Since all buildings were constructed of bricks, many of them of burned bricks, kilns were numerous in the vicinity of ancient Babylon. Excavations show that ancient brickkilns were similar to modern ones, which are found in that area in great numbers. These kilns are ordinarily cone-shaped structures built of bricks. The unbaked bricks to be fired line the inner walls. An opening on one side of the wall permits fuel to be thrown into the inte-

rior. Fuel consists of a mixture of crude oil and chaff. A tremendous heat is thus produced, and through the opening the observer can see the fired bricks heated to a white glow.

8. Certain Chaldeans. Obviously members of the caste of magician-scientists and astrologer-astronomers, rather than members of the Chaldean nation as contrasted with citizens of the Jewish nation (see on ch. 1:4). Racial and nationalistic antagonisms were not involved so much as professional envy and jealousy. The accusers were members of the same caste to which the three loyal Jews belonged.

Accused. Aramaic *'akalu qarṣehon,* a colorful expression, prosaically rendered by the English "accused." A literal translation would be "they ate the pieces of," or "they gnawed at," hence, figuratively, "they calumniated," "they slandered," or "they accused." The Aramaic expression, with a similar meaning, is found also in Akkadian, Ugaritic, and other Semitic languages.

9. O king, live for ever. See on ch. 2:4.

12. Thou hast set. A clear reference to the promotion recorded at the close of the preceding chapter (ch. 2:49). The mention of the exalted official rank of these Jews was designed to emphasize the dangerous feature connected with the disobedience of such men, also to direct attention to the seriousness of their ingratitude toward their royal benefactor. On the other hand, the fact that the Chaldeans gave prominence to the official position to which these Jews had been raised by the king suggests that their denunciation arose from jealousy. Their words also contained hidden insinuations against the king, and virtually blamed him for a lack of political foresight by appointing to high administrative offices foreign prisoners of war from whom naturally no loyalty toward the Babylonian king and his gods could be expected. This, they implied, the king should have foreseen.

14. Do not ye serve? Nebuchadnezzar's opening question was based on the first part of the accusation of the Chaldeans. It must have been generally known that these Jewish officials did not worship the Babylonian idols. But because the king himself had recognized the God they served as "a God of gods, and a Lord of kings" (ch. 2:47), there had previously been no valid reason to accuse these men of subversive acts. Now, however, a direct command had been neglected, even despised, and the bold refusal to comply with the royal order to worship the image was probably interpreted as though the king's tolerance toward these deviators was leading to defiance and rebellion. This would account for Nebuchadnezzar's rage and fury.

15. Who is that God? This need not be considered direct blasphemy against the God of the Jews. Nevertheless it was a challenge addressed to Jehovah in a presumptuous spirit and with a haughty sense of superior power. Some have compared these words with those spoken by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, "Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee" (Isa. 37:10). But Nebuchadnezzar's case was somewhat different. Sennacherib elevated his gods above Jehovah, the God of the Jews, but Nebuchadnezzar declared only that deliverance out of the fiery furnace was a work that no god could accomplish. In this acknowledgment he did no more than indirectly liken the God of the Jews to his own gods, with whose impotence in such matters he was sufficiently acquainted.

16. Careful. From the Aramaic *chashach,* "to be in need of." The response of the defendants may be translated, "We have no need to answer you in this matter" (RSV). Some have interpreted this reply as highly arrogant, and have pointed to martyrs reacting similarly toward their persecutors. Yet J. A. Montgomery has shown that the term "to answer" is to be interpreted in a legal sense. Analogies from cognate and other languages show that the sense is to "make defense," or "apology." Since the defendants did not deny the truth of the indictment, they saw no need to make a defense. Their case rested in the hands of their God (see v. 17), and they made their answer in complete submission to His will, whatever might be the outcome of their trial. That they were not sure of coming through this experience alive can be seen from their further statement (v. 18). Had they been sure of deliver-

ance, their reply could be interpreted as revealing spiritual arrogance. As the case stood, their attitude showed their firm conviction that their course of action was the only feasible one, which needed no defense, or even further explanation.

17. If it be so. The introductory particle translated "if" has been the subject of much debate among commentators. Both ancient and modern versions reflect some uncertainty as to its correct meaning. Two interpretations predominate: (1) that of the KJV, RV, ASV, RSV, and others, which reflect the meaning, "If it be so, our God . . . is able to deliver us, . . . but if not," etc.; and (2) that of modern commentators who interpret the passage, "If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the fiery burning furnace and from thy hand, O king, he will save (us); but if not," etc. The latter translation is inconsistent with the faith of the three Jewish defendants elsewhere revealed. The first translation seems the more fair reflection of the firm faith of these worthies in God's omnipotence and unsearchable wisdom. God could save them if it was best for them and for the glory of His name and cause. The "if" should not be taken as an indication of doubt in God's power to save, but as an indication of uncertainty as to whether it was God's will to save.

The LXX has no introductory particle "if" and has the whole statement (vs. 16-18) a positive declaration: "O king, we have no need to answer thee concerning this command. For God in the heavens is our one Lord, whom we fear, and who is able to deliver us out of the furnace of fire; and out of your hands, O king, he will deliver us; and then it shall be manifest to thee that we will serve neither thy idol, nor worship thy golden image." However, scholars generally prefer the Masoretic reading (see on v. 16).

19. One seven times more. Aramaic *chadshib'ah,* literally meaning, "one seven," with the meaning "seven times," is a rather strange construction, but the same form is used also in an Aramaic letter of the 5th century B.C., from Elephantine. Some grammarians have thought that it is an abbreviation of a usual Aramaic idiom, while others, like Montgomery, think that "it may come from reminiscence of recitation of multiplication tables." The increased heat in the furnace was probably produced by an extraordinary supply of chaff and crude oil. The oil would be obtained from the many open oil wells of Mesopotamia, which, from ancient times, have lavishly furnished this product, and with which modern brickkilns in the area are fired (see on v. 6). The purpose of this extraordinary command was probably not to increase the punishment. An increase of heat in the furnace would not have increased the torture of the victims. The king intended to forestall any possible intervention (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse).

20. The most mighty men. Better, "some strong men," or "certain mighty men" (RSV). The choice of military men of outstanding strength was probably to forestall the possibility of intervention on the part of the gods.

21. Coats. The Aramaic words describing the "coats" and the "hosen" (Old English for "trousers") are not yet fully understood. Lexicographers agree that the renderings offered in the KJV are approximately correct.

Hats. Aramaic *karbelah,* a word of Akkadian origin, as shown by the cuneiform texts, where it appears as *karballatu,* "cap." In the Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription of Darius I the term designates the helmet, but in late Babylonian texts it stands for "hats." The mention of the separate articles of clothing, consisting of easily inflammable material, was doubtless with reference to the miracle that followed (see v. 27).

23. Burning fiery furnace. Following v. 23, manuscripts of the oldest translations of Daniel, the LXX and Theodotion, contain a long Apocryphal addition of 68 verses, called "The Song of the Three Holy Children." The song consists of three parts: (1) Prayer of Azarias (Abednego), composed of both confession and supplication (vs. 24-45); (2) a prose interlude, describing the heating of the fire and the descent of the angel of the Lord to cool the flames (vs. 46-50); (3) the benediction of the three (vs. 51-91). Although

recognized by Jerome as spurious, this Apocryphal addition found its way into Roman Catholic Bibles as canonical. Scholars debate whether the song is of Christian or Jewish origin. A number of them believe the work was produced approximately 100 B.C. See p. 744.

24. Rose up in haste. The king had evidently gone to the place of execution, undoubtedly to make sure that his command would be properly carried out. He was probably seated so that he could observe the victims as they were thrown into the fire.

25. Like the Son of God. Commentators have variously interpreted the exclamation of the astonished Nebuchadnezzar concerning the fourth individual in the fiery furnace. Jewish scholars have always identified him simply as an angel. This view is reflected in the LXX, which translates the phrase "like an angel of God." Early Christian interpreters (Hippolytus, Chrysostom, and others), on the other hand, saw in this fourth personage the second person of the Godhead. The rendering of the KJV reflects this interpretation. The majority of conservative Christians hold to this view, although modern critical commentators have now generally discarded it, as is seen by the translations of the RV, ASV, RSV, and other modern versions, "like a son of the gods."

The problem is one of Aramaic grammar and interpretation. The Aramaic *'elahin,* "gods," is the plural of *'elah,* "god." In some cases where *'elahin* is used, reference is made to pagan gods (chs. 2:11, 47; 5:4, 23). However, there are two passages besides the one under discussion where *'elahin* can be interpreted to refer to the true God of Daniel (ch. 5:11, 14; see RSV footnote). Hence the translation "God" for *'elahin* is justifiable if it can be established that Nebuchadnezzar was employing the term as a proper name. Grammatically, both translations, "like the son of God," and, "like a son of the gods," are correct.

The context reveals that Nebuchadnezzar acknowleged the superiority of the most high God of Israel (see chs. 3:26, 28, 29; 4:2). In these statements the king was not referring to gods in general but to *the* God in particular. For this reason conservative interpreters prefer the translation of the KJV and can linguistically defend their preference (see PK 509; *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 170-173).

26. Most high God. Nebuchadnezzar's acknowledgment that the God of the three Hebrews was the "most high God" does not necessarily imply that the king had abandoned his polytheistic concepts. To him the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was not the only true God, but simply the most high God, the chief of all gods, in the same way as the Greeks called their Zeus *ho hupsistos theos,* "the highest god." The term is also attested in this sense in Phoenicia, and later in the inscriptions of Palmyra.

27. The princes. Concerning the officials mentioned here see on v. 2.

Coats. See on v. 21.

28. Blessed be the God. The miraculous deliverance of the three men made a deep impression on the king and altered his earlier and erroneous opinion (v. 15) about the God of the Hebrews. Nebuchadnezzar now spoke in praise of the might of this God, announcing publicly that this God had saved His worshipers, and decreeing that anyone who dishonored this God would be punished by death (v. 29). His acknowledgment revealed progression in his concept of God (see ch. 2:47; p. 751).

29. I make a decree. In this unusual way many peoples who would otherwise never have heard of the God of the Hebrews would be introduced to Him. Nevertheless, Nebuchadnezzar exceeded his rights when he sought by force to compel men to honor the God of the Hebrews (PK 511).

Cut in pieces. On the penalties here threatened see on ch. 2:5.

30. Promoted. The verb form thus translated means primarily "to cause to prosper," and in a wider sense "to promote." How this promotion was effected is not stated. The three worthies may have received money, or more influence and power in the administration of the province, or more elevated titles. By faithfulness in the face of death the three Hebrew worthies had demonstrated qualities of character that made it evident that they could be trusted with even greater responsibilities than they had previously borne.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-30 PK 503-513
1 PK 505
1-6 SL 36
4, 5 PK 506
4-7 ML 68
7 PK 506
9, 12-15 PK 507
12-18 SL 37
16-18 5T 43
16-20 LS 329
16-22 PK 508
17-22 ML 68
23 Ed 254; 5T 453
24, 25 ML 256; SL 38; 3T 47; 4T 212
24-26 PK 509
25 ML 68, 317
25-27 AA 570; LS 330
26-29 SL 39
27-29 PK 510; 5T 453

CHAPTER 4

1 *Nebuchadnezzar confesseth God's kingdom,* 4 *maketh relation of his dreams, which the magicians could not interpret.* 8 *Daniel heareth the dream.* 19 *He interpreteth it.* 28 *The story of the event.*

NEBUCHADNEZZAR the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

2 I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me.

3 How great *are* his signs! and how mighty *are* his wonders! his kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion *is* from generation to generation.

4 ¶ I Nebuchadnezzar was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace:

5 I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me.

6 Therefore made I a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that they might make known unto me the interpretation of the dream.

7 Then came in the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers: and I told the dream before them; but they did not make known unto me the interpretation thereof.

8 ¶ But at the last Daniel came in before me, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods: and before him I told the dream, *saying,*

9 O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof.

10 Thus *were* the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof *was* great.

11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth:

12 The leaves thereof *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.

13 I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven;

14 He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches:

15 Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts in the grass of the earth:

16 Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.

17 This matter *is* by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

18 This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known unto

me the interpretation: but thou *art* able; for the spirit of the holy gods *is* in thee.

19 ¶ Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonied for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee. Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

20 The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;

21 Whose leaves *were* fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it *was* meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:

22 It *is* thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.

23 And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and *let* his portion *be* with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him;

24 This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

26 And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.

27 Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.

28 ¶ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar.

29 At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.

30 The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?

31 While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.

32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*.

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.

37 Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

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1. Unto all people. The narrative of events in ch. 4 is recorded in the form of a royal proclamation. Because they cannot find parallels to such publicly an-

nounced conversions, modern scholars declare such an edict historically absurd. But arguments from silence are never conclusive. On the other hand, royal conversion to a new religion or god is attested elsewhere. For example, King Amenhotep IV of Egypt forsook the polytheistic religion of his ancestors and of the nation and made strong efforts to introduce a new monotheistic religion into the realm. He built a new capital, changed his own name, closed the old temples, denounced the old gods, erected new temples to his god, and did everything in his power to promote the new religion.

Furthermore, little is known of Nebuchadnezzar's history from sources outside of the Bible. Hence it is impossible to verify all the events of the king's reign from contemporary source material. In fact, there are no contemporary non-Biblical sources for Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem, or even for his long campaign against Tyre, though the historicity of these events is not disputed. It is therefore not strange to find no reference in Babylonian records to the king's mental illness. Such records naturally omit items dealing with the misfortunes of a national hero. The change in this chapter from the first to the third person and back again to the first person (see vs. 2-27; cf. vs. 28-33; 34-37) has been explained by assuming either that Daniel wrote the edict upon the king's command or that as Nebuchadnezzar's chief counselor Daniel added certain portions to the edict written by the king himself. The edict reflected the king's feelings when his full mental powers had been restored. "The once proud monarch had become a humble child of God" (PK 521; cf. EGW, Supplementary Material, on Dan. 4:37).

Peace be multiplied. The introduction to the proclamation contains an expression of good wishes. The edicts later promulgated by Persian kings were similar in form (see Ezra 4:17; 7:12). A typical formula in the Aramaic Elephantine letters of the 5th century B.C. is "The health of —— may the God of Heaven seek."

3. His kingdom. The doxology of the second part of v. 3 occurs again with variations in v. 34; cf. ch. 7:14, 18.

4. At rest. This phrase indicates that the king was now in undisturbed possession of his kingdom. Therefore the events of this chapter belong to the last half of his reign of 42 years. The king was "flourishing" in his palace in Babylon (see the Additional Note at the end of this chapter), and like the foolish rich man in the parable, whose fields had produced abundantly (Luke 12:16-21), forgot his responsibility to the One to whom he owed his greatness.

5. Afraid. The abrupt manner in which the event is here introduced aptly illustrates the unexpected suddenness of the occurrence itself (see ch. 2:1).

6. Decree. Compare the phraseology in ch. 3:29. As in the case of the dream of ch. 2, the wise men were summoned. In this instance, however, the king had not forgotten the contents of the dream. The demand of the king for an interpretation of it was therefore vastly different from that described in ch. 2:5.

7. Magicians. Of the four groups of wise men listed in this verse, two, the magicians and the astrologers, were introduced in ch. 1:20 (see comments there), the third class, the Chaldeans, in ch. 2:2 (see on ch. 1:4), and the fourth class, the soothsayers, in ch. 2:27 (see comments there).

Did not make known. Some have suggested that because these wise men of Babylon were experts in the interpretation of dreams and signs of a supernatural character, they possibly offered some kind of interpretation. In fact the dream was so explicit the king himself sensed that it contained some evil message for him (see PK 516). It was this that alarmed him. However, ancient courtiers customarily flattered their sovereigns and avoided directly telling them anything disagreeable. Hence, even if they understood parts of the dream and had some inkling as to its import, they would not have found the courage to voice their conclusions. If they did offer some sort of explanation, it proved wholly unsatisfactory to the king. They certainly could not give an accurate and detailed interpretation as Daniel later did (see PK 517, 518). Instead of "they did not make known" the RSV reads, "they could not make known." Some re-

gard the KJV as the better rendering. Nevertheless it is true that "none of the wise men could interpret" the dream (PK 516).

8. Belteshazzar. The narrative introduces Daniel, first by his Jewish name, by which he was known to his countrymen, then by his Babylonian name, given to him in honor of Nebuchadnezzar's chief god (see on ch. 1:7).

Why Daniel had been kept in the background so long, although he was considered "master of the magicians" (v. 9), is not explained. Some have suggested that Nebuchadnezzar aimed first to find out what the Chaldeans in general had to say about this extremely disconcerting dream, before hearing the full truth, which he suspected was unfavorable (compare the case of King Ahab, 1 Kings 22:8). Only after the other wise men of the caste of occult scientists proved unable to satisfy the king did he call for the man who had, on a previous occasion, demonstrated his superior skill and wisdom with respect to the interpretation of dreams (ch. 2; cf. ch. 1:17, 20).

Of the holy gods. Or, "of the holy God" (see RSV margin). The Aramaic for "gods" is *'elahin,* a term used frequently of false gods (see Jer. 10:11; Dan. 2:11, 47; 3:12; 5:4), but which may apply also to the true God (see on Dan. 3:25; cf. Dan. 5:11, 14). The expression reveals what it was that had inspired the king with confidence in Daniel's superior power and understanding. It also reveals that Nebuchadnezzar possessed a conception of the nature of that Deity to whom Daniel owed such power and wisdom. Daniel and his companions had borne witness without hesitation concerning the God they worshiped. The expression, repeated in vs. 9 and 18 of Dan. 4, shows clearly that Nebuchadnezzar had by no means forgotten what he had learned on a previous occasion respecting the eminent prophetic gift of this Jew, and of his intercourse with the only true God.

Instead of "in whom is the spirit of the holy gods," the Theodotion version reads, "who has in him the holy spirit of God." The original LXX version entirely omits vs. 5b to 10b.

9. Master of the magicians. This term used by the king is probably synonymous with that used in ch. 2:48, "chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon." The word "master" in ch. 4:9 and "chief" in ch. 2:48 are translations of the same Aramaic word, *rab.*

Tell me the visions. The king seems to demand that Daniel tell the dream as well as its interpretation, at the same time proceeding at once to narrate the dream (v. 10). The LXX does not have this verse in the extant MSS. It has the narrative of vs. 1-9 in a greatly abbreviated form. Theodotion's Greek version reads, "Listen to the vision of the dream which I have seen, and tell me its interpretation." The Syriac translates this passage by a paraphrase, "In the visions of my dream I was seeing a vision of my head, and do thou its interpretation tell." Some modern expositors (Marti, Torrey, etc.) accept the version of Theodotion as the best solution, while others, like Montgomery, think that the Aramaic word *chzwy* (originally unpointed), translated "the visions of" (KJV), was originally *chzy,* "lo," as demonstrated by the Aramaic papyri from Elephantine. The text would then read, as in the RSV, "Here is the dream which I saw; tell me its interpretation."

10. Behold a tree. Divine wisdom frequently employs parables and similitudes as vehicles for the transmission of truth. This method is impressive. The imagery tends to enable the recipient to retain the message and its import in his memory longer than if the message had been communicated in any other way. Compare the imagery of Eze. 31:3-14.

The ancients were accustomed to seeing a meaning in every extraordinary dream. Perhaps this is why God employed the agency of a dream on this occasion.

13. A watcher. Aramaic *'ir,* derived from the verb *'ur,* "to watch," and corresponds to the Heb. *'er,* which does not signify "keeping watch," but rather "being watchful," or "one who is awake" as the marginal annotation to the word in the Codex Alexandrinus explains it. The LXX translates the word by *aggelos,* "angel," but Theodotion, instead of trans-

lating it, simply transliterates it *ir*. The Jewish translators Aquila and Symmachus render it *egrēgoros,* "the watchful one," a term found in the book of Enoch and other Apocryphal Jewish writings to designate the higher angels, good or bad, who watch and slumber not. As a designation for angels the term "watcher" would be peculiar to this passage in the OT. It has been suggested that angels may have been known to the Chaldeans under this term, though no evidence for this has yet been found. That the watcher is a heavenly messenger is indicated by the further attribute "an holy one," and the phrase "came down from heaven." This much is evident: The watcher was recognized as bearing the credentials of the God of heaven (see PK 518).

15. Leave the stump. Compare Job 14:8; Isa. 11:1. The ultimate sprouting of this root-stump (see Job 14:7-9) typified, as appears from a comparison of vs. 26 and 36, the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar from his sickness, and not the continued supremacy of his dynasty, as some commentators have explained it. The whole passage obviously designates an individual and not a nation.

With a band. Many commentators see in this statement a reference to metal bands fastened on a root-stump, probably in order to prevent it from cracking or splitting, although such a practice cannot be demonstrated from ancient sources. The LXX makes no mention of these bands. According to that version v. 15 reads, "And thus he said, Leave one of its roots in the earth, in order that with the beasts of the earth, in the mountains of grass he might feed like an ox." Theodotion supports the Masoretic text. Since the interpretation of the dream does not call attention to the bands, the interpretation of the figure is left to conjecture. Somewhere in vs. 15, 16 there is a transition from the "stump" to what the stump represented. Some make the transition as early as in the phrase under consideration and see in the bands either physical chains such as would be necessary to bind the king in his maniacal condition (Jerome) or figurative bands, representing the restrictions that would be placed upon the monarch as a result of his illness. However, it appears more natural to apply the bands to the stump itself and to consider them as indicating the care that would be exercised in preserving it.

16. His heart. The transition from the figure of the tree to the actual object symbolized by the tree has now clearly been made (see on v. 15). The term "heart" here seems to indicate nature. The king would take on the nature of a beast.

Seven times. The majority of ancient and modern interpreters explain the Aramaic *'iddan,* "time," here (also in vs. 23, 25, 32; chs. 7:25; 12:7) to mean "year." The original LXX reads "seven years." Among the earlier expositors supporting this view are Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 10. 6), Jerome, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Jephet. Most modern expositors also agree with this view.

17. Watchers. See on v. 13. The plural presupposes the existence of a heavenly council or assembly (see Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6).

That the living. This sentence reveals the divine purpose in the execution of the order. God's dealings with Babylon and its king were to be an illustration to other nations and their kings of the results of accepting or rejecting the divine plan with respect to nations.

The most High ruleth. In the affairs of nations God is ever "silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (Ed 173). At times, as with the call of Abraham, He ordains a series of events designed to demonstrate the wisdom of His ways. Again, as in the antediluvian world, He permits evil to run its course and provide an example of the folly of opposition to right principles. But eventually, as in the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt, He intervenes lest the forces of evil overcome His agencies for the salvation of the world. Whether God ordains, permits, or intervenes, "the complicated play of human events is under divine control" and an "overruling purpose has manifestly been at work throughout the ages" (PK 536, 535; see Ed 174; Rom. 13:1).

"To every nation . . . God has assigned a place in His great plan" and has given

an opportunity to "fulfil the purpose of 'the Watcher and the Holy One'" (Ed 178, 177). In the divine economy the function of government is to protect and upbuild the nation, to provide its people with the opportunity of achieving the Creator's purpose for them, and to permit other nations to do the same (Ed 175)—in order that all men "should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him" (Acts 17:27).

A nation is strong in proportion to the fidelity with which it fulfills God's purpose for it; its success depends upon its use of the power entrusted to it; its compliance with the divine principles is always the measure of its prosperity; and its destiny is determined by the choices its leaders and people make with respect to these principles (Ed 175, 174, 177, 178; PP 536). God imparts wisdom and power that will keep strong the nations that remain faithful to Him, but abandons those that ascribe their glory to human achievement and act independently of Him (PK 501).

Men "who refuse to submit to the government of God are wholly unfitted to govern themselves" (GC 584). When, instead of being a protector of men, a nation becomes a proud and cruel oppressor, its fall is inevitable (Ed 176). As the nations one after another have rejected God's principles their glory has faded, their power departed, and their place been occupied by others (Ed 177). "All are by their own choice deciding their destiny," and in rejecting God's principles accomplishing their own ruin (Ed 178, 177). "The complicated play of human events is under divine control. Amidst the strife and tumult of nations, He that sitteth above the cherubim still guides the affairs of earth" and overrules "all for the accomplishment of His purposes" (Ed 178). See on ch. 10:13.

Basest. Aramaic *shephal,* "low," "lowly," "humble." The verb is translated "humbled" in ch. 5:22 and "abase" in ch. 4:37.

18. Declare the interpretation. See on v. 7.

The holy gods. See on v. 8.

19. Astonied. Aramaic *shemam,* which, in the form here found, means "to be appalled," "to be perplexed," or "to be embarrassed." The last meaning may be more appropriate here inasmuch as Daniel, understanding immediately the dream and its consequences, must have been extremely embarrassed over the responsibility of disclosing its fearful import to the king (see ch. 2:5).

Hour. Aramaic *sha'ah.* It is impossible to define precisely the period of time indicated by *sha'ah.* It may be a brief moment, or perhaps a longer period of time. Compare the uses of *sha'ah* in chs. 3:6, 15; 4:33; 5:5. Sufficient time must have elapsed for Daniel to have revealed to his royal patron that "his thoughts troubled him [or, alarmed him]." Daniel was obviously searching for suitable words and expressions by which to acquaint the king with the terrible news concerning his future fate.

The king spake. That Nebuchadnezzar now speaks in the third person does not justify the conclusion of critics that either another spoke of him, and that thus the document is not genuine, or that this verse includes a historical notice introduced as an interpolation into the document. Similar changes from the first to the third person and vice versa are found in other books, Biblical (see Ezra 7:13-15; Esther 8:7, 8) and non-Biblical, ancient and modern (see on Ezra 7:28).

The king clearly saw the consternation on Daniel's face. From the nature of the dream he could hardly have expected to hear anything pleasant. Nevertheless he encouraged his trusted courtier to give him the full truth without fear of incurring royal disfavor.

That hate thee. Although Daniel had been made a captive by the king and had been deported from his homeland to serve strangers, the oppressors of his people, he harbored no ill feelings toward Nebuchadnezzar. In fact, his words testify that he felt the highest personal loyalty toward the king, probably in contrast with many of the Jews of his time. On the other hand, Daniel's words must not be interpreted as necessarily expressing malice toward the king's enemies. The answer exhibited simply a courteous reply in true Oriental fashion.

22. It is thou. Without holding the king in suspense for any length of time, Daniel

plainly and clearly announced to him—though he no doubt already surmised it—that the tree represented the king himself.

Unto heaven. To some, the terms by which the prophet described Nebuchadnezzar's greatness may seem exaggerated, but we must bear in mind that Daniel used Oriental court language and idioms, to which both he and the king were accustomed. These terms are remarkably similar to the boastful language of Nebuchadnezzar, exhibited in various of the king's inscriptions discovered by archeologists. They also resemble the words employed by Nebuchadnezzar's Assyrian predecessors and other Oriental monarchs.

25. With the beasts. Although the words of the heavenly messenger clearly implied doom of some kind, to ascertain the nature of the judgment was beyond the skill of the magicians. The reason for the king's expulsion from society is not stated, though probably understood by the king. That the judgment was insanity can be concluded not only from the general remarks of this verse describing his future status but also from the statement that his "understanding returned" (v. 34). The contention of critics that the king was expelled by discontented elements in the government, or as the result of a revolution, is unfounded.

26. Shall be sure. Many have wondered why the insane king was not killed, or why his subjects and ministers of state did not place someone else on the vacant throne during the time Nebuchadnezzar was incapacitated. The following explanation has been offered: Superstitious ancients thought that all mental disturbances were caused by evil spirits who took control of their victim; that if someone should kill the insane man, the spirit would take hold of the murderer or instigator of the crime; and that if his property should be confiscated or his office filled, a grievous revenge would be inflicted upon those responsible for the injustice. For this reason insane persons were removed from the society of men, but otherwise not molested (see 1 Sam. 21:12 to 22:1).

27. Break off thy sins. Here a divine principle is communicated to the proud monarch. God's judgments against men may be averted by repentance and conversion (see Isa. 38:1, 2, 5; Jer. 18:7-10; Jonah 3:1-10). For this reason God announced the impending judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar but gave him a full year in which to repent, and thus avert the threatened calamity (see Dan. 4:29). However, the king did not change his way of life, and accordingly brought upon himself the execution of the judgment. By contrast, the Ninevites, given 40 days of respite, took advantage of the opportunity, and they and their city were spared (Jonah 3:4-10). "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). God forewarns peoples and nations of their impending doom. He sends a message to the world today, warning of its rapidly approaching end. Few may heed such warnings, but because adequate warning has been given them men will be without excuse in the day of calamity.

Shewing mercy. The king was admonished to practice righteousness toward all his subjects and to exercise mercy toward the oppressed, the miserable, and the poor (see Micah 6:8). These virtues are frequently listed together (see Ps. 72:3, 4; Isa. 11:4).

29. In the palace. Literally, "upon the palace." It is not known from which palace Nebuchadnezzar viewed the city. It was possibly either from the roof of the famous hanging gardens, whose thick and strong foundation walls have been excavated, or from the new Summer Palace in the northern section of the new city quarters, now the ruined mound known as *Babil.* For a description of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon see the Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

30. That I have built. Students of ancient Babylonian history are reminded of these proud words when reading the claims the king makes in his inscriptions, which have been preserved amid the dust and debris of Babylon's ruins. On one of these inscriptions the proud king proclaims, "Then built I the palace, the seat of my royalty, the bond of the race of men, the dwelling of exultation and rejoicing" (E. Schrader, *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek,* vol. 3, part 2, p. 39). In another

text he says, "In Babylon, the city which I prefer, which I love, was the palace, the amazement of the people, the bond of the land, the brilliant palace, the abode of majesty on the ground of Babylon" (*Ibid.*, p. 25). That Nebuchadnezzar had valid reasons to be proud of his marvelous creation, the excavations of R. Koldewey have shown, although they have not in every detail corroborated the exaggerated claims of classical writers about the size of ancient Babylon (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter).

Nebuchadnezzar's claim to have "built" Babylon must not be interpreted as referring to the founding of the city, which actually took place shortly after the Flood (Gen. 11:1-9; cf. ch. 10:10). The reference is to the great work of rebuilding which his father, Nabopolassar, began, and which Nebuchadnezzar completed. Nebuchadnezzar's building activities were so extensive as to eclipse all previous accomplishments. It has been said that little could be seen that had not been erected in his time. This was true of the palaces, temples, walls, and even of the residential sections. The size of the city had been more than doubled by the addition of new areas to old Babylon, as suburbs on both sides of the river Euphrates.

31. There fell a voice. Compare Isa. 9:8, where "lighted" is literally, "fell." The proud utterance is immediately followed by the king's humiliation. It is not stated whether this voice was heard by the king alone or whether his entourage also heard the heavenly words.

33. Fulfilled. Many commentators have identified Nebuchadnezzar's malady as a form of insanity in which men think themselves animals and imitate the beasts' manner of life.

An ancient example of such mental maladies has been attested. An unpublished cuneiform tablet in the British Museum mentions a man who ate grass like a cow (F. M. Th. de Liagre Böhl, *Opera Minora* [1953], p. 527). It is not necessary to identify Nebuchadnezzar's malady precisely or to equate it with anything known to medical science today. The experience may have been unique. The narrative is brief, and a precise diagnosis on such meager information is invalid.

Eagles' feathers. The word "feathers" is supplied. Hair, when unkempt and long exposed to the influences of rough weather and to the rays of the sun, becomes hard and unruly.

34. End of the days. That is, the end of the "seven times," or seven years, predicted for the continuation of Nebuchadnezzar's madness (see on v. 16).

Lifted up mine eyes. It is significant to notice that the return of reason is said to have come to the king with his recognition of the true God. When the humbled king prayerfully looked up to heaven he was elevated from the condition of a brute beast to that of a being bearing the image of God. The one who for years had helplessly lain on the ground in his debasement was once more lifted up to the dignity of manhood which God has granted His creatures formed after His likeness. The essential feature of the miracle that occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's case is still repeated—even if in a less spectacular manner—in the conversion of every sinner.

I blessed the most High. It speaks well for the once proud king, that after his dreadful experience his first desire was to thank God, to praise Him as the everliving One, and to recognize the eternity of His rulership.

35. As nothing. Compare Isa. 40:17. The second half of this verse has a close parallel in Isa. 43:13. Some have suggested the possibility that in his association with Daniel the king had become acquainted with the words of Isaiah, and that they came suddenly back to his mind. The confession was a marvelous one, coming, as it did, from the mouth of the once proud monarch. It is the testimony of a penitent convert, a statement from the heart of a man who had learned by experience to know and to revere God.

36. Returned unto me. With the restoration of his understanding Nebuchadnezzar also regained his royal dignity and his throne. In order to show the close connection between the return of reason and his restoration to sovereignty, this verse restates (see v. 34) the first element of his restoration. The second follows im-

mediately, in the simple manner of Semitic narrative. An English narrator would have said, "When my understanding returned, then also my royal state and glory returned."

Sought unto me. The word "sought" does not necessarily indicate that during the period of his insanity the king was allowed to wander about in the fields and desert without supervision, but it denotes the seeking of a person with a view to his official position. When it became known that the king's reason had returned, the regents of state brought him back with all due respect in order that they might restore the government to him again. During his insanity these men had carried on the affairs of government.

37. Praise and extol. This is Nebuchadnezzar's conclusion to his proclamation, in which, as a converted sinner, he recognized the righteousness of God. His confession that God is "King of heaven" expressed his reverence toward his newfound God. The healed monarch of Babylon had learned well his lesson (see PK 521; EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse). On the progressive character of Nebuchadnezzar's understanding of God see chs. 2:47; 3:28; p. 751.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 4

Under the direction of Robert Koldewey, who worked for the German Orient Society, important excavations were carried out at Babylon between the years 1899 and 1917. These have uncovered some of the most important sections of the large ruined site of ancient Babylon, although wide areas were not touched in these excavations. Babylon had been an important city of Mesopotamia from the dawn of history (Gen. 11). Hammurabi had made it the capital of his dynasty. As the seat of the famous god Marduk, it remained a religious center even during periods when it did not enjoy political supremacy, as, for example, during the time when Assyria was the leading world power. When Nabopolassar regained for Babylonia its independence, the city once more became the metropolis of the world. But it was especially under Nebuchadnezzar, the great builder of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, that Babylon became "the glory of kingdoms" and "the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (Isa. 13:19).

It was Nebuchadnezzar's city that Koldewey uncovered during the 18 years of the German excavations; practically no remains of the earlier stages of the city were found. For this a double reason has been assigned: (1) The change of the river bed of the Euphrates raised the water table, so that the levels of the earlier cities now lie below the water level, and (2) the destruction of Babylon by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 689 B.C. was so thorough that little of the old city was left to be discovered by later generations. Hence, all visible ruins today date from the Neo-Babylonian Empire of later times. Even these show unusual desolation and confusion, for two reasons: (1) Large portions of the city were destroyed by King Xerxes of Persia after two short-lived revolts against his rule. (2) The ruins of Babylon were used by Seleucus to build Seleucia about 300 B.C. Most of the buildings in the neighboring villages and in the city of Hilla, as well as the great river dam at Hindiya, were built of bricks from Babylon.

In spite of these handicaps the excavators succeeded in clearing up much of the layout of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon. In this work they were aided by ancient cuneiform documents found during the excavations. These documents contain detailed descriptions of the city, its principal buildings, walls, and city quarters, so that more is known concerning the city plan of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon than of many medieval cities of Europe. Hence we are singularly well informed about the city in whose streets Daniel walked and concerning which Nebuchadnezzar uttered the proud words recorded in Dan. 4:30.

The Size of Ancient Babylon.—Before the spade of the excavator revealed the true size of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon and the Babylon of earlier times, scholars relied on the description of Herodotus. This historian claims to have visited Mes-

opotamia in the middle of the 5th century B.C., and therefore his statements have frequently been considered those of an eyewitness. He states (i. 178, 179) that the ground plan of Babylon had the shape of a large square, approximately 14 mi. (22.4 km.) on a side. These measurements would give to the city walls a total length of 55 mi. (88 km.) and to the city itself an area of almost 189 sq. mi. (490 sq. km.). He also claims that its walls were about 85 ft. (26 m.) thick and 340 ft. (104 m.) high.

Before modern excavations revealed the size of ancient Babylon, attempts were made to bring Herodotus' statement into harmony with its visible ruins. The French Assyriologist Jules Oppert, for example, tried to explain Herodotus' statement by extending the area of the city of Babylon far enough to include either *Birs Nimrud,* 12 mi. (19.2 km.) southwest of the ruins of Babylon, or *Tell el-Oheimir,* 8 mi. (12.8 km.) east. This explanation is entirely unsatisfactory. Already in Oppert's day it was known that *Birs Nimrud* is the site of ancient Borsippa, and *Tell el-Oheimir* that of Kish, both famous independent cities with separate protecting walls. Since no wall has ever been found encompassing both Babylon and either Borsippa or Kish, and since such a wall is not mentioned in any of the contemporary documents describing the ancient city, Oppert's figure for Herodotus' statement concerning the length of the walls of Babylon cannot be accepted.

Excavations reveal that before Nebuchadnezzar's time the city was almost square, with walls about one mile long on each side—the Inner City on the map on p. 796. The palaces and administration buildings lay in the northwestern section of the city, and south of them stood the main temple complex called *Esagila,* dedicated to Babylon's main god, Marduk. The river Euphrates flowed along Babylon's western wall.

When Babylon served as the capital of a far-flung empire in the time of Nabopolassar and of Nebuchadnezzar, it was in need of enlargement. A new section was built on the western bank of the Euphrates. Its extent is known, but little excavation has been carried out in that area. What is known about its temples and streets has been gathered from the cuneiform documents describing this quarter. The new section was connected with the old city by a bridge. This bridge rested on eight piers, as excavations at the site have revealed.

Nebuchadnezzar also built a new palace far to the north of the old city, the so-called Summer Palace. A great outer wall was constructed to enclose this palace. The new wall greatly increased the area of the city. There is no evidence of a wall along the river from the Summer Palace to the old palace area. It has therefore been concluded that the river itself was considered a sufficiently strong protection.

The walls, which for the greater part can still be clearly seen as long, high mounds, measure about 13 mi. This measurement is that of the total length of the walls of both the inner and outer cities. The circumference of Nebuchadnezzar's city, including the river front from the Summer Palace to the old palace area, was about 10 mi.

Modern excavations show that Herodotus' description needs modification on the dimensions of the walls. The fortifications surrounding the Inner City consisted of double walls — the inner 21½ and the outer 12¼ ft. thick (6.5 and 3.7 m., respectively), 23½ ft. (7.2 m.) apart, with a moat outside it. The outer wall was also double, with a rubble fill between and a road on top, according to Herodotus. The widths were: inner, 23½ ft.; space for fill, 36¾ ft.; outer, 25½ ft.; plus a sort of buttress wall at its base, 10¾ ft. (respectively 7.1, 11.2, 7.8, and 3.3 m.). This outer fortification's total width was thus 96½ ft., or 29.39 m. Of its many towers, 15 have been excavated.

The excavations tell nothing of the height of the walls, since only stumps remain, nowhere higher than 39½ ft. (12 m.) at the Ishtar Gate. It seems inconceivable that even a double wall with a base width of 95 ft., or 29 m., would have been 340 ft. (103.7 m.) high. No ancient or modern city wall of this sort is known. Hence Herodo-

BABYLON AND ITS ENVIRONS

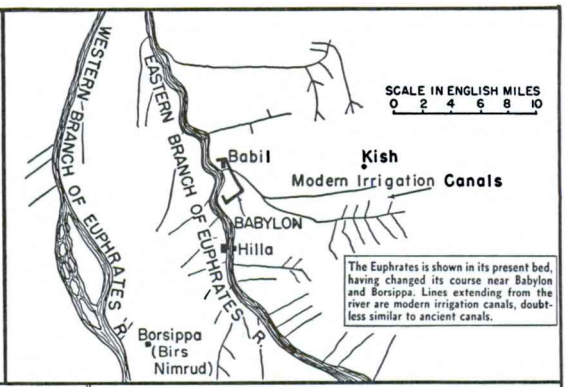
SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

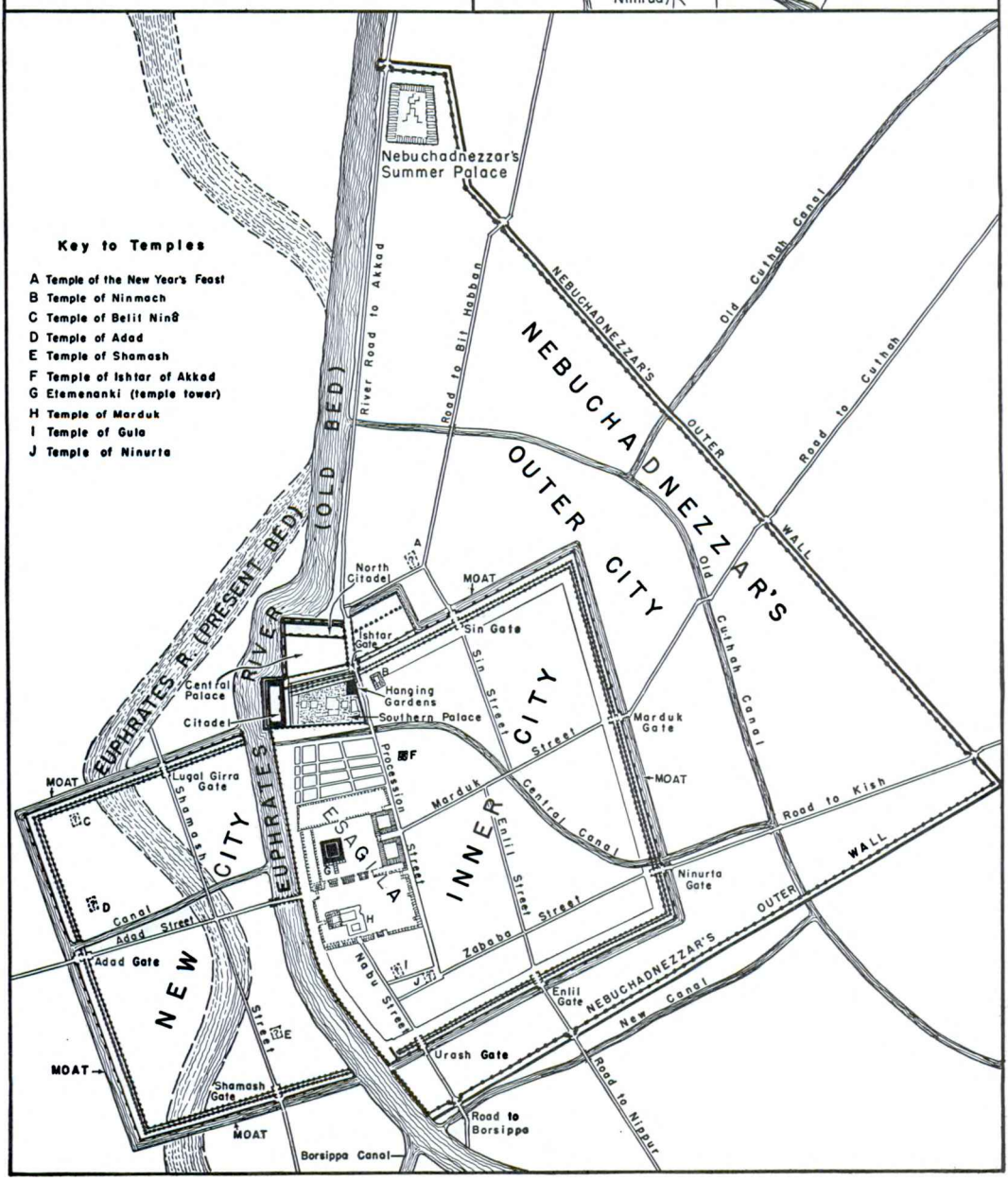
ACCORDING TO ECKHARD UNGER,

BABYLON; DIE HEILIGE STADT

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tus' statement in regard to the height of Babylon's city wall must also be discarded.

What are the reasons for these inaccuracies? The following explanation has been offered: When Herodotus visited Babylon the city lay largely in ruins, having been destroyed by Xerxes after two serious revolts against his rule. Temples, palaces, and all fortifications were thoroughly demolished. At the time of his visit Herodotus had to depend on oral information regarding the former state of affairs, the appearance of the buildings, and the size of the city and walls. Since he did not speak the Babylonian language, but was dependent on a Greek-speaking guide, he may, owing to translation difficulties, have received certain inaccurate information. Some of his erroneous statements may have been due to a faulty memory.

F. M. Th. [de Liagre] Böhl recently advanced another explanation. He suggests that Herodotus may have meant the whole fortress of Babylon, including all areas that lay within terrain that could be inundated in times of danger. Böhl reminds his readers of the fact that it is extremely difficult for a layman to distinguish between the dikes of dry canals and the remnants of the old city walls. The only difference is the lack of potsherds in the dikes. Potsherds are found in profusion near former walls of the city. It must therefore be considered possible that Herodotus took some of the many canal dikes for the remains of city walls (see *Ex Oriente Lux,* Jaarbericht No. 10, 1945-48, p. 498, n. 28).

Although ancient Babylon did not have the fantastic size attributed to it by Herodotus, the city was nevertheless of formidable size at a time when cities were very small according to modern standards. Its circumference of about 11 mi. (17.6 km.) was comparable with the 7½ mi. (12.5 km.) circumference of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria's empire; with the walls of imperial Rome, 6 mi. (9.6 km.) in circumference; and with the 4 mi. (6.5 km.) of the walls of Athens at the time of that city's height in the 5th century B.C. This comparison with other famous cities of antiquity shows that Babylon was, with the possible exception of Egyptian Thebes, then in ruins, the largest and greatest of all ancient capitals, though it was much smaller than classical writers later pictured it. It is understandable why Nebuchadnezzar felt he had a right to boast of having built "this great Babylon . . . by the might of my power" (Dan. 4:30).

A City of Temples and Palaces.—Because Babylon contained the sanctuary of the god Marduk, considered to be the lord of heaven and earth, the chief of all the gods, the ancient Babylonians considered their city the "navel" of the world. Hence, Babylon was a religious center without rival on earth. A cuneiform tablet of Nebuchadnezzar's time lists 53 temples dedicated to important gods, 955 small sanctuaries, and 384 street altars—all of them within the city confines. In comparison, Asshur, one of the chief cities of Assyria, with its 34 temples and chapels, made a comparatively poor impression. One can well understand why the Babylonians were proud of their city, saying, "Babylon is the origin and center of all lands." Their pride is reflected in Nebuchadnezzar's famous words quoted in the comment on ch. 4:30, and also in an ancient song of praise (as given by E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts,* Part I [Leipzig, 1915], No. 8):

"O Babylon, whosoever beholds thee is filled with rejoicing,
Whosoever dwells in Babylon increases his life,
Whosoever speaks evil of Babylon is like one who kills his own mother.
Babylon is like a sweet date palm, whose fruit is lovely to behold."

The center of Babylon's glory was the famous temple tower *Etemenanki,* "the foundation stone of heaven and earth," 299 ft. (91 m.) square at the base and probably 300 ft. (91.4 m.) high. This edifice was surpassed in height in ancient times only by the two great pyramids at Giza in Egypt. The tower may have been built at the site where the Tower of Babel once stood. The brick structure consisted of seven stages, of which the smallest and uppermost was a shrine dedicated to Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. See further on Gen. 11:9.

A great temple complex, called *Esagila,* literally, "He who raises the head," surrounded the tower *Etemenanki.* Its courts and buildings were the scenes of many religious ceremonies performed in honor of Marduk. Great and colorful processions terminated at this place. With the exception of the great Amen temple at Karnak, *Esagila* was the largest and most famous of all temples of the ancient Orient. At the time Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne it had already enjoyed a long and glorious history, and the new king entirely rebuilt and beautified extensive sections of the temple complex, including the tower *Etemenanki.*

In both number and size the palaces of Babylon revealed extraordinary luxury. During his long reign of 43 years Nebuchadnezzar built three large castles or palaces. One of them lay within the Inner City, the others outside it. One was what is known as the Summer Palace, in the northernmost part of the new eastern quarter. The mound that now covers its remains is the highest of those comprising the ruins of old Babylon, and is the only place that still bears the ancient name *Babil.* However, the thorough destruction of this palace in ancient times and the subsequent looting of the bricks of the structure have not left much for the archeologist to discover. Thus we know little regarding this palace.

Another large palace, which excavators now call the Central Palace, lay immediately outside the northern wall of the Inner City. This, too, was built by Nebuchadnezzar. Modern archeologists found this large building also in a hopelessly desolate condition, with the exception of one part of the palace, the Museum of Antiquities. Here valuable objects of the glorious past of Babylonia's history, such as old statues, inscriptions, and trophies of war, had been collected and exhibited "for men to behold," as Nebuchadnezzar expressed it in one of his inscriptions.

The Southern Palace lay in the northwestern corner of the Inner City and contained, among other structures, the famous hanging gardens, one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. A large vaulted building was surmounted with a roof garden irrigated by a system of pipes through which water was pumped up. According to Diodorus, Nebuchadnezzar built this marvelous edifice for his Median wife in order to give to her, in the midst of level and treeless Babylonia, a substitute for the wooded hills of her native land, which she missed. In the vaults underneath the roof gardens provisions of grain, oil, fruit, and spices were stored for the needs of the court and court dependents. Excavators found administrative documents in these rooms, some of which mention King Jehoiachin of Judah as the recipient of royal rations.

Adjoining the hanging gardens was an extensive complex of buildings, halls, and rooms that had replaced the smaller palace of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar. This Southern Palace was more or less the official residence of the king, the place for all ceremonies of state. In the center was a large throne room, 56 by 171 ft. (17 by 52 m.), and possibly 60 ft. (18 m.) high. This immense hall was probably the place where Belshazzar banqueted during the last night of his life, because no other hall in the palace was large enough to accommodate a thousand guests (see Dan. 5:1).

One of that city's colorful structures was the famous Ishtar Gate which adjoined the Southern Palace and formed one of the northern entrances to the Inner City. This was the most beautiful of all Babylonian gates, for through it passed the Procession Street, leading from the various royal palaces to the temple *Esagila.* Fortunately, this gate was less completely destroyed than any other structure in Babylon and is now the most impressive of all extant ruins of the city. It still rises to a height of about 39 ft. (12 m.).

The interior structures of the city walls and gates, the palaces and temples, were of unbaked bricks. The outer coats consisted of baked and, in some instances, of glazed bricks. The outer bricks of the city walls were yellow in color, those of the gates sky blue, those of the palaces rose, and those of the temples white. The Ishtar Gate was a double structure, because of double walls. It was 165 ft. (50 m.) long and consisted of four tower-

like structures of varying thickness and height. The walls were of bricks whose glazed surfaces formed raised figures of animals. There were at least 575 of these. There were bulls in yellow, with decorative rows of blue hair, and green hoofs and horns. These alternated with mythological beasts in yellow, called *sirrush,* which had serpents' heads and tails, scaled bodies, and eagles' and cats' feet (for an illustration see facing p. 864 and *SDA Bible Dictionary,* fig. 137).

The approach to the Ishtar Gate (see illustration facing p. 864) was lined on both sides of the street with defensive walls. On these walls were glazed-brick lions in relief, either white with yellow manes or yellow with red manes (now turned green) on a blue background.

Such was this colorful and mighty city that King Nebuchadnezzar had built—the marvel of all nations. His pride in it is reflected in inscriptions he left to posterity. One of them, now in the Berlin Museum, reads as follows:

"I have made Babylon, the holy city, the glory of the great gods, more prominent than before, and have promoted its rebuilding. I have caused the sanctuaries of gods and goddesses to lighten up like the day. No king among all kings has ever created, no earlier king has ever built, what I have magnificently built for Marduk. I have furthered to the utmost the equipment of *Esagila,* and the renovation of Babylon more than had ever been done before. All my valuable works, the beautification of the sanctuaries of the great gods, which I undertook more than my royal ancestors, I wrote in a document and put it down for coming generations. All my deeds, which I have written in this document, shall those read who know [how to read] and remember the glory of the great gods. May the way of my life be long, may I rejoice in offspring; may my offspring rule over the black-headed people into all eternity, and may the mentioning of my name be proclaimed for good at all future times."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-37 PK 514-521; 8T 126
7 PK 516
9 PK 517
10, 11 PK 515
11, 12 Ed 175
12-17 PK 516
13 Ed 177
14 8T 127
17 DA 129; PK 500
18-22 PK 517
23-27 PK 518
27 Ed 174; PK 502
30 Ed 175; 8T 127
30-32 PK 519
31 Ed 176; PK 533
33-35 PK 520
34 Ev 88; PK 514
35 8T 180
36, 37 PK 521

CHAPTER 5

1 Belshazzar's impious feast. 5 A handwriting, unknown to the magicians, troubleth the king. 10 At the commendation of the queen Daniel is brought. 17 He, reproving the king of pride and idolatry, 25 readeth and interpreteth the writing. 30 The monarchy is translated to the Medes.

BELSHAZZAR the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which *was* in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which *was* at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

5 ¶ In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

6 Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.

7 The king cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. *And* the king spake, and said to the wise *men* of Babylon, Whosoever shall read this writing, and shew me the interpretation thereof, shall be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about his neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom.

8 Then came in all the king's wise *men:* but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof.

9 Then was king Belshazzar greatly troubled, and his countenance was changed in him, and his lords were astonied.

10 ¶ *Now* the queen by reason of the words of the king and his lords came into the banquet house: *and* the queen spake and said, O king, live for ever: let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed:

11 There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom *is* the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, *I say,* thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers;

12 Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.

13 Then was Daniel brought in before the king. *And* the king spake and said unto Daniel, *Art* thou that Daniel, which *art* of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry?

14 I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods *is* in thee, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.

15 And now the wise *men,* the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing, and make known unto me the interpretation thereof: but they could not shew the interpretation of the thing:

16 And I have heard of thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and *have* a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom.

17 ¶ Then Daniel answered and said before the king, Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation.

18 O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour:

19 And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.

20 But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him:

21 And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and *that* he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.

22 And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this;

23 But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is,* and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

24 Then was the part of the hand sent from him; and this writing was written.

25 ¶ And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

26 This *is* the interpretation of the

thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.
27 TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.
28 PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.
29 Then commanded Belshazzar, and they clothed Daniel with scarlet, and *put* a chain of gold about his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him, that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.
30 ¶ In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.
31 And Darius the Median took the kingdom, *being* about threescore and two years old.

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1. Belshazzar. The Babylonian name *Bêl-shar-uṣur* means "Bel, protect the king!" Belshazzar was the first-born son of Nabonidus, the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. See Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

The king. When Nabonidus was in Lebanon recuperating from an illness, just before setting out on a campaign against Tema in western Arabia, he summoned his eldest son (Belshazzar), and "entrusted the kingship to him" (see Additional Note at end of this chapter). This was in "the third year." If this was the third regnal year, it was in the winter of 553/552. Some scholars think it was in the third year after the completion of a temple at Haran; if so, Belshazzar's appointment as coregent occurred two or three years later, but some time before Nabonidus' seventh regnal year, in which Nabonidus was in Tema. From that time on Belshazzar controlled the affairs of Babylonia as his father's coruler, while Nabonidus resided in Tema for many years. According to the "Verse Account of Nabonidus," Belshazzar held the "kingship." Daniel therefore made no mistake when he called Belshazzar "king," though critics formerly declared that Daniel here erred.

A great feast. From vs. 28 and 30 it can be concluded that the feast took place during the night that Babylon fell to Cyrus' forces. Xenophon preserved the tradition that at the time of Babylon's fall "a certain festival had come round in Babylon, during which all Babylon was accustomed to drink and revel all night long" (*Cyropaedia* vii. 5. 15). It is inexplicable that Belshazzar should have made a feast immediately after the fall of Sippar, and only a few days after the lost battle at Opis (see Vol. III, p. 49). Apparently, he felt recklessly secure in his capital, protected by strong walls and a system of canals which could, in case of danger, put the surrounding country under water and so make it difficult for an invader to reach the city (see PK 523).

It is a well-known fact that it was common for ancient monarchs to give feasts for their courtiers. A stele discovered recently at Nimrud, the ancient Calah, makes mention of the fact that King Ashurnasirpal II made a great festival at the opening of a new palace. He is stated to have fed, wined, and housed 69,574 people for 10 days. The Greek historian Ctesias states that the Persian kings fed 15,000 people every day, and that Alexander the Great had 10,000 guests take part in his wedding feast. A similar feast is also described in Esther 1:3-12.

Before the thousand. That a certain emphasis is placed on the fact that Belshazzar drank before his guests, seems to indicate that the same court custom existed at Babylon as at the Persian court, where the king usually ate in a separate hall, and only on exceptional occasions, with his guests. The feast of Belshazzar seems to have been such an occasion. For a description of the hall in which the feast probably took place, see p. 798.

2. Tasted the wine. Some understand these words to imply that Belshazzar was drunk when he gave the order to bring in the sacred vessels from Jerusalem. Others explain the phrase to mean that this command was given after the meal, at the moment the wine began to circulate. They point to classical Greek statements which declare that the Persians had the custom of drinking wine after the meal. However, it was uncommon for an Oriental to desecrate holy objects of other religions; hence it would appear unnatural that Belshazzar would have given the order as long as he was in command of his reason (see PK 523).

Vessels. The Temple vessels had been carried away from Jerusalem on three occasions: (1) a portion of them at the time Nebuchadnezzar took captives from Jerusalem in 605 (Dan. 1:1, 2); (2) most of the remaining vessels of precious metal when King Jehoiachin went into captivity in 597 (2 Kings 24:12, 13); and (3) the rest of the metal objects, mostly of bronze, when the Temple was destroyed in 586 (2 Kings 25: 13-17).

His father. It seems that Belshazzar was a grandson of the great king (see PK 522); his mother was probably a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar (see p. 806). The word "father" must be understood to mean "grandfather" or "ancestor," as in many other passages of the Bible (see on 1 Chron. 2:7). For the descent of Belshazzar from Nebuchadnezzar, see Additional Note at the end of this chapter. Of itself, the expression "his father" could also be understood in the sense of "his predecessor." An example of such usage is found in an Assyrian inscription which calls the Israelite king, Jehu, "a son of Omri," although the two had no blood relationship whatsoever. Actually Jehu was the exterminator of the whole house of Omri (2 Kings 9; 10).

His wives, and his concubines. The two Aramaic words translated "wives" and "concubines" are synonyms, both meaning "concubines." One may have represented a higher class than the other. It has been suggested that the one class of concubines may have consisted of women from respectable homes, or even the homes of nobility, and the other, women bought for money or captured in war. Although women took part in the banquet, as we learn from this passage, it appears that the "queen" was not found among the riotous drinkers. After the appearance of the handwriting on the wall she is described as entering the banqueting hall (v. 10). The LXX makes no reference to the participation of women in the sacrilegious rioting. Some think this is because, according to the custom of the Greeks, wives took no part in such festivals.

4. Praised the gods. The songs of the drunken heathen were in honor of their Babylonian gods, whose images adorned the various temples of the city.

5. Upon the plaister. If the large throne hall excavated by Koldewey in the Southern Palace of Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon (see p. 798) was the scene of this feast, it is not difficult to visualize what took place at the fateful moment described here. The hall was 56 by 171 ft. (17 by 52 m.). In the center of one of the long sides, opposite the entrance, was a niche, in which the throne may have stood. The walls were covered with white plaster made of fine plaster of Paris. We may imagine that the candlestick, or lampstand, was near the king's seat. Lampstands with numerous oil lamps were in use at that time. Across the room from this lampstand the mysterious hand appeared and wrote on the plaster so that Belshazzar saw it. It is not explained whether the writing took the form of painted letters or was incised in the plaster.

Part of the hand. It is not stated how much of the hand was visible. The Aramaic *pas,* translated "part," has sometimes been interpreted to mean "palm," at other times to designate the hand proper below the wrist, as opposed to the lower part of the arm.

6. Were loosed. Compare Isa. 21:3. The terror was heightened by an accusing conscience, which roused itself and filled the king with dark forebodings. The gloom of his thoughts must have been deepened as he realized the mortal danger into which the empire had been thrown through past political blunders, his own immoral life and acts, the recent disastrous defeat of his army and the sacrilegious acts in which he was engaged. No wonder "his thoughts troubled him"!

7. Astrologers. See on ch. 1:20.

Chaldeans. See on ch. 1:4.

Soothsayers. See on ch. 2:27.

Scarlet. Aramaic *'argewan,* better, "purple." Ancient royal purple was deep purplish red in color, more nearly like crimson. That purple was the royal color of antiquity is attested by documentary evidence from the time of the Persians (Esther 8:15; Xenophon *Anabasis* i. 5. 8), the Medes (Xenophon *Cyropaedia* i. 3. 2; ii. 4. 6), and later periods. Daniel attests the existence of this custom for the Neo-Babylonian period, which preceded the Persian.

Chain of gold. The custom of honoring

favorite public servants of the crown by the granting of gold chains, decorations, or collars existed in Egypt many centuries earlier (see on Gen. 41:42). The custom was common among ancient nations.

The third ruler. Prior to the time that Belshazzar's place in the kingdom and his relationship to Nabonidus were fully understood (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter), commentators could only conjecture as to the identity of the *second* ruler in the kingdom. The existence of such a ruler was implied by the promise to make the reader of the mysterious script on the wall "the *third* ruler in the kingdom." The queen mother, Belshazzar's wife, or a son had all been suggested. It was, of course, thought that Belshazzar himself was first ruler over the empire. Now that it is known that Belshazzar was only a coruler with his father, and hence the second ruler in the kingdom, it is clear why he could bestow no higher position in the realm than that of "third ruler."

8. Then came in all. Some have seen a contradiction between this statement and the account of the preceding verse that records an address of the king to the wise men. The most natural explanation is that the king's address recorded in v. 7 was spoken to the wise men who were already present at the banquet when the handwriting appeared on the wall. Verse 8 would then apply to "all the king's wise men," including those who came into the banquet hall in response to Belshazzar's command.

They could not read. The reason is not stated, and any explanation that may be offered is only conjecture. The words were apparently in Aramaic (see on vs. 26-28). But the words were so few and so cryptic that even a knowledge of their individual meanings would not reveal the message concealed in them. Whether the king himself could not read because of excessive use of wine, or whether the letters themselves were indistinguishable because of their dazzling brilliance (see EGW, Supplementary Material, on vs. 5-9), or whether the script was singular, decipherable only by divine illumination, is not stated. The conjecture that the characters were in the ancient Hebrew script and consequently illegible to the Babylonians does not appear plausible. It is extremely unlikely that the wise men of Babylon should not have known these old Semitic characters, which had been used not only by the Hebrews but also by the Phoenicians and other peoples of Western Asia.

10. The queen. From the time of Josephus (*Antiquities* x. 11. 2) commentators have usually taken this "queen" to be the king's mother or grandmother (see PK 527). According to Oriental custom none but a ruling monarch's mother would dare to enter the presence of the king without being summoned. Even the wife of a king endangered her life by so doing (see Esther 4:11, 16). Babylonian cuneiform letters written by kings to their mothers show a remarkably respectful tone and clearly reveal the exalted position in which royal mothers were held by their sons. This high position of a queen mother can also be deduced from the fact that when, in 547, Nabonidus' mother, Belshazzar's grandmother, died at *Dur Karâshu* on the Euphrates above Sippar, there was an extensive official court mourning. The fact of her death prior to the events of this chapter was unknown to commentators who identified the "queen" as Belshazzar's grandmother.

O king, live for ever. For this common salutation see on ch. 2:4.

11. There is a man. It need not be thought strange that Daniel was not among the group of wise men summoned by the king. His term of public service had doubtless closed some time before, perhaps with Nebuchadnezzar's death or earlier (see p. 746). Yet he would be well known to a representative of the earlier generation, to which the king's mother belonged. On the possible reasons for his retirement see on v. 13.

Spirit of the holy gods. Compare Nebuchadnezzar's statement (ch. 4:8, 9). The similarity supports the probability, suggested also by other evidence, that the queen was a close relative, probably a daughter, of Nebuchadnezzar (see p. 806). The information she imparts concerning Daniel's distinguished service in the past and concerning the prophet's elevated position under Nebuchadnezzar is apparently new to Belshazzar. This suggests that Daniel had not held office for some time prior

to the event narrated here. Hence probably few men, if any, in the king's entourage, who had grown up with him, were well acquainted with Daniel.

Nebuchadnezzar thy father. See on v. 2.

Magicians. See on ch. 1:20; cf. ch. 2:2, 27.

12. Doubts. Aramaic *qiṭrin,* literally, "knots." The word was later used as a magical term in Syria and Arabia. Here the meaning seems to be "difficult tasks," or "problems" (RSV).

13. Art thou that Daniel? This clause may also be translated, "You are that Daniel" (RSV). If this is the correct rendering, the salutation suggests that Belshazzar was acquainted with Daniel's origin, but that he had had no official intercourse with him. This much seems clear, Daniel was no longer the president of the magicians at the king's court (ch. 2:48, 49).

It seems that with the passing of Nebuchadnezzar, the policy for which Daniel had stood had come into disfavor at the court of Babylon, and that, as a result, he was retired from public service. Belshazzar and his predecessors evidently knew all about God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 5:22), but had deliberately rejected the latter's policy of acknowledging the true God and cooperating with His will (chs. 4:28-37; 5:23). The fact that Daniel later entered the service of Persia (ch. 6:1-3) implies that his retirement during the closing years of the Babylonian Empire was not due to ill-health or old age. His bitter censure of Belshazzar (ch. 5:22, 23) is evidence of the king's hostility toward the principles and state policy that Daniel represented. Daniel's disapproval of official Babylonian policy may have been one of the factors that led the first rulers of the Persian Empire to favor him.

14. Spirit of the gods. In contrast with the words of the queen (v. 11) and of Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 4:8), Belshazzar omits the adjective "holy" in connection with "gods."

17. To thyself. Some have thought that, as a divinely enlightened seer, Daniel declined the distinction and the place of honor promised the interpreter in order to avoid every appearance of self-interest in the presence of such a king. This may be true. It is also possible that Daniel, knowing that Belshazzar's reign was about to end, had no interest in receiving any favors from the man who that very night had, by acts and words, blasphemed the God of heaven and earth. That even now, in his old age, Daniel was not in principle opposed to accepting a high government position can be demonstrated from the fact that a short time later he was once more in high office (ch. 6:2). The office was doubtless accepted because Daniel felt that he could exercise a wholesome influence upon the king and be an instrument in the hand of God to bring about the release of his people from exile. But perhaps Daniel felt that to accept any honors or dignities from Belshazzar not only was useless but could even be harmful and dangerous.

18. Nebuchadnezzar. Before Daniel read and interpreted the writing he reminded the king of what Nebuchadnezzar had experienced as a result of his refusal to fulfill the divine destiny with regard to himself and his nation. Besides, Nebuchadnezzar had been mightier and more prudent than the wretched Belshazzar. The prophet showed Belshazzar how he, the (grand)son, had acted wickedly toward God, the Lord of his life, and had learned nothing from the experience of Nebuchadnezzar.

24. Then. A reference to the recent moment when, in drunken revelry, Belshazzar had praised his gods and drunk wine out of the consecrated vessels from the Temple of Jerusalem, as described in v. 23.

Part of the hand. See on v. 5.

This writing. The inscription was still visible upon the wall.

25. This is the writing. Daniel proceeds to read the words written on the wall, apparently four words in Aramaic. It is futile to speculate concerning the nature of this script and its relationship to any other known script (see on v. 8). But, even after the words had been read, they could not be understood except by divine illumination. A whole truth was expressed in each key word; hence the need for an interpretation.

26. Mene. The Aramaic *mene'* is a passive participle of the verb "to number," or "to count," and, if taken alone, simply means "numbered," or "counted." By divine illumination Daniel drew from this

word the interpretation, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."

27. Tekel. The Jewish scholars called Masoretes, who somewhere between the 7th and 9th centuries of the Christian Era added vowel signs to the Bible manuscripts (see Vol. I, pp. 34, 35), pointed the Aramaic word *teqel* as a noun. Like *mene'* (see on v. 26), it should obviously be pointed as a passive participle (*teqil*). The form *teqel* was probably chosen by the Masoretes on account of its greater similarity of sound with *mene'*. *Teqil* comes from the verb "to weigh." Daniel at once informed the king as to the import of this divine weighing. Belshazzar was found lacking in moral worth.

Found wanting. These fearful words of doom, addressed to the profligate king of Babylon, condemn all who, like Belshazzar, neglect their God-given opportunities. In the investigative judgment now in progress (see on ch. 7:10) men are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary to see whether their moral character and spiritual state correspond with the benefits and blessings God has conferred upon them. There is no appeal from the decisions of that court. In view of the solemnity of the hour, all must watch lest the decisive moment that forever fixes every man's destiny finds them unprepared and "wanting." Compare 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:11, 12.

28. Peres. This word is not a passive participle like the two words *mene'* and *teqil*, although the vocalization indicates that the Masoretes considered it a verb form. It is a noun, here singular in form. The plural form appeared on the inscription (v. 25). There it is also connected to the preceding words by the conjunction *we*, "and." The *we* appears as *u* in the word *upharsin*. This accounts for the difference between *upharsin* and *peres*. *Peres* means "share," or "portion," and if the plural form *upharsin* (v. 25) is adopted, may be translated, "pieces." Daniel's interpretation, "Thy kingdom is divided," could also be rendered, "Thy kingdom is broken into pieces." The emphasis is not necessarily that the kingdom was to be divided into two equal parts, the one part given to the Medes and the other to the Persians. The kingdom was to be divided into pieces, destroyed, and dissolved. This was to be effected by the Medes and the Persians. Significantly, the Aramaic form *peres* contains the consonants of the Aramaic words (see Vol. I, pp. 25, 26) for Persia and Persians, who were even then at the gates of Babylon.

29. Then commanded Belshazzar. The king fulfilled the promise he had made to Daniel, although Daniel clearly indicated that he was not interested in the proffered honors. Because of Belshazzar's drunken condition it may not have been possible to deter him from his course. Some have objected that the dignity of being third ruler was not possible, because, according to v. 30, Belshazzar was slain that very night. The objection is based on the supposition that the proclamation was publicly made in the streets of the city. But the words do not necessitate such a supposition. The proclamation may have been made only before the notables assembled in the palace. It could not become effective because of succeeding events.

30. In that night. Although Belshazzar is not mentioned in the cuneiform sources describing the fall of Babylon, Xenophon declares that "the impious king" of Babylon, whose name is not mentioned in the account, was slain when Cyrus' army commander Gobryas entered the palace (*Cyropaedia* vii. 5. 30). Although it must be recognized that Xenophon's narrative is not historically reliable in all details, many of his statements are based on fact. According to cuneiform sources Nabonidus was absent from Babylon at the time of its capture. When Nabonidus surrendered, Cyrus sent him to distant Carmania. Therefore the king who was slain during the capture of Babylon could have been none other than Belshazzar. For a summary of the history of Belshazzar see Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

31. Darius the Median. The ruler mentioned in this verse and throughout the 6th chapter is still an obscure figure as far as secular history is concerned. The Additional Note at the end of ch. 6 presents a brief survey of the various identifications proposed by commentators, as well as a possible solution of the various historical problems involved.

The conjunction "and," with which the

verse begins, shows that the author of the book closely connected the death of Belshazzar, recorded in the preceding verse, with the accession of "Darius the Median" to the throne. In the printed editions of the Hebrew Bible this verse is counted as the first verse of ch. 6. However, most modern versions, following the LXX, connect v. 31 with ch. 5. This is preferable.

There is no difference between the spelling of the name of the Darius mentioned here and that of "Darius [I] king of Persia" in Ezra 4:24 (see comments there) and elsewhere, in Aramaic and Hebrew as in English.

Threescore and two years. Darius' advanced age was probably responsible for the brevity of his reign. The book of Daniel mentions only the first regnal year of Darius (chs. 9:1, 2; 11:1). The king's death occurred "within about two years of the fall of Babylon" (PK 556).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 5

One of the great puzzles to Bible commentators through the centuries has been the identity of Belshazzar. Until fairly recently no reference in ancient records to such a king had been discovered. The name Belshazzar was known only from the book of Daniel and from works that borrowed the name from Daniel—as, for example, the Apocryphal Baruch and Josephus' writings. Many attempts were made to harmonize secular history with the Biblical records. The difficulty was accentuated by the fact that several ancient sources gave lists of the kings of Babylon to the end of the history of that nation, all of which mentioned Nabonidus, in different spellings, as the last king before Cyrus, who was the first king of Persia. Since Cyrus conquered Babylon and succeeded its last Babylonian king, there seemed to be no place for Belshazzar in the royal line. The book of Daniel, on the other hand, puts the events immediately preceding the fall of Babylon in the reign of Belshazzar, a "son" of Nebuchadnezzar (see on ch. 5:2), who lost his life during the night of the conquest of Babylon by the invading Medes and Persians (ch. 5:30).

Of the numerous interpretations formerly set forth to explain the apparent discrepancies between the Biblical records and other ancient sources the following are listed (according to Raymond P. Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar,* pp. 13, 14):

Belshazzar was (1) another name of Nebuchadnezzar's son known as Evil-Merodach, (2) a brother of Evil-Merodach, (3) a son of Evil-Merodach, hence Nebuchadnezzar's grandson, (4) another name for Nergal-shar-usur, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, (5) another name for Labashi-Marduk, Nergal-shar-usur's son, (6) another name for Nabonidus, and (7) the son of Nabonidus and a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar.

According to another view, held by the the majority of critical scholars prior to the discovery of Belshazzar's name in cuneiform sources toward the close of the 19th century, the name Belshazzar was an invention of the writer of Daniel, who, these critics assert, lived in the time of the Maccabees in the 2d century B.C.

This list of divergent views demonstrates the nature and extent of the historical problems confronting interpreters of the book of Daniel, one that seems to abound in more problems than any other OT book of its size. That the identity and office of Belshazzar have now been fully established from contemporary sources, thus vindicating the reliability of ch. 5, is one of the great triumphs of Biblical archeology of the last century. The extreme importance of this achievement calls for a brief review of the subject.

In 1861 H. F. Talbot published certain texts found in the Moon Temple at Ur, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (vol. 19, p. 195). The texts contained a prayer of Nabonidus pronounced in favor of *Bel-shar-uṣur,* his eldest son. Several writers, among them George Rawlinson, brother of the famous decipherer of the cuneiform script, identified this *Bel-shar-uṣur* with the Biblical Belshazzar. Others rejected this identification, among them Talbot himself, who, in 1875, listed his arguments with a new translation of the text mentioning Belshazzar (*Records of the Past,* vol. 5, pp. 143-148). Seven years later (1882) Theophilus

G. Pinches published a text brought to light in the preceding year, which is now called the Nabonidus Chronicle. This text describes the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, and states also that Nabonidus stayed in Tema for several years while his son was in Babylonia. Although at the time Pinches did not completely understand the text, and incorrectly identified Tema, which lies in western Arabia, he made several accurate deductions concerning Belshazzar. He observed, for example, that Belshazzar "seems to have been commander-in-chief of the army, probably had greater influence in the kingdom than his father, and so was regarded as king" (*Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology,* vol. 7 [1882], p. 150).

In the succeeding years more texts were discovered that shed light on the various functions and important positions that Belshazzar, Nabonidus' son, held before and during his father's reign. However, none of these texts called Belshazzar king as the Bible does. Nevertheless a number of scholars, on the basis of the accumulating evidence, suggested the view—later proved to be correct—that the two men may have been coregents. In 1916 Pinches published a text in which Nabonidus and Belshazzar were jointly invoked in an oath. He claimed that texts like this indicated that Belshazzar must have held a "regal [viceregal] position," although he stated that "we have yet to learn what was Belshazzar's exact position in Babylonia" (*Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology,* vol. 38 [1916], p. 30).

Confirmation of the conclusion that a coregency between Nabonidus and Belshazzar had existed finally came in 1924, when Sidney Smith published the so-called "Verse Account of Nabonidus" of the British Museum, in which the clear statement is made that Nabonidus "entrusted the kingship" to his eldest son (*Babylonian Historical Texts* [London, 1924], p. 88; see translation by Oppenheim in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* ed. by Pritchard [Princeton, 1950], p. 313). This text, which settled all doubts about a kingship for Belshazzar, was a severe blow to scholars of the higher-critical schools who claimed that Daniel was a product of the 2d century B.C. Their dilemma is reflected in the words of R. H. Pfeiffer of Harvard University, who states:

"We shall presumably never know how our author learned . . . that Belshazzar, mentioned only in Babylonian records, in Daniel, and in Bar. 1:11, which is based on Daniel, was functioning as king when Cyrus took Babylon" (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [New York, 1941], pp. 758, 759).

The discovery of so many cuneiform texts that shed light on the reign of Nabonidus and Belshazzar led Raymond P. Dougherty of Yale University to collect all source material, cuneiform and classical, in one monograph, which appeared in 1929 under the title *Nabonidus and Belshazzar* (New Haven, 1929, 216 pp.).

Cuneiform inscriptions indicate that Nabonidus was the son of the prince of Haran, *Nabû-balâṭsu-iqbi,* and of the priestess of the Moon Temple at Haran. After the Medes and Babylonians captured Haran in 610 B.C. the mother of Nabonidus was possibly taken as a distinguished prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar's harem, so that Nabonidus grew up in the court under the eyes of the great king. He was most likely the "Labynetus" of Herodotus (i. 74), who acted as peace mediator between the Lydians and Persians in 585 B.C. This appears evident from the following observations: Herodotus calls the king of Babylon who reigned at the time of the fall of Sardis, in 546, Labynetus (i. 77). Later he identifies the father of the ruler of Babylon at the time of its fall in 539 by the same name (i. 188). We know that Nabonidus was king of Babylon in 546, also that he was Belshazzar's father. That, in 585, Nabonidus was chosen to act as diplomatic representative of Nebuchadnezzar was a high honor, and shows that the young man must have been a favorite of the king at that time. It is possible, as Dougherty thinks, that his wife Nitocris, whom Herodotus describes as a wise woman (i. 185, 188), was a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar by an Egyptian princess.

However, the family relationship between Belshazzar, Nabonidus' son, and Nebuchadnezzar is not yet definitely established from contemporary records.

For lack of more complete information it is impossible at present to determine pre-

cisely how the repeated statements of ch. 5, that Nebuchadnezzar was Belshazzar's father, are to be understood. As far as Biblical usage is concerned "father" may mean also "grandfather" or "ancestor" (see on 1 Chron. 2:7). Three interpretations have been offered: (1) Nabonidus was a son-in-law of Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar's grandson through his mother. (2) Nabonidus was called son because his mother belonged to Nebuchadnezzar's harem and was therefore his stepson. (3) Belshazzar was son only in the sense of the analogous case of Jehu, king of Israel, whom the Assyrian contemporary inscriptions call the "son of Omri." Jehu was not related by blood to the house of Omri, but Jehu extinguished the dynasty that Omri had founded and became the next king of Israel.

Cuneiform records have thrown an abundant stream of light on Belshazzar, his office and activities during the years he was coregent with his father. After conferring the kingship upon Belshazzar in 553/552 B.C., or shortly thereafter (see on ch. 5:1), Nabonidus conducted a successful expedition against the Arabian Tema, and made it his residence for many years. During this time Belshazzar was the acting king in Babylon and functioned as commander in chief of the army. Although legal documents continued to be dated according to the regnal years of Nabonidus, the fact that the names of both father and son were pronounced together in oaths, whereas under other kings' reigns only one name was used, clearly reveals the dual rulership of Nabonidus and Belshazzar.

Information from the secular sources, briefly sketched above, has, in a positive way, vindicated the historical accuracy of ch. 5. At the conclusion of his monograph on Belshazzar and Nabonidus, Dougherty has forcefully expressed this conviction:

"Of all non-Babylonian records dealing with the situation at the close of the Neo-Babylonian empire *the fifth chapter of Daniel ranks next to cuneiform literature in accuracy* so far as outstanding events are concerned. The Scriptural account may be interpreted as excelling because it employs the name Belshazzar, because it attributes royal power to Belshazzar, and because it recognizes that a dual rulership existed in the kingdom. Babylonian cuneiform documents of the sixth century B.C. furnish clear-cut evidence of the correctness of these three basic historical nuclei contained in the Biblical narrative dealing with the fall of Babylon. Cuneiform texts written under Persian influence in the sixth century B.C. have not preserved the name Belshazzar, but his role as a crown prince entrusted with royal power during Nabonidus' stay in Arabia is depicted convincingly. Two famous Greek historians of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. do not mention Belshazzar by name and hint only vaguely at the actual political situation which existed in the time of Nabonidus. Annals in the Greek language ranging from about the beginning of the third century B.C. to the first century B.C. are absolutely silent concerning Belshazzar and the prominence which he had during the last reign of the Neo-Babylonian empire. The total information found in all available chronologically-fixed documents later than the cuneiform texts of the sixth century B.C. and prior to the writings of Josephus of the first century A.D. could not have provided the necessary material for the historical framework of the fifth chapter of Daniel" (*op cit.*, pp. 199, 200).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-31 PK 522-538; TM 434-436
1, 2 PK 523
3-5 PK 524
4 COL 259
6 TM 436
6-8 PK 527
10-16 PK 528
17-24 PK 529
23, 24 MM 151; 5T 244
24-28 4T 14
25-29 PK 530
25 TM 436
27 CG 155, 569; COL 267; CS 142; CT 348; EW 37, 246; FE 228, 468; GC 491; LS 117; MM 151, 164, 195; MYP 229; PK 219; TM 237, 286, 440, 450; 1T 126, 152, 260, 263, 317, 406; 2T 43, 54, 58, 83, 266, 409, 439, 452; 3T 185, 370, 522, 538; 4T 311, 339, 385, 386, 470; 5T 83, 116, 154, 279, 397, 411, 420, 435; 6T 230, 405; 7T 120; 8T 14, 247
27-31 Te 49
30 COL 259; PK 531

CHAPTER 6

1 Daniel is made chief of the presidents. 4 They conspiring against him obtain an idolatrous decree. 10 Daniel, accused of the breach thereof, is cast into the lions' den. 18 Daniel is saved. 24 His adversaries devoured, 25 and God magnified by a decree.

IT pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;

2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel *was* first: that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage.

3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm.

4 ¶ Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he *was* faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him.

5 Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God.

6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king, and said thus unto him, King Darius, live for ever.

7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

10 ¶ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall ask *a petition* of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing *is* true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which *is* of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.

14 Then the king, when he heard *these* words, was sore displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians *is*, That no decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast *him* into the den of lions. *Now* the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 ¶ Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: *and* the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also

before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.

23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.

24 ¶ And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

25 ¶ Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you.

26 I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he *is* the living God, and stedfast for ever, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion *shall be even* unto the end.

27 He delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

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1. Princes. Aramaic *'achashdarpan,* literally, "satraps" (see on ch. 3:2). The various details of the provincial administration of the Persian Empire prior to Darius I's reorganization are still obscure. Herodotus (iii. 89) states that Darius I created 20 satrapies as main divisions of the empire. Each satrapy was divided into provinces. The inscriptions of Darius give various totals for the satrapies (21, 23, 29), indicating that the king probably changed the number as well as the size of satrapies during his reign. Some Greek historians use the term "satrap" for lower officials, as Daniel apparently did when he used the term to designate provincial governors. Compare the 127 provinces of Esther 1:1 in the time of Xerxes.

2. Three presidents. This administrative body is not mentioned in non-Biblical sources. There is a complete lack of contemporary documentary evidence as to the organization of the Persian Empire prior to the reign of Darius I.

Daniel was first. Literally, "Daniel was one." The word here translated "first" is rendered "one" in chs. 2:9; 4:19; 7:5, 16. The aged prophet soon distinguished himself by conscientious service.

No damage. The reason for the elaborate organization of civil service in Persia is here pictured in vivid colors. On precautions taken by the imperial system to guard against loss of revenue and other damage, compare Ezra 4:13-16.

3. Excellent spirit. This was not the first time that royal observers had noticed a unique "spirit" in Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar had testified to Daniel's possession of "the spirit of the holy gods" (ch. 4:8). The queen mother repeated the expression in her interview with Belshazzar on his last fateful night (ch. 5:11). On the same occasion she called attention to the "excellent spirit" that had been observed in Daniel (ch. 5:12). This spirit had no doubt manifested itself, not only in the solving of "hard sentences" (ch. 5:12), but also in scrupulous integrity, unwavering faithfulness, loyalty to duty, and integrity in words and acts—qualities rarely seen in civil servants of that age. A brief acquaintance with this elderly statesman, a survivor of the golden age of imperial Babylonia, was sufficient to convince Darius that Daniel would be a wise choice as chief administrator of the new empire and counselor of the crown.

4. Against Daniel. In his plans to elevate Daniel to the highest civil office in the state, the king doubtless acted in the interests of the crown and of the empire. However, he failed to take into account the feelings of jealousy that would naturally be aroused among the Median and Persian dignitaries when a Jew, a former minister of the Babylonians, occupied a position that, according to their expectations, should be theirs.

Any error. Despite his advanced age—he was now in his middle eighties—Daniel was able to perform his duties of state in such a way that no errors or faults could be charged against him. This accomplish-

ment was due to his personal integrity and to confidence in the unfailing guidance of his heavenly Father. To love and serve God was to him more important than life itself. Scrupulous adherence from his youth to the laws of health doubtless gave him a vigor far beyond what was usual for men of his age.

5. The law of his God. A careful scrutiny of Daniel's habits, a close observation of his dealings with associates and subordinates, and a careful checking of the records, revealed no irregularities to provide a ground for complaints or accusations. However, Daniel's enemies discovered that he was never to be found worshiping in any of the temples of Babylon, nor did he take part in any heathen religious ceremonies. Undoubtedly they had noticed that he was absent from his office every Sabbath, the day of weekly rest prescribed in "the law of his God." They doubtless reasoned that his set times for prayer interfered with the discharge of his official duties.

6. These presidents and princes. There is no need to assume that all governors of the empire assembled before the king concerning this matter. Doubtless only those appeared who envied Daniel's position. If all had been called together for the occasion, the king might have become suspicious, especially if Daniel was not among them. The plotters probably calculated that with only a few approaching the king with the request, the chances of deceiving the monarch were greater than if they waited until all the governors from every corner of the empire could be assembled to appear before him.

Live for ever. See on ch. 2:4.

7. All. Doubtless a lie, for it is questionable that all were consulted.

Whosoever shall ask a petition. A decree of this nature would be entirely alien to the Persians, who won the reputation of being largehearted in matters of religious tolerance. It is unthinkable that a man like Cyrus would have signed such a decree. However, Darius the Mede evidently had a different background. We know little of the thinking of the Medes with respect to religious tolerance. Cyrus, the Persian king, rebuilt temples of nations destroyed by the Babylonians, and thereby showed his spirit of tolerance with regard to other peoples' religious feelings and practices. On the other hand Darius I claimed that the False Smerdis, his predecessor, a Magian from Media who ruled for about half a year in 522 B.C., showed his spirit of intolerance by destroying temples. Although generalizations are subject to error, we must reckon with the possibility that the Medes, or at least some of their rulers, showed less religious tolerance than the Persians.

It has also been observed that the command to pray for one month to none but the king, though in this instance especially aimed at Daniel, may have been suggested by a national religious custom of earlier date among the Medes, according to which divine honors were rendered to the king. Herodotus (i. 199) remarks that Deioces, one of the earliest known kings of the Medes, had made his person the object of reverential awe in the eyes of his subjects by removing himself from the observation of the common man, in order to convince his people that he was different from them. That even Persian kings were willing occasionally to accept divine honors is evident from the fact that in Egypt they allowed divine attributes to be added to their names. Hieroglyphic inscriptions refer to Cambyses as the "son of Re" the sun-god, and to Darius as "the son of god." Hence it is not necessary to go down in history to the Roman emperors to find the first historical parallels to the command referred to in Dan. 6:7, as some critical scholars have claimed.

Den of lions. Contemporary literature and works of art frequently depict kings of antiquity, such as those of Egypt, Assyria, and Persia, engaged in the sport of hunting wild animals. Game consisted chiefly of lions, but included also panthers, wild bulls, and elephants. Reports tell of vassal kings sending captured wild animals to their royal lords in Mesopotamia as tribute. There they were kept in menageries, as symbols of the monarch's world power and for the amusement of the king and his friends. Although no examples of capital punishment by throwing the culprit before wild animals are known from

contemporary records in Persian times, these sources speak of extraordinarily barbaric forms of capital punishment ordered by otherwise humane Persian kings.

8. It be not changed. On the irrevocability of the law of "the Medes and Persians" compare Esther 1:19; 8:8. This characteristic is also attested by Greek writers. For example, Diodorus Siculus (xvii. 30) describes the attitude of Darius II toward the sentence of death upon Charidemos. He claims that the king, after pronouncing the death sentence, repented and blamed himself for having greatly erred in judgment; yet it was impossible to undo what had been done by royal authority.

Medes and Persians. Higher critics frequently pointed to the presence of this expression in the book of Daniel, used at a time when the Persians were actually more in control of the former empire than the Medes, as proof of the supposed late authorship of the book. They claimed that such a term would be used only at a time when the real political situation had become hazy in the memory of the people. Contemporary documents, since discovered, have proved this higher critical view incorrect. These documents refer to the Persians as "Medes," and to "Medes and Persians," as does the Bible. The cuneiform documents also mention various Persian kings by the title "king of the Medes," as well as by the customary title "king of Persia." Since Darius was a "Mede," it is only natural that any courtier referring in his presence to the law of the land would speak of "the law of the Medes and Persians."

10. His house. Daniel's house probably had a flat roof, like the majority of both ancient and modern houses in Mesopotamia. Usually on one corner there is an apartment raised above the flat roof that contains latticed windows for ventilation. Such rooms provided ideal places of seclusion.

His windows being open. An identical Aramaic expression is used in an Aramaic papyrus from Elephantine. The papyrus describes a house having "open windows" at the lower end and above (Cowley, No. 25, line 6). Another papyrus speaks of a house whose "one window opens to the two compartments" (Kraeling, No. 12, line 21). Daniel's open windows faced in the direction of Jerusalem, the city he had left as a boy and probably never saw again. On the custom of turning in prayer toward Jerusalem see 1 Kings 8:33, 35; Ps. 5:7; 28:2.

He kneeled. The Bible notes various postures in prayer. We find servants of God praying while sitting, like David (2 Sam. 7:18), bowing, like Eliezer (Gen. 24:26) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:42), and frequently standing, like Hannah (1 Sam. 1:26). The most common attitude in prayer seems to have been that of kneeling, of which the following are examples: Ezra (Ezra 9:5), Jesus (Luke 22:41), Stephen (Acts 7:60). See further PK 48; GW 178.

Three times a day. In later Jewish tradition the offering of prayer three times a day took place at the third, sixth, and ninth hours of the day (the hours being counted from sunrise). The third and ninth corresponded to the time of the morning and the evening sacrifices. The psalmist followed the same practice (Ps. 55:17). Three daily prayers later became a fixed custom with every orthodox Jew living according to rabbinical regulations (*Berakoth* iv. 1). This custom of the three daily times of prayer seems also to have been adopted in the early Christian church (*Didache* 8).

11. Found Daniel praying. The plotters did not have to wait long to see Daniel disregard the king's prohibition. Decree or no decree, this man of God felt that he should continue his regular prayer habits. God was to him the source of all his wisdom and success in life. The favor of Heaven was dearer to him than life itself. His conduct was the natural result of his trust in God.

13. Of the captivity. The form of the accusation revealed the full hatred and contempt that these men felt toward Daniel. They did not refer to the dignity of his office but characterized him merely as a foreigner, a Jewish exile. They doubtless hoped thereby to bring his conduct under the suspicion of being an act of rebellion against the royal authority. They inquired, in effect, How could a man whom the king had so highly honored, and who had every

reason to demonstrate his gratitude toward the king by strict obedience to royal decrees, be so shameless as to defy the royal orders openly? Their words were calculated to lead Darius to regard Daniel as an ungrateful, if not traitorous, character.

14. Deliver him. The monarch saw the snare that had been set for him. When the decree was proposed, the men had resorted to flattery, and the aging king had agreed without recognizing the plot that underlay the plan of the men whose judgment he had been accustomed to trust. He suddenly realized that the whole matter had been conceived, not, as he had thought, to bring honor to his reign and person, but to deprive him of a true friend and trustworthy public servant. Despite his almost frantic efforts, the king could find no legal loophole by which to save Daniel and at the same time preserve the basic Median and Persian concept of the inviolability of law.

15. Assembled. For the second time on that fateful day Daniel's enemies came to the king, this time in the evening. For many hours they had waited for the execution of the verdict, and when nothing happened they resorted again to the king and impudently claimed their prey. They knew they had a legal right to demand Daniel's execution, and that there was no loophole in the law by which he could escape.

16. Deliver thee. The king's words were in striking contrast with those of Nebuchadnezzar uttered on another occasion that was in some respects similar (ch. 3: 15). Darius may have been acquainted with the miracles that God had performed in the days of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar.

17. A stone was brought. No ancient lions' den has yet been excavated, and it is thus impossible to reconstruct an accurate picture of such a place.

Sealed it. The official sealing by the king and his lords had a twofold purpose. It served as a guarantee to the king that Daniel would not be killed by any other means, in case he was not harmed by the lions. Because Darius hoped that Daniel's God would save His faithful servant from the lions, he would naturally want to take precautions against any interference on the part of the men who were determined to take Daniel's life. On the other hand the seal provided assurance to Daniel's enemies that no attempt could be made to save him, in the event he was not immediately torn to pieces by the wild animals. Darius' counselors may have feared that such an attempt to save Daniel from the pit would be made by Daniel's friends or by the king as soon as everyone had withdrawn from the place of execution. Hence, their seal, as well as that of the king, was used to make sure that the stone would not be tampered with during the night.

Sealed Egyptian tombs may serve to illustrate the technique of sealing an opening. After the door had been closed for the last time, it was covered with plaster, and either seals were stamped all over the wet plaster or roll seals were rolled over it. A similar procedure may have been followed in the case of the closing and sealing of the lions' den. The sealing was most probably carried out by means of cylinder seals, which were common among the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. Every excavation in Mesopotamia brings to light numerous examples of such seals.

18. Instruments of musick. Aramaic *dachawan.* The word is obscure. In the Bible it occurs only here. The medieval Jewish commentator Rashi explained it to mean "tables." Ibn Ezra, another Jewish scholar, interpreted the word to mean "musical instruments." His interpretation may have influenced the translators of the KJV. Among the many other interpretations found in translations and commentaries, all of which are conjectural, the following may be listed: "foods," "musicians," "dancing women," "perfumes," "entertainers," and "concubines." The translation of the RSV, "diversions," appears to aim at a noncommittal reading.

19. Very early in the morning. Aramaic *shepharpar,* "dawn." The meaning of the passage is clearly revealed in Keil's translation: "The king as soon as he arose at morning dawn, went hastily by the early light."

20. Lamentable. Aramaic *'aṣib,* "sad," "pained," "full of anxiety." The voice is

an index to the emotions, and it is difficult for people to hide their inner feelings. The king had gone through the ordeal of seeing his most faithful servant thrown to the lions. This dreadful experience was followed by a long, sleepless night. Little wonder that his voice betrayed his inner restlessness, anxiety, and bitter remorse!

Servant of the living God. The words of Darius reveal a degree of acquaintance with the God and religion of Daniel. The fact that the king spoke of Daniel's God as the "living God" suggests that Daniel had instructed him concerning the nature and power of the true God.

21. O king, live for ever. For this ceremonial greeting see on ch. 2:4.

22. Shut the lions' mouths. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers to this experience of Daniel and attributes the deliverance of the prophet to the power of faith (Heb. 11:33).

Innocency was found in me. Presumably Daniel had not defended himself or his actions before he was thrown to the lions. Any word spoken at that time might have been interpreted by his enemies as weakness or a sign of fear. Now, however, after God had seen fit to save his life, Daniel chose to declare his innocence.

23. Take Daniel up. The requirements of the royal decree had been met. That decree had not required the execution of the transgressor, but only that he "be cast into the den of lions" (v. 7). There is no question, of course, but that these words implied the death sentence. Daniel had been cast into the lions' den, and there were no constitutional restrictions to prevent the king from removing Daniel from the lions' den.

24. They cast them. The angry king acted in the fashion typical of despots of his day. Ancient history gives many examples of such actions. Some critical commentators have tried to show that the narrative is unhistorical by claiming that the den in which the lions were kept could not have been large enough to receive 122 men with their families; further, that there could not have been enough lions in Babylon to eat so many victims. However, the Bible nowhere states that this was the number condemned to death. These critical scholars have drawn the unnecessary conclusion that every one of the 120 princes and the two presidents of vs. 1, 2 were involved in the unfortunate experience. It is pure speculation to say how many were involved in the matter.

Their children. Both Herodotus (iii. 119) and Ammianus Marcellinus (xxiii. 6, 81) testify that consigning to death the wives and children along with condemned men was in accordance with Persian custom.

26. I make a decree. After the wonderful deliverance of Daniel's friends from the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar had issued an edict to all the nations of his kingdom forbidding them, on pain of death, from saying anything against the God of these Hebrews (ch. 3:29). In similar manner, in consequence of the miraculous preservation of Daniel in the den of lions, Darius gave out an edict commanding all the nations of his realm to fear and reverence Daniel's God. We need not necessarily conclude from this that the king personally departed from the polytheism of the Medes. Darius acknowledged the God of Daniel as the living God, whose kingdom and dominion are everlasting, but it is not stated that he acknowledged Him as the only true God. See further on p. 751.

28. In the reign. The repetition of these words does not indicate a separation of the Persian kingdom from the Median, but merely a distinction of rulers, one being a Mede and the other a Persian. The sentence construction allows interpretations that make Cyrus either a coruler with, or successor to, Darius.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 6

Following is a summary and evaluation of the various views that have been held as to the identity of Darius the Mede. Prior to the age of modern archeology the book of Daniel posed a number of historical problems, most of which have satisfactorily been solved (see Introduction, p. 747). Of the remaining problems, the question of the person and office of Darius is at present the greatest. However, the

remarkable way in which other historical statements of the Bible have been confirmed justifies the confidence that this problem will also be solved.

Higher critics offer their simple but unacceptable explanation that the historical parts of Daniel are legendary and that Darius is a fictitious character invented by a 2d-century author of the book. The fact that secular confirmation of certain Biblical statements of history cannot be produced is no reason for questioning the historical reliability and accuracy of Holy Writ. Many Bible statements formerly challenged by critical scholars have since proved to be in full harmony with the facts of ancient history as revealed by the spade of the archeologist.

Following is a summary of Scripture statements concerning Darius:

1. Darius was a Mede by descent (chs. 5:31; 9:1; 11:1).

2. He was "the son of Ahasuerus" (ch. 9:1).

3. He was "made king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (ch. 9:1), hence, "took [or "received" (RSV)] the kingdom" (ch. 5:31).

4. He was "about" 62 years old at the time Babylon was captured (ch. 5: 30, 31).

5. Only his first regnal year is noted (chs. 9:1; 11:1).

6. He appointed "an hundred and twenty princes" (literally "satraps") over the whole kingdom, with "three presidents" as their superiors (ch. 6:1, 2).

7. Cyrus either followed Darius or reigned at the same time (ch. 6:28).

From this evidence the following picture of Darius emerges: After Babylon's fall the Babylonian Empire was ruled by Darius, perhaps during the first part of the reign of Cyrus, as counted in Babylon. Darius, a son of Ahasuerus (Greek, Xerxes), is called a Mede in contrast with Cyrus, who is called a Persian (ch. 6:28). He was already 62 years of age when Babylon was conquered, and presumably died shortly afterward.

No known non-Biblical sources except those based on Daniel, such as Josephus, mention a Darius as ruler of the conquered Babylonian Empire prior to Darius I (522-486 B.C.). Future finds may bring to light direct references to Darius the Mede. In the meantime Biblical interpreters must seek to identify Darius the Mede with one of the historical figures of the time of Cyrus who was known by another name. Josephus claims that the Darius of the book of Daniel "had another name among the Greeks" (*Antiquities* x. 11. 4). Of the several identifications proposed the following merit examination:

1. That Darius the Mede was Astyages, the last ruler of the Median kingdom before Cyrus took over the empire. Astyages was the son of Cyaxares I, whose name, it is claimed, can be identified linguistically with that of the Ahasuerus of ch. 9:1, although Ahasuerus elsewhere stands for Xerxes (see on Esther 1:1). Since Astyages began to reign about 585 B.C., he would have been an old man at the time of the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., as Darius is reported to have been (ch. 5:31). This fact gives some plausibility to the suggested identification.

There are serious objections to this identification. According to Greek sources Astyages was the grandfather of Cyrus. When Cyrus was a youth Astyages made several attempts to kill him. Later, when vassal king over the Persian tribes, Cyrus rebelled against his overlord and deposed Astyages in either 553/552 or 550 B.C., making him governor of Hyrcania, south of the Caspian Sea. Not even the Greek sources hint that Astyages was associated with Cyrus at the capture of Babylon in 539. Further, it is questionable whether Astyages, who was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar and was the great Babylonian king's brother-in-law, was still alive at that time. It is therefore highly unlikely that the two can be equated.

2. That Darius the Mede was Cambyses, Cyrus' son. Cambyses is mentioned in several cuneiform tablets by the title King of Babylon, as associated on the throne with his father Cyrus, whom these tablets term King of the Lands. However, his coregency with his father is the only factor in favor of identifying Cambyses with the Darius of Daniel. In all other respects Cambyses does not fit the picture as presented in the Bible. He could not possibly have been 62 years of age in 539 B.C. He was not a

Mede, but a Persian like his father. And he was not the son of Ahasuerus. Because of these difficulties, the identification of Cambyses as Darius must be rejected.

3. That Darius the Mede was Gobryas (the view most widely held). Gobryas, says Xenophon (*Cyropaedia* vii), was an elderly general who took Babylon for Cyrus. The Nabonidus Chronicle, an important cuneiform document describing the fall of Babylon, mentions him. It says that "*Ugbaru,* the governor of Gutium, and the army of Cyrus entered Babylon without battle" on the 16th of Tishri. After describing Cyrus' entry into Babylon it also mentions a certain "*Gubaru,* his governor," who "installed [sub-]governors in Babylon." Furthermore, after recounting how the gods exiled to Babylon by Nabonidus were returned to their respective cities, the tablet states that "in the month Arahshamnu, on the night of the 11th day, *Ugbaru* died." The next sentence is broken, and scholars disagree as to whether it refers to the death of *Ugbaru* or to the death of a royal personage. The next sentence mentions an official mourning held throughout the country for seven days.

Some have taken *Ugbaru* and *Gubaru* as variant spellings of the same name, representing Gobryas of the Greek sources. However, *Ugbaru* died in the month of Arahshamnu—either in the year of Babylon's fall or in the next—while there was another *Gubaru,* who lived on for many years as governor over the satrapies of Babylonia and Greater Syria and later as father-in-law of Darius I, the Great, as attested by tablet documents. According to this view *Ugbaru* and *Gubaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle must be two different persons. The former, having taken Babylon, died soon after. The latter lived on as governor of Babylonia.

Those who identify Darius the Mede with Gobryas and equate *Ugbaru* with *Gubaru* point out that Gobryas is reported to have taken Babylon, and that he virtually became ruler over Babylonia, hence could have been called "king," although the contemporary records call him only governor. The fact that, according to the Nabonidus Chronicle, he is reported to have appointed governors over Babylonia, seems to corroborate ch. 6:1, 2, where this work is attributed to Darius the Mede. The name *Gubaru* has also been explained as of Median origin. Also his earlier position as governor of Gutium, a province bordering on Media, seems to allow the possibility that he was a Mede.

Although this identification of Darius with *Ugbaru* (Gobryas) has more in its favor than the two previously mentioned, there are objections to this view. Gobryas is called a governor, not a king. Since he lived many years after the fall of Babylon, he must have been much younger than 62 years of age in 539 B.C.

An alternative Gobryas theory, based on a reinterpretation of the Nabonidus Chronicle, proposes that Darius the Mede was not *Gubaru,* the later governor of the contract tablets, but *Ugbaru/Gubaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle, the governor of Gutium who took Babylon for Cyrus and died in Arahshamnu, not three weeks but a year and three weeks later. This would allow time for ch. 6 during his rule "over the realm of the Chaldeans" (ch. 9:1). For *Ugbaru/Gubaru* the term *king* would be only a courtesy title; Cyrus, already master of Persia, Media, and Lydia before conquering Babylonia, was the *de facto* ruler of the whole empire.

4. That Darius the Mede was Cyaxares II, the son of Astyages. Compare the statements in PK 523, 556, 557 concerning Cyrus as the nephew and general of Darius with Xenophon's claim that (1) Cyrus, Astyages' grandson through his mother Mandane, had become acquainted with his uncle Cyaxares during the years Cyrus spent at the court of his Median grandfather (*Cyropaedia* i. 3. 1; 4. 1, 6-9, 20-22; 5. 2); (2) that Cyaxares followed his father on the throne as king of Media, after the latter's death (i. 5. 2); (3) that when Cyrus had conquered Babylon he visited his uncle with gifts and offered him a palace in Babylon; that Cyaxares accepted the presents, and gave Cyrus his daughter as well as the kingdom (viii. 5. 17-20).

Although the details of the story as given by Xenophon cannot be accepted, it is possible that the Greek writer preserves correctly the tradition that Cyaxares was the last Median ruler, and that he was

Cyrus' father-in-law as well as an intimate friend of the great Persian. If these points can be accepted as historical facts, it can be assumed that Cyrus, upon rebelling against Astyages, permitted Cyaxares to rule as a shadow king to please the Medes. At the same time everyone in the kingdom would know that the actual sovereign was Cyrus, and that Cyaxares was a mere figurehead. In that case Darius the Mede may be identified with Cyaxares II, who, presumably, had come to Babylon at Cyrus' invitation to act in an honorary capacity as king.

That Cyaxares II was advanced in age at the time of the fall of Babylon can be shown as follows, assuming Xenophon to be correct: Cyaxares II was the father-in-law of Cyrus. Cyrus himself was most likely at least 40 years old at the time, as is evident from the fact that his son, Cambyses, was mature enough to represent him in an official position during the next New Year's Day activities. Hence Cyaxares II could have been 62 years old at the fall of Babylon, the age Daniel assigned to Darius the Mede. His comparatively advanced age—in a time when most people died young—may have been responsible for the fact that he did not survive the fall of Babylon very long. This would explain why Daniel mentions only his first regnal year. Xenophon reports nothing further concerning Cyaxares shortly after the conquest of Babylon.

Daniel's statement that Darius was the "son" of Ahasuerus should probably be understood as meaning that he was the "grandson" of Ahasuerus. That the Hebrew word for "son" may mean "grandson," or an even more remote descendant, can be abundantly demonstrated (see on 2 Kings 8:26). The English form Ahasuerus is from the Heb. *'Achashwerosh,* which might possibly be a rendering of *Uvaxshtrah,* the Old Persian spelling of Cyaxares I, but not of Astyages.

If after his arrival at Babylon, Darius became a special friend of Daniel's, it is understandable that the prophet would date the visions received during this brief reign in terms of Darius' regnal years (chs. 9:1; 11:1), rather than of the regnal years of Cyrus. However, after the one year credited to Darius, Daniel dated events in terms of the years of Cyrus' reign (chs. 1:21; 10:1).

Contemporary evidence that might shed light on this reconstruction of the history of Cyaxares II is ambiguous and meager. There is a possible reference to Cyaxares in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Since it is certain that *Gubaru* lived for many years after the conquest of Babylon, whereas *Ugbaru* died soon after, and a state mourning was provided for some high personage during the same month, it may be possible to see Cyaxares II in the *Ugbaru* of the Nabonidus Chronicle. Or, the name of Cyaxares may have been in the broken line which speaks about the death of a distinguished individual for whom a nationwide mourning was held. However, there seems to be an error in the first mention of *Ugbaru* in the Nabonidus Chronicle. Either the name *Ugbaru* is a scribal error for *Gubaru,* or the title "governor of Gutium" was by mistake transferred by the author of the tablet from *Gubaru* to *Ugbaru.*

A second possible piece of contemporary evidence may lie in the double mention of a Cyaxares in the great Behistun inscription of Darius I (on the Behistun inscription see Vol. I, pp. 98, 110). Among the several pretenders to the throne against whom Darius I fought were two who claimed to be of the family of Cyaxares. The Cyaxares in question may have been either Cyaxares I, the father of Astyages, or possibly Cyaxares II, the father-in-law of Cyrus, and last shadow king of Media.

The foregoing summary makes evident that there are still many obscure factors in the solution of the problem of identifying Darius the Mede from historical and archeological sources. All things considered, however, this commentary favors the fourth view.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-28 PK 539-548; 1T 295, 296
1-4 SL 42
1-5 PK 539
3, 4 1T 295
4 Ed 56; FE 305; ML 75; PK 546; 7T 248

4-10 4T 368
5 SL 43
6-9 PK 540
7 SL 43
10 CH 423; GW 178; PK 48, 541; SL 43; 1T 296; 4T 373, 569; 5T 43, 453, 527
12, 13 PK 542
14-16 SL 44
14-17 PK 543
16 AA 575; Ed 254; 4T 448, 525
17-24 SL 35
20-27 PK 544
22 ML 317; 5T 453, 527
22-28 PK 557; TM 443; 1T 296
25-27 Ed 56
26 PK 545
27 2T 54
28 PK 545

CHAPTER 7

1 *Daniel's vision of four beasts.* 9 *Of God's kingdom.* 15 *The interpretation thereof.*

IN the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, *and* told the sum of the matters.

2 Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.

3 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.

4 The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.

5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh.

6 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.

7 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.

8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

9 ¶ I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire.

10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

11 I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

12 As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

13 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

15 ¶ I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.

16 I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things.

17 These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, *which* shall arise out of the earth.

18 But the saints of the most High shall

take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

19 Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth *were* of iron, and his nails *of* brass; *which* devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet;

20 And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows.

21 I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;

22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom *are* ten kings *that* shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

25 And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

26 But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* unto the end.

27 And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

28 Hitherto *is* the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.

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1. First year of Belshazzar. It should be pointed out that Daniel does not present the materials of his book in strict chronological order. The events of chs. 5, 6 took place after those recorded in the 7th chapter, but, doubtless for reasons of continuity, the historical narrative is carried through to completion in chs. 1-6. On the identity and place in history of Belshazzar see Additional Note on Chapter 5.

Had a dream. Literally, "saw a dream." In a dream the Lord gave to Daniel a pictorial view of the future history of the world.

The prophecy of ch. 7 covers essentially the same span of history as the dream of ch. 2, both reaching from the prophet's day to the time of the establishment of the kingdom of God. Nebuchadnezzar saw the world powers represented by a great metallic image; Daniel saw them as symbolic beasts and horns, and saw also aspects of history related to the experience of God's people and the outworking of His plan. Chapter 2 deals largely with political matters. It was given, first of all, for the instruction of Nebuchadnezzar, to secure his cooperation in the divine plan (see on ch. 2:1). The relationship of the people of God to the shifting political scenes was not a subject of that prophecy. The prophecy of ch. 7, like those of the remainder of the book, was given especially for the people of God in order that they might understand their part in the divine plan for the ages. The inspired preview of events was given against the background of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The efforts of the archenemy of souls to destroy the "holy people" were unveiled and the final victory of truth assured.

He wrote. So that it might be preserved for future generations.

Sum of the matters. The Aramaic words thus translated are particularly difficult to phrase in English. The word for "sum" is *re'sh,* which means "head," or "beginning." The original Greek version reads, *eis kephalaia logōn,* which may be interpreted to mean "a summary." Evidently what is meant by the expression is that Daniel wrote down and reported the chief contents of the dream. Ehrlich translates the phrase, "the important details."

2. Winds. From the Aramaic *ruach,* equivalent to the Heb. *ruach,* which has a variety of meanings, such as "air" (Jer. 2:24,

translated "wind"), "breath" (Job 19:17), human "spirit" (Ps. 32:2), divine "Spirit" (Ps. 51:12), and "wind" (Ex. 10:13). Metaphorically the word is also used of vain and empty things (Jer. 5:13). When used in symbolic vision, as here, the word seems to denote activity or energy of some form, the particular form to be determined by the context. For example, the "winds" of Ezekiel's symbolic vision, which revived the dry skeletons, were representative of divine energy reviving the lifeless nation of Israel (Eze. 37:9-14). The "winds" of Daniel, which strove upon the great sea, causing four beasts—or empires—to emerge, represented those movements, diplomatic, warlike, political, or otherwise, that were to shape the history of the period.

The "four winds," being from the four points of the compass, doubtless represent political activity in various parts of the earth (Jer. 49:36; cf. Dan. 8:8; 11:4; Zech. 2:6; 6:5, margin).

Strove. Aramaic *guach,* which means "to stir up." The form of the verb suggests continued action.

Great sea. No specific body of water, such as the Mediterranean Sea, need be inferred. The sea is here symbolic of the nations of the world—the "great sea" of humanity in all ages (see Rev. 17:15; cf. Isa. 17:12; Jer. 46:7).

3. Four . . . beasts. The application of the symbol is not left to speculation. According to v. 17 the four beasts represent "four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." For "kings" the LXX, Theodotion, and the Vulgate read "kingdoms." The fourth beast is specifically called "the fourth kingdom" (v. 23). There is general agreement that these four beasts represent the same four world powers symbolized by the metallic image of ch. 2.

Came up. The world powers represented did not bear rule contemporaneously but successively.

Diverse. The diversity here spoken of was illustrated by the different metals presented (ch. 2:38-40).

4. Lion . . . eagle's wings. An appropriate symbol for Babylon. The winged lion is found on Babylonian objects of art. The combination of lion and eagle was a common motif—more often a lion with eagle's wings, sometimes with claws or a beak; a similar composite was the eagle with a lion's head. The winged lion is one of the forms of the beast often pictured in combat with Marduk, the patron god of the city of Babylon. On these lion-eagle combinations see S. H. Langdon, *Semitic Mythology* ("The Mythology of All Races," vol. 13), pp. 118, 277-282, and Fig. 51 facing p. 106 (winged lion), and pp. 116, 117 (lion-headed eagle); see illustrations of various Babylonian and Assyrian composite beasts in L. E. Froom, *Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers,* Vol. I, pp. 50, 52.

Other prophets referred to King Nebuchadnezzar by similar figures (Jer. 4:7; 50:17, 44; Lam. 4:19; Eze. 17:3, 12; Hab. 1:8). The lion as the king of beasts and the eagle as the king of birds fittingly represented the empire of Babylon at the height of its glory. A lion is noted for its strength, whereas the eagle is famous for the power and the range of its flight. Nebuchadnezzar's power was felt not only in Babylon but from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, and from Asia Minor to Egypt. Thus it is fitting, in order to represent the spread of Babylon's power, that the lion should be provided with eagle's wings.

Plucked. The lion was no longer able to fly like an eagle upon its prey. This doubtless refers to the time when less powerful rulers followed Nebuchadnezzar in the kingdom of Babylon, rulers under whose administration Babylon lost glory and power. Some have suggested a possible reference also to Nebuchadnezzar's later life, when for seven years he was deprived not only of his power but also of his reason (ch. 4:31-33).

Lifted up. A lion standing erect like a man is indicative of the loss of lionlike qualities.

A man's heart. King Richard's nickname, the "Lion-Hearted," ascribed to him unusual courage and boldness. Conversely, a "man-hearted" lion would indicate cowardice and timidity. In its declining years Babylon became weak and enfeebled through wealth and luxury, and fell a prey to the Medo-Persian kingdom.

Some see in the expression "man's heart" the disappearance of the animal characteristic of greed and ferocity and the humanizing of the king of Babylon. Such could apply to Nebuchadnezzar after his humiliating experience, but would not be a fitting representation of the kingdom in its closing years.

5. A bear. The Persian, or Medo-Persian, Empire, corresponding to the silver of the image (see on ch. 2:39). As silver is inferior to gold, so, in some respects at least, the bear is inferior to the lion. The bear is, nevertheless, cruel and rapacious, characteristics that are attributed to the Medes in Isa. 13:17, 18.

On one side. The interpreter (v. 16) does not explain this feature of the vision. However, a comparison with ch. 8:3, 20 seems clearly to indicate that the kingdom was composed of two parts. Of the Medes and the Persians, the latter became the dominant power a few years before the dual empire conquered Babylon (see on ch. 2:39).

Three ribs. These are not mentioned in the interpretation (vs. 17-27), but many commentators have considered them a symbol of the three principal powers that were conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire—Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt (see on Isa. 41:6).

They said. The speaker is not identified. The subject should perhaps be regarded impersonally, "it was said."

6. Like a leopard. The leopard is a fierce, carnivorous animal noted for the swiftness and agility of its movements (see Hab. 1:8; cf. Hosea 13:7).

The power succeeding the Persian Empire is identified in ch. 8:21 as "Grecia." This "Grecia" must not be confused with the Greece of the classical period, inasmuch as that period preceded the fall of Persia. The "Grecia" of Daniel was the semi-Greek Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great (see on ch. 2:39), which inaugurated what is called the Hellenistic period. Not until Alexander's day could reference be made to the "first king" (ch. 8:21) of a Greek empire who was "a mighty king" with "great dominion" (ch. 11:3).

In 336 Alexander succeeded to the throne of Macedonia, a semi-Greek state on the northern border of Greece. Alexander's father, Philip, had already united most of the city-states of Greece under his rule by 338 B.C. Alexander proved his mettle by subduing revolts in Greece and Thrace. After order had been restored in his own kingdom, Alexander set himself the task of conquering the Persian Empire, an ambition he had inherited from his father. Among the factors that spurred the young king on in his plans were personal ambition, the need for economic expansion, the desire to spread Greek culture, and a not unnatural animosity toward the Persians because of their past relations with his countrymen.

In 334 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hellespont and entered Persian territory with only 35,000 men, the meager sum of 70 talents in cash, and but one month's store of provisions. The campaign was a series of triumphs. The first victory was achieved at Granicus, the next at Issus in the following year, and the next at Tyre in the year after that. Passing through Palestine, Alexander conquered Gaza and then entered Egypt virtually unopposed. Here in 331 B.C. he founded the city of Alexandria. He declared himself the successor to the Pharaohs and his troops hailed him as a god. When he set forth again that year he directed his armies toward Mesopotamia, the heart of the Persian Empire. The Persians took their stand near Arbela, east of the junction of the Tigris and Great Zab rivers, but their forces were defeated and routed. The fabulous riches of the world's greatest empire lay open to the young king, 25 years old.

After preliminary organization of his empire Alexander pushed his conquests to the north and to the east. By 329 B.C. he had taken Maracanda, now Samarkand in Turkistan. Two years later he invaded northwest India. Soon after crossing the Indus River, however, his troops refused to go farther, and he was forced to yield to them. Returning to Persia and Mesopotamia, Alexander was faced with the stupendous work of organizing the administration of his territories. In 323 B.C. he made his capital in Babylon, a city that still preserved reminders of the glory of

Nebuchadnezzar's day. In the same year, after a round of hard drinking, Alexander fell ill and died of "swamp fever," which is thought to be the ancient name for, or counterpart of, malaria.

Four wings of a fowl. Although the leopard is itself a swift creature, its natural agility seems inadequate to describe the amazing speed of Alexander's conquest. The symbolic vision represented the animal with wings added to it, not two but four, denoting superlative speed. The symbol most fittingly describes the lightning speed with which Alexander and his Macedonians in less than a decade came into possession of the greatest empire the world had yet known. There is no other example in ancient times of such rapid movements of troops on so large and successful a scale.

Four heads. Obviously parallel with the four horns of the he-goat, which represented the four kingdoms (later reduced to three) that occupied the territory of Alexander's short-lived conquests (see on ch. 8:8, 20-22). For some years, however, Alexander's Macedonian generals attempted to preserve, in theory if not in fact, the unity of the vast empire. Alexander died without arranging for the succession to his throne. First his weak-minded half brother Philip and then his posthumous son Alexander were the titular rulers under the regency of one or another of the generals, and the empire was divided into a large number of provinces, the most important of which were controlled by about six leading generals as satraps (see p. 824, map A).

But the central authority—that is, the regency for the two puppet kings—was never strong enough to weld the vast empire together. Through some 12 years of internal struggle, during which the control of various sections of the territory changed repeatedly, and during which both kings were slain, Antigonus emerged as the last of the claimants for central power over the whole empire. He was opposed by a coalition of four powerful leaders, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who were bent on dividing the territory among themselves. In 306 Antigonus declared himself king (jointly with his son Demetrius) of the entire empire, the successor of Alexander. Thereupon the four allies, abandoning their subordinate title of satrap, declared themselves kings of their respective territories (see p. 824, map B).

The long life-and-death struggle over the question as to whether the empire should be united under Antigonus and Demetrius or divided by the four generals was settled by the Battle of Ipsus in 301 B.C. Antigonus was killed, Demetrius fled, and their territory was divided. This left, with the exception of the small fragments, four independent kingdoms (see p. 825, map C) in place of the huge empire that Alexander had won but had not been able to consolidate. Ptolemy had Egypt, also Palestine and part of Syria; Cassander had Macedonia, with nominal sovereignty over Greece; Lysimachus had Thrace and a large part of Asia Minor; and Seleucus had the bulk of what had been the Persian Empire—part of Asia Minor, northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and the east. Demetrius, reduced to control of a navy and a number of coastal cities, had no kingdom, though he later displaced the heirs of Cassander and founded the Antigonid dynasty in Macedonia.

About 20 years after the division the four were reduced to three, for Lysimachus was eliminated (see p. 825, map D). Much of his territory was taken by the Seleucid Empire, but part was overrun by the Gauls, or fell apart into small independent states, the most important of which was Pergamum. But Macedonia, Egypt, and the Seleucid Empire (sometimes known as Syria, for the eastern part was soon lost) continued on as the three major divisions of the eastern Mediterranean until they were absorbed, one by one, into the Roman Empire.

Many historians, especially writers of textbooks who must eliminate details in a broad survey, skip over the division into four and mention only the later and longer-lasting division into the three principal kingdoms that retained their identity into Roman times.

Some would seek to find the continuation of the four kingdoms on into the Roman period by reckoning Pergamum as the successor of Lysimachus' short-lived

kingdom. But regardless of whether we speak of three principal kingdoms and the much smaller Pergamum, or three kingdoms plus a group of smaller states, it is significant that at the critical time—when the last hope of holding Alexander's empire together failed, and the division was inevitable—the whole territory, with the exception of minor fragments, fell into *four* kingdoms (see p. 825, map C) as specified by prophecy (ch. 8:22). For the approximate boundaries of these four kingdoms, see maps in Willis Botsford, *Hellenic History,* facing p. 463; see discussion in Botsford, p. 454; W. W. Tarn, *Hellenistic Civilisation,* [2d ed.], pp. 6, 9.

Alexander's empire, even in its divided phase, was still a continuation and embodiment of its founder's ideal—a Greco-Macedonian-Asiatic world of diverse peoples united by Greek language, thought, and civilization. Except for political centralization, the Hellenistic world constituted as much a unity as it had been under Alexander, and more so than had ever been achieved before. It was aptly represented by a single beast with multiple heads (or, in ch. 8, with multiple horns). For the Hellenistic period and the rise of Rome see article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

7. Fourth beast. Compare v. 19. There was, presumably, no parallel in the natural world by which to designate this hideous creature, for no comparison is made as in the case of the first three beasts. There should be no question, however, but that it represents the same power that is portrayed by the iron legs of the great image (see on ch. 2:40).

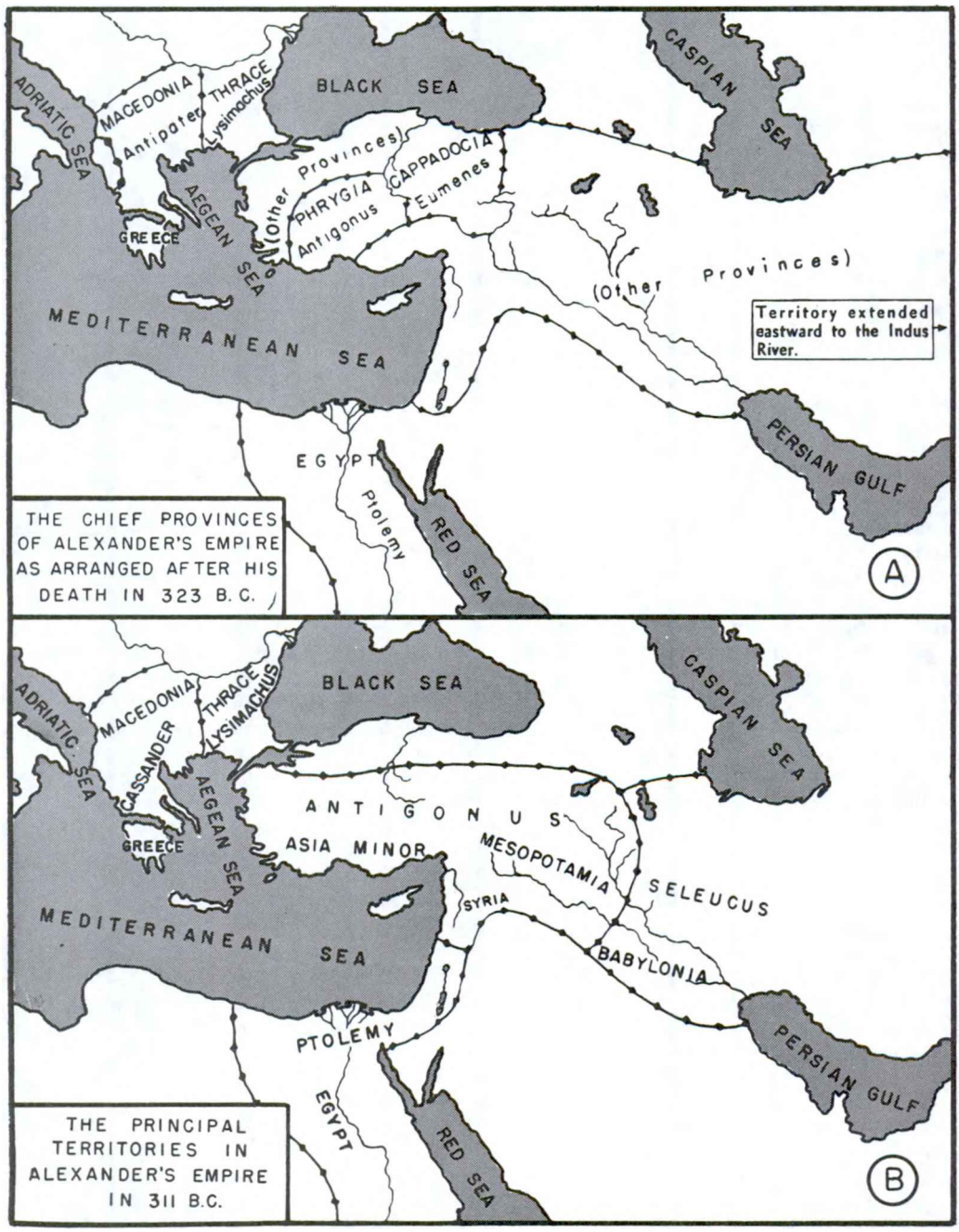
It is clear from history that the world power succeeding the third prophetic empire was Rome. However, the transition was gradual so that it is impossible to point to a specific event as marking the change. As already stated, the empire of Alexander was divided after 301 into four (later three) Hellenistic kingdoms (see on ch. 8:8), and their replacement by the Roman Empire was a gradual process in several principal stages. Writers differ in attempting to choose a significant turning point.

By 200 B.C., when Carthage was no longer a rival (although it was not destroyed until more than half a century later), Rome was the mistress of the western Mediterranean and had begun to enter into contacts with the East, where she was thenceforth to become dominant also. In 197 Rome defeated Macedonia and set up the Greek states under her own protection. In 190 Rome defeated Antiochus III and took the Seleucid territory as far east as the Taurus Mountains. In 168, at the Battle of Pydna, Rome ended the monarchy in Macedonia, dividing it up into four confederacies; and probably in the same year warned Antiochus IV away from his attack on Egypt. In 146 Rome annexed Macedonia as a province and placed most of the Greek cities under the governor of Macedonia.

If Rome's mastery of the East is reckoned from the removal of the monarchs of the three Hellenistic kingdoms, by Roman power, the date 168 may be regarded as the first step in the process. However, the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings remained on their thrones till much later, 63 in Syria and 30 in Egypt. If the dates of the annexation of these three kingdoms as Roman provinces are chosen, the dates would be 146, 64, and 30 respectively. Some historians emphasize 168 because by that time Rome had conquered Macedonia and had saved Egypt from falling to the Seleucid kingdom by merely forbidding the invasion of Antiochus IV. This demonstrated that Rome virtually controlled all three kingdoms even though she had as yet conquered only one of them.

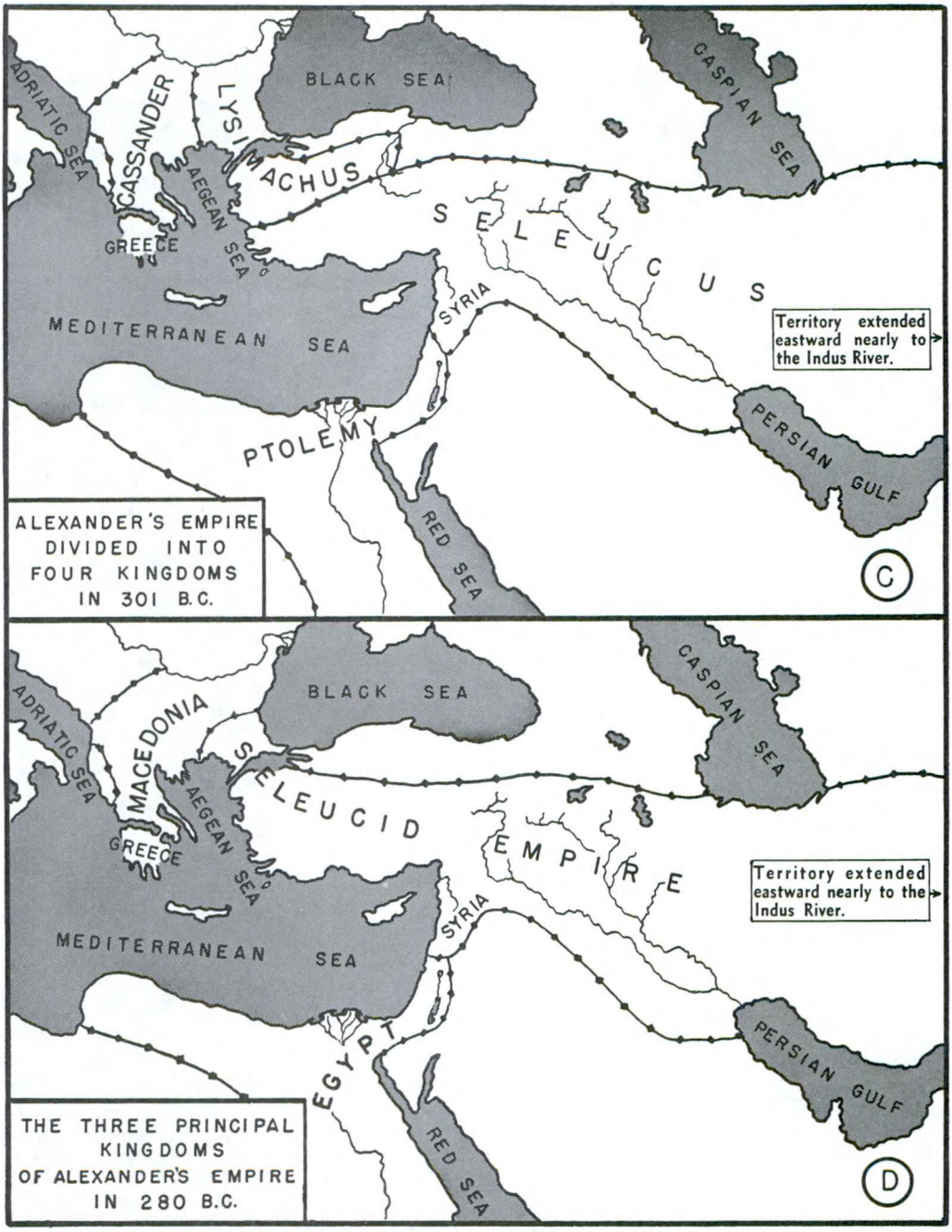
No single date can be given for a gradual process. Regardless of one's choice of the most significant date or dates, the change of world power to Rome is clear, and the absorption of the territory of Alexander from Macedonia to the Euphrates was completed in 30 B.C. See article on the intertestament period in Vol. V.

Great iron teeth. These enormous metallic teeth speak of cruelty and strength. As the animal tore to pieces and devoured its prey with these grotesque fangs, so Rome devoured nations and peoples in its conquests. Sometimes whole cities were destroyed, as in the case of Corinth in 146 B.C., then again kingdoms, such as



(A) Immediately after Alexander died, in 323 B.C., his generals distributed among themselves the provinces of the empire. These they governed nominally under the authority of the regency for the two puppet kings, Alexander's weak-minded half brother Philip and the posthumous infant Alexander. Antipater was in command in Europe; in Asia, Perdiccas, who had control of the kings. Other leaders held the chief provinces; those in the east remained as they had been in Alexander's lifetime. A struggle for supremacy soon broke out among the leaders, in which Perdiccas and others were eliminated and the various generals jockeyed for power. In 321 the armies met for the last formal distribution. New names appear, such as Seleucus as satrap of Babylonia. The new regent, Antipater, lasted only two years, and the struggle for dominance long continued among the leading generals.

(B) The truce of 311 B.C. ended a stalemated war in which Antigonus had emerged as the strongest of five principal leaders, though his attempts to control the whole empire had been blocked by the other four. The war had begun soon after the murder of Philip (317). Antigonus drove Seleucus from Babylon (316) and claimed a regent's authority over the other satraps. The principal struggle was between Antigonus and the coalition of Cassander (son of Antipater), Lysimachus, and Ptolemy, with whom Seleucus had sought refuge; but it involved other leaders of lesser importance. There were varied conflicts in Greece, the islands, and elsewhere, and boundaries shifted repeatedly. Seleucus regained Babylon (312) and subsequently consolidated the eastern provinces. Not long after the truce the second king, Alexander's son, was killed, and the struggle for power went on.



(C) In 301 B.C. the question of the unification or the division of Alexander's empire was settled. The final phase of the long conflict had begun when Antigonus in 306 declared himself king (jointly with his son Demetrius) of the whole empire. Then the four allies, Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, assumed the royal title in their respective territories. The issue of one kingdom or four was decided at the battle of Ipsus, in 301. Antigonus was killed and his territory fell to Lysimachus and Seleucus. Demetrius was left with no kingdom, only a fleet, a number of coastal cities, and a foothold in Greece. Henceforth there was no hope of a unified empire; at this decisive moment it irrevocably fell apart, and four principal kingdoms (plus minor fragments) emerged. This decisive partition of Alexander's empire was not permanent; later one of the four kingdoms was eliminated.

(D) After Seleucus defeated and killed Lysimachus in 281 B.C. there remained three great Hellenistic kingdoms dominating the Near East: Macedonia, the Seleucid empire (Syria), and Egypt. Macedonia, previously taken by Lysimachus, did not fall to Seleucus; he was killed (280) before he could take it over. It soon afterward fell to Antigonus, son of Demetrius, and thenceforth was held by the Antigonid line of kings. For some years large parts of Asia Minor were ruled by the Seleucid kings, though almost immediately after the death of Lysimachus the invading Gauls overran part of it, and other fragments fell away (Lysimachus' territory eventually becoming a welter of small states, including Pergamum). The Seleucids later lost all but Syria. Before the time of Christ the three Hellenistic kingdoms, Macedonia, Syria, and Egypt, each successively became a Roman province.

Macedonia and the Seleucid dominions had been, were divided into provinces.

Stamped the residue. Where Rome did not destroy or subjugate a people, it often employed them as slaves or sold them into slavery. In the intensity of its power to destroy, Rome surpassed the kingdoms that had previously ruled the world.

Ten horns. Explained as "ten kings" (v. 24). If the "four kings" of v. 17 represent kingdoms (see on v. 3), parallel to the four empires of ch. 2, then there is fully as much reason to understand these "ten kings" as kingdoms also, even as the four horns of the goat are "four kingdoms" (ch. 8:22). The successive invasions of the Roman Empire by numerous Germanic tribes, and the replacement of the empire by a number of separate states or monarchies, are well established facts of history. Owing to the fact that a score or more barbarian tribes invaded the Roman Empire, commentators have compiled various lists of the kingdoms that were founded. The following list is representative: Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Franks, Vandals, Suevi, Alamanni, Anglo-Saxons, Heruli, Lombards, Burgundians. Some prefer to list the Huns in place of the Alamanni, however the Huns disappeared early without leaving a settled kingdom. The period was one of great upheaval, confusion, and change, during which a large number of states secured their independence.

8. Another little horn. Better, "another horn, a little one." Though small at the beginning, this little horn is described later as "more stout than his fellows," literally, "greater than its companions." It will be seen that this was the continuation of the Roman power in the Roman Church.

"Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the 'giant form' of the Roman Church" (A. C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church* [1900], p. 150). See further on vs. 24, 25.

"Under the Roman Empire the popes had no temporal powers. But when the Roman Empire had disintegrated and its place had been taken by a number of rude, barbarous kingdoms, the Roman Catholic church not only became independent of the states in religious affairs but dominated secular affairs as well. At times, under such rulers as Charlemagne (768-814), Otto the Great (936-73), and Henry III (1039-56), the civil power controlled the church to some extent; but in general, under the weak political system of feudalism, the well-organized, unified, and centralized church, with the pope at its head, was not only independent in ecclesiastical affairs but also controlled civil affairs" (Carl Conrad Eckhardt, *The Papacy and World-Affairs* [1937], p. 1).

Before. Aramaic *qodam,* a word occurring frequently in Daniel, meaning either "before in point of time," or "in the presence of." The phrase "before whom" may be interpreted as meaning "to make way for him."

Three of the first horns. The "little horn" is a symbol of papal Rome. Hence the plucking up of three horns symbolizes the overthrow of three of the barbarian nations. Among the principal obstructions to the rise of papal Rome to political power were the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. All three were supporters of Arianism, which was the most formidable rival of Catholicism.

The Heruli were the first of the barbarian tribes to rule over Rome. They were German auxiliary troops in Rome who mutinied, and in 476 deposed the boy Romulus Augustus, the last emperor of the West. At the head of the Heruli and the other mercenary troops was Odovacar (Odoacer), who made himself king in Rome. Odovacar, an Arian, though tolerant toward the Catholics, was hated by the Italians. At the suggestion of the Emperor Zeno of the Eastern Empire, Theodoric, leader of the Ostrogoths, next invaded Italy. He arrived there in 489, and in 493 secured Odovacar's surrender and soon afterward killed him (see Thomas Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders,* vol. 3, pp. 180-213).

So far as the position of the Roman Church was concerned the arrival of Theodoric marked no change for the better, but merely a change of leaders. Theodoric was as strong an Arian as his predecessor on the throne of Italy. Although he granted toleration to the various religions in his kingdom, the lofty ambitions of

the Roman pontiff could not succeed under a system that granted only toleration.

In the meantime the Vandals, led by Gaiseric (Genseric), had settled in North Africa, having taken Carthage in 439. Being fanatically Arian and warlike, they posed a threat to the supremacy of the Catholic Church in the West. They were particularly intolerant toward the Catholics, whom they termed heretics. To help the cause of the Catholics in the West the Emperor Justinian, who ruled the Eastern half of the Roman Empire in Constantinople, dispatched Belisarius, the ablest of his generals. Belisarius completely vanquished the Vandals in 534.

This victory left the Ostrogoths in Italy as the sole surviving Arian power of significance to hinder the hegemony of the papacy in the West (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, ch. 15). Having wiped out the Vandals, Belisarius in 534 began his campaign against the Ostrogoths in Italy. Though this campaign lasted for twenty years before the imperial armies emerged completely victorious (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 5, pp. 3-66), the decisive action occurred early in the campaign. The Ostrogoths, who had been driven from Rome, returned and laid siege to it in 537. The siege lasted for a full year, but in 538 Justinian landed another army in Italy, and in March the Ostrogoths abandoned the siege (see Hodgkin, *op. cit.*, vol. 4, pp. 73-113, 210-252; Charles Diehl, "Justinian," in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2, p. 15). It is true that they re-entered the city for a very brief time in 540, but their stand was short-lived. Their withdrawal from Rome in 538 marked the real end of Ostrogothic power, though not of the Ostrogothic nation. Thus was "plucked up" the third of the three horns that stood in the way of the little horn.

Justinian is noted not only for his success in temporarily reuniting Italy and parts of the West with the Eastern half of what had been the Roman Empire, but also for the gathering and organizing of the then-existing laws of the empire, including new edicts of Justinian himself, into a unified code. Incorporated into this imperial code were two official letters of Justinian, which had all the force of royal edicts, in which he legally confirmed the bishop of Rome as the "head of all the holy churches" and "head of all the holy priests of God" (Code of Justinian, book 1, title 1). In the later epistle he also commends the pope's activities as corrector of heretics.

Although this legal recognition of the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy was dated in 533, it is obvious that the imperial edict could not become effective for the pope so long as the Arian Ostrogothic kingdom was in control of Rome and the greater part of Italy. Not until the rule of the Goths was broken could the papacy be free to develop fully its power. In 538, for the first time since the end of the Western imperial line, the city of Rome was freed from the domination of an Arian kingdom. In that year the Ostrogothic kingdom received its deathblow (although the Ostrogoths survived some years longer as a people). That is why 538 is a more significant date than 533.

To summarize: (1) The pope had already been recognized generally (though by no means universally) as supreme bishop in the churches of the West, and had exercised considerable political influence, from time to time, under the patronage of the Western emperors. (2) In 533 Justinian recognized the pope's ecclesiastical supremacy as "head of all the holy churches" in both East and West, and this legal recognition was incorporated into the imperial code of laws (534). (3) In 538 the papacy was effectively freed from the domination of the Arian kingdoms that followed the Western emperors in the control of Rome and Italy. From then on the papacy was in a position to increase its ecclesiastical power. The other kingdoms became Catholic, one by one, and since the distant Eastern emperors did not retain control of Italy, in the turbulent developments that followed, the pope emerged often as the leading figure in the West. The papacy acquired territorial rule and eventually it reached its peak in political as well as religious dominance in Europe (see Additional Note at the end of this chapter). Though this dominance came much later, the turning point can be found in the time of Justinian.

Some find it significant that Vigilius, the pope who held office in 538, had, the year before, replaced a pope who had been under Gothic influence. The new pope owed his office to the Empress Theodora, and was regarded by Justinian as the means of uniting all the churches, East and West, under his own imperial dominance. It has been pointed out that, beginning with Vigilius, the popes were more and more men of the state as well as of the church, and often became rulers of the state (Charles Bemont and G. Monod, *Medieval Europe,* p. 121).

This horn. With the ten horns representing the divided state of the Roman Empire after its fall (see on v. 7), the little horn must represent some power that would come into being among them and take the place of some of these kingdoms (see quotation in comments on ch. 8:23).

Eyes. Generally taken to be a symbol of intelligence. In contrast with the barbarians, who were largely illiterate, the power represented by the "little horn" was noted for its intelligence, its insight, and its foresight.

Speaking great things. See on v. 25.

9. Cast down. Aramaic *remah.* The word also means "to place," or "to set up," though it may also mean "to throw" (chs. 3:20; 6:16, 24). The LXX has *tithēmi,* which is defined, "to set up," "to place," "to erect." The translation "cast down" seems to have been based on an interpretation that regarded the thrones as belonging to the beasts. A symbolic representation of the great final assize, fixing the destinies of men and of nations, is here brought to view.

The Ancient of days. The Aramaic reads literally, "an Ancient of days," or "One, ancient of days." The expression is descriptive rather than being a title. The article is used in vs. 13, 22 as an article of previous reference, that is, its function is to refer to the Being earlier described. God the Father is represented.

Whose garment. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the representations of symbolic visions. "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). Daniel saw only a representation of the Deity. To what extent the representation reflected the reality cannot be known. In vision Deity is presented in various forms, the form assumed generally having reference to the teaching objective of the vision. In a vision of the second advent, John saw Jesus as sitting upon a white horse, clothed in a garment dipped in blood, and having a sword proceeding out of His mouth (Rev. 19:11-15). Obviously we do not expect to see our Saviour thus clothed, equipped, or mounted when He returns. But each of these features has instructive value (see on Rev. 19:11-15). In Daniel's vision we may see in the white garment a symbol of purity and in the white hair a mark of antiquity, but to go beyond symbolization and to speculate on the appearance of Him who dwelleth "in the light which no man can approach unto" (1 Tim. 6:16) is to enter the realm of forbidden theorizing (see 8T 279). That God is a personal being cannot be doubted. "God is a spirit; yet He is a personal being, for man was made in His image" (8T 263). "Let none indulge in speculation regarding His nature. Here silence is eloquence" (8T 279). On the interpretation of symbolic visions see on Eze. 1:10.

10. Thousand thousands. These represent the heavenly angels who wait before the Lord and are ever attendant on His will. The angels perform an important part in the judgment. They function as both "ministers and witnesses" (GC 479).

Was set. Or, "began to sit." Daniel is shown the final judgment in both its phases, investigative and executive.

In the investigative judgment the records of all who have at one time or another professed allegiance to Christ will be examined. The investigation is not conducted for the information of God or of Christ, but for the information of the universe at large—that God may be vindicated in accepting some and rejecting others. Satan claims all men as his lawful subjects. Those for whom Jesus pleads in judgment, Satan accuses before God; but Jesus defends their penitence and faith. As a result of the judgment a register of those who will be citizens of the future kingdom of Christ will have been made up. This register includes the names of men and women from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. John speaks of

the ransomed in the new earth as "the nations" of the saved (Rev. 21:24).

The books were opened. Compare Rev. 20:12. The following classification appears in GC 480, 481: (1) the book of life, wherein are recorded the names of all those who have accepted the service of God; (2) the book of remembrance, a record of the good deeds of the saints; and (3) a record of the sins of men. In the record of a vision of the executive phase of the judgment at the end of the 1000 years the following classification appears: (1) the book of life, containing a record of the good deeds of the saints; (2) the book of death, containing the record of the evil deeds of the unrepentant, (3) the statute book, the Bible, according to whose standard men are judged (EW 52).

11. I beheld. In prophetic vision Daniel saw one event rapidly following another. Note the repetition of the statements "I beheld" and "I saw" throughout the narrative of the visions. These clauses introduce the transition from one scene to the next.

Great words. See on v. 25.

Was slain. This represents the end of the system, or organization, symbolized by the horn. Paul presents the same power under the title "man of sin," "son of perdition," "that Wicked," and speaks of its destruction at the second coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2:3-8; cf. Rev. 19:19-21).

12. Dominion taken away. The territory of Babylon was made subject to Persia, yet the subjects of Babylon were allowed to live on. Similarly, when Macedonia conquered Persia and when Rome conquered Macedonia, the inhabitants of the conquered countries were not destroyed. With the final destruction of the little-horn power the whole world will be depopulated (see on v. 11).

13. Like the Son of man. Aramaic *kebar 'enash,* literally, "like a son of man." According to Aramaic usage, the phrase could be rendered "like a man" (Hans Bauer and Pontus Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* [Halle, 1927], p. 315d). The LXX has, *hōs huios anthrōpou,* also literally, "like a son of man."

Many of the revised translations (see RV, RSV, etc.) follow this literal rendering. Some have felt that such a rendering detracts from the majesty of our Redeemer. The English phrase "a son of man" is admittedly indefinite in tone. However, the corresponding phrase in the Aramaic is full of meaning. Along with other ancient languages, the Aramaic omits the article when the primary stress is upon quality, and uses it when the stress is on identity. The normal order in prophetic narrative is for the prophet first to describe what he has seen, and later to give attention to identity. Prophetic items are usually introduced without the article. When subsequently referred to, the article is employed (see on v. 9). Thus there were "four great beasts" (v. 3), not "the four great beasts," but later "all the beasts" (v. 7). The Ancient of days was introduced as "One, ancient in days" (see on v. 9) but later referred to as "the Ancient of days" (vs. 13, 22; see on v. 9). Compare further, "a ram" and "the ram," "two horns" and "the two horns," "an he goat" and "the he goat" (ch. 8: 3-8), etc. In harmony with this rule the Son of God is introduced literally as "One, of human form." He is not again referred to by this expression in this prophecy. If He were, the definite article would probably appear. In the NT the expression "Son of man" which most commentators agree is based on ch. 7:13, occurs almost invariably with the article.

Instead of the translation "a son of man" the translation "One, human in form" would more adequately represent the Aramaic phrase. God chose to present His Son in prophetic vision with special emphasis on His humanity (see MB 14).

At the incarnation the Son of God took upon Himself the form of humanity (John 1:1-4, 12, 14; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; etc.) and became the Son of man (see on Mark 2:10). so uniting divinity with humanity by a tie never to be broken (DA 25). Thus, repentant sinners have as their representative before the Father "one like" themselves, One who was in all points tempted like as they are and who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities (Heb. 4:15). Comforting thought!

Came to the Ancient of days. This cannot

represent the second coming of Christ to this earth, for Christ comes to "the Ancient of days." The coming of Christ to the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary is here represented (GC 426, 480).

14. Given him dominion. In Luke 19:12-15 Christ is represented as a nobleman who took his journey into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. At the close of His priestly ministry in the sanctuary, while still in heaven, Christ receives the kingdom from His Father and then returns to earth for His saints (see GC 428; EW 55, 280).

15. Grieved. Aramaic *kerah,* "to be distressed."

16. One of them. This being is not identified. Here, Daniel is still in vision, and the being he addresses is probably one of the attendants at the judgment. Whenever we inquire with a sincere heart for spiritual enlightenment, the Lord has one standing by to help us. Angels are eager to communicate truth to men. They are ministering spirits (Heb. 1:14), commissioned by God to bring messages from heaven to earth (Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2; Rev. 1:1).

17. Four kings. See on vs. 3-7.

18. Take the kingdom. All earthly kings and governments will pass away, but the kingdom of the Most High will endure forever. The usurpation and misrule of the wicked may last for a time, but soon it will be at an end. Then this earth will be restored to its rightful Owner, who will share it with the saints. Those who have long been destitute and despised by men will soon be honored and exalted by God.

For ever, even for ever and ever. The repetition of the phrase emphasizes the idea of perpetuity. There is nothing transitory about the occupancy of the restored earth. The lease will never expire, and the inhabitants will be secure in their own dwelling places. "They shall not build" only to have someone else take over the building. "They shall not plant," and another eat the fruit, for the "elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isa. 65:22).

19. Know the truth. Compare v. 7. Daniel repeats the specifications earlier described. He is particularly interested in the fourth beast so different in appearance and activity from the preceding. His query dramatically focuses attention on the great persecuting power of history (see on vs. 24, 25).

20. Stout. Aramaic *rab,* "large," "great," "big." The clause reads literally, "whose appearance was bigger than that of its companions." Though small at the beginning, this little horn grew until it became greater than any of the other horns. This power would gain superiority over all other earthly powers. For an interpretation of the specifications here noted, see on vs. 24, 25.

21. Made war with the saints. This little horn represented a persecuting power, carrying on a campaign of extermination against the people of God (see on v. 25).

Prevailed against them. For many long centuries (see on v. 25) the saints seemed to be helpless against this destructive force.

22. Ancient of days came. Daniel is relating events as they appeared to him in vision. By the *coming* of the Ancient of days he means the appearance of this Being on the prophetic screen. On the significance of the events see on vs. 9-14.

Judgment was given. Not only would judgment be given in favor of the saints, but according to Paul (1 Cor. 6:2, 3) and John (Rev. 20:4) the saints will assist in the work of judgment during the 1000 years (see GC 661).

23. Devour. See on v. 7.

24. Ten horns. On the divisions of the Roman Empire see on v. 7.

From the first. Better, "from the former [horns]." The word for "first" is plural. The former represented political kingdoms. The power represented by this unique horn was religio-political in nature. The papacy was an ecclesiastical kingdom ruled over by a pontiff; the other kingdoms were political powers ruled by kings.

25. Great words. Aramaic *millin* (singular *millah),* simply, "words." The word "great" is supplied. The expressions "great things" (v. 8) and "very great things" (v. 20) are translations of the Aramaic *rabreban. Millah* is translated "thing" in chs. 2:5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17; 4:33; 5:15,

26; 6:12; "matter" in chs. 2:23; 7:1, 28; "word" in chs. 2:9; 3:28; 4:31; 5:10; 7:11, 25; and "commandment" in ch. 3:22.

Against. Aramaic *lesad. Ṣad* literally means "side." *Leṣad* may be interpreted as meaning "over against," implying that in its opposition to the Most High the little horn would set itself up as being equal with God (see on 2 Thess. 2:4; cf. Isa. 14: 12-14).

Ecclesiastical literature is replete with exhibits of the arrogant, blasphemous claims of the papacy. Typical examples are the following extracts from a large encyclopedic work written by a Roman Catholic divine of the 18th century:

"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God. . . .

"The Pope is crowned with a triple crown, as king of heaven and of earth and of the lower regions. . . .

"The Pope is as it were God on earth, sole sovereign of the faithful of Christ, chief of kings, having plenitude of power, to whom has been intrusted by the omnipotent God direction not only of the earthly but also of the heavenly kingdom. . . .

"The Pope is of so great authority and power that he can modify, explain, or interpret even divine laws. . . .

"The Pope can modify divine law, since his power is not of man but of God, and he acts as vicegerent of God upon earth with most ample power of binding and loosing his sheep.

"Whatever the Lord God himself, and the Redeemer, is said to do, that his vicar does, provided that he does nothing contrary to the faith" (translated from Lucius Ferraris, "Papa II," *Prompta Bibliotheca,* Vol. VI, pp. 25-29).

Wear out. Or, "wear away." The event is earlier described in the words, "the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (v. 21). The phrase depicts continuous and relentless persecution. The papacy acknowledges that it has persecuted, and defends such acts as a legitimate exercise of power presumably granted her by Christ. The following is from *The Catholic Encyclopedia:*

"In the Bull 'Ad exstirpanda' (1252) Innocent IV says: 'When those adjudged guilty of heresy have been given up to the civil power by the bishop or his representative, or the Inquisition, the podestà or chief magistrate of the city shall take them at once, and shall, within five days at the most, execute the laws made against them.' . . . Nor could any doubt remain as to what civil regulations were meant, for the passages which ordered the burning of impenitent heretics were inserted in the papal decretals from the imperial constitutions 'Commissis nobis' and 'Inconsutibilem tunicam.' The aforesaid Bull 'Ad exstirpanda' remained thenceforth a fundamental document of the Inquisition, renewed or re-enforced by several popes, Alexander IV (1254-61), Clement IV (1265-68), Nicholas IV (1288-92), Boniface VIII (1294-1303), and others. The civil authorities, therefore, were enjoined by the popes, under pain of excommunication to execute the legal sentences that condemned impenitent heretics to the stake" (Joseph Blötzer, art. "Inquisition," Vol. VIII, p. 34).

Think. Aramaic *sebar,* "to mean to," "to intend," "to strive," "to endeavor." A deliberate attempt is indicated (see GC 446).

Times. Aramaic *zimnin* (singular, *zeman*), a term denoting fixed time, as in chs. 3:7, 8; 4:36; 6:10, 13, or a period of time, as in chs. 2:16; 7:12 (where *zeman* is translated "season"). A suggestion as to the meaning of the expression "to change times" is given in ch. 2:21, where the identical Aramaic words for "change" and "times" are again coupled together. However, Daniel there ascribes to God the prerogative to change times. It is God who has the destiny of nations under His control. It is He who "removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (ch. 2:21). "Above, and through all the play and counter-play of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, [are] silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (Ed 173). It is God who determines also the "time" (Aramaic *zeman*) that the saints shall possess the kingdom (ch. 7:22). For the little horn to endeavor to change times would indicate a deliberate attempt to exercise the prerogative of God in shaping the course of human history.

Laws. Aramaic *dath,* used of both human (chs. 2:9, 13, 15; 6:8, 12, 15) and divine (Ezra 7:12, 14, 21, 25, 26) law. Here it is evident that divine law is referred to, inasmuch as human law is changed at will by those in authority, and such changes would hardly become the subject of prophecy. Inquiring as to whether the papacy has endeavored to change divine law, we find the answer in the great apostasy of the early Christian centuries that introduced numerous doctrines and practices contrary to the will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The most audacious change was in the matter of the weekly day of worship. The apostate church freely admits it is responsible for the introduction of Sunday worship, claiming that it has the right to make such changes (see GC 446). An authoritative catechism for priests says: "But the Church of God [that is, the apostate church] has in her wisdom ordained that the celebration of the Sabbath day should be transferred to 'the Lord's day' " (*Catechism of the Council of Trent,* Donovan translation, 1829 ed., p. 358). This catechism was written by order of this great council, and published under the auspices of Pope Pius V.

Throughout NT times Christians observed the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath (see on Acts 17:2). The transition from Sabbath to Sunday was a gradual process that began sometime before A.D 150 and continued for some three centuries. The first historical references to the observance of Sunday by professed Christians occur in the *Epistle of Barnabas* (ch. 15) and in Justin Martyr's *First Apology* (ch. 67), both dating from about A.D. 150. Both denounce Sabbath observance and urge that of Sunday. The first authentic references to Sunday as the "Lord's day" come from the apocryphal *Gospel According to Peter* and from Clement of Alexandria (*Miscellanies,* v. 14), toward the close of the 2d century.

Prior to the Jewish revolt under Bar Cocheba, A.D. 132-135, the Roman Empire recognized Judaism as a legal religion and Christianity as a Jewish sect. But as a result of this revolt Jews and Judaism were discredited. To avoid the persecution that followed, Christians henceforth sought by every means possible to make it clear that they were not Jews. Repeated references by Christian writers of the next three centuries to the observance of the Sabbath as "Judaizing," together with the fact that no historical references to the Christian observance of Sunday as a sacred day occur prior to the Jewish revolt, point to the period A.D. 135-150 as the time when Christians began to attach Sabbath sacredness to the first day of the week.

The observance of Sunday did not, however, immediately replace that of the Sabbath, but accompanied and supplemented it. For several centuries Christians observed both days. Early in the 3d century, for instance, Tertullian observed that Christ did not rescind the Sabbath. A little later the apocryphal *Apostolic Constitutions* (ii. 36) admonished Christians to "keep the Sabbath and the Lord's day festival."

By the early 4th century Sunday had achieved definite official preference over the Sabbath. In his *Commentary on Psalm 92* Eusebius, foremost church historian of the period, wrote, "All things whatsoever it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day, as more appropriately belonging to it, because it has a precedence and is first in rank, and more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath."

The first official action of the Catholic Church expressing preference for Sunday was taken at the Council of Laodicea, in the 4th century. Canon 29 of this council stipulates that "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday [Sabbath], but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honor, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ." This council made provision for Sabbath worship, but designated the day as a work day. It is worthy of note that this, the first ecclesiastical law enjoining the observance of Sunday, specifies Judaizing as the reason for avoiding the observance of the Sabbath. Furthermore, the stern injunction against Sabbath observance is evidence that many were still "Judaizing" on that day. Indeed, the writers of the 4th and 5th centuries repeatedly warn their fellow Christians against this practice. About the year 400, for instance, Chrysostom observes that many

were still keeping the Sabbath in the Jewish manner, and thus Judaizing.

Contemporary records also reveal the fact that the churches in Alexandria and Rome were chiefly responsible for promoting Sunday observance. About A.D. 440 the church historian Socrates wrote that "although almost all churches throughout the world celebrate the sacred mysteries on the Sabbath every week, yet the Christians of Alexandria and at Rome, on account of some ancient tradition, have ceased to do this" (*Ecclesiastical History* v. 22). About the same time Sozomen wrote that "the people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria."

Three facts are thus clear: (1) The concept of Sunday sacredness among Christians originated, primarily, in their effort to avoid practices that would tend to identify them with Jews, and thus lead to persecution. (2) The church at Rome early developed a preference for Sunday; and the increasing importance attached to Sunday in the early church, at the expense of the Sabbath, closely parallels Rome's gradual rise to power. (3) Finally, Roman influence prevailed to make the observance of Sunday a matter of church law, as it did with many other practices such as the worship of Mary, the veneration of saints and angels, the use of images, and prayers for the dead. Sunday sacredness rests upon the same basis as these other nonscriptural practices introduced into the church by the bishop of Rome.

A time and times and the dividing of time. The Aramaic *'iddan,* here translated "time," occurs also in ch. 4:16, 23, 25, 32. In these passages the word *'iddan* undoubtedly means "a year" (see on ch. 4:16). The word translated "times," also from *'iddan,* was pointed by the Masoretes as a plural, but scholars generally agree that it should have been pointed as a dual, thus denoting "two times." The word translated "dividing," *pelag,* may also be translated "half." Hence the more acceptable translation of the RSV, "a time, two times, and half a time."

A comparison with parallel prophecies calling attention to this same time period, but by other designations, enables us to calculate the length of time involved. In Rev. 12:14 the period is denominated "a time, and times, and half a time." The same period is referred to earlier in the chapter by the designation "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" (Rev. 12:6). In Rev. 11:2, 3 the expression "a thousand two hundred and threescore days" is equated with "forty and two months." Thus it is clear that a period of three and a half times equals 42 months, which in turn equals 1260 days, and that a "time" represents 12 months, or 360 days. This period may be denominated a prophetic year. However, a *prophetic* year of 360 days, or 12 30-day months, must not be confused either with a Jewish calendar year, which was a lunar year of variable length (with both 29-day and 30-day months), or with a solar calendar year of 365 days (see Vol. II, pp. 111, 112). A prophetic year means 360 prophetic days, but a prophetic day stands for a solar year.

This distinction may be explained thus: A 360-day prophetic year is not literal, but symbolic; hence its 360 days are prophetic, not literal, days. By the year-day principle, as illustrated in Num. 14:34 and Eze. 4:6, a day in symbolic prophecy stands for a literal year. Thus a prophetic year, or "time," represents 360 literal, natural years, and similarly a period of 1260 or 2300 or any other number of prophetic days means as many literal, actual years (that is, full solar years as marked off by the seasons, which are controlled by the sun). Although the number of days in each lunar year was variable, the Jewish calendar was corrected by the occasional addition of an extra month (see Vol. II, p. 104), so that for Bible writers—as for us—a long series of years always equaled the same number of natural solar years. For the historical application of the year-day principle see pp. 39-76.

The validity of the year-day principle has been demonstrated by the precise fulfillment of various prophecies calculated by this method, notably the 1260 days and the 70 weeks. A period of three and a half literal years falls absurdly short of fulfilling the requirements of the 1260-day prophecies

in regard to the papacy. But when, by the year-day principle, the period is extended to 1260 years, the prophecy meets a unique fulfillment.

In July, 1790, thirty Roman Catholic bishops appeared before the leaders of the revolutionary government of France to protest legislation designed to free the French clergy from the jurisdiction of the pope and to make them directly responsible to the government. Were the leaders of the Revolution, they inquired, going to leave all religions free "except that which was once supreme, which was maintained by the piety of our fathers and by all the laws of the State, and has been for twelve hundred years the national religion?" (A. Aulard, *Christianity and the French Revolution,* p. 70).

The prophetic period of the little horn began in A.D. 538, when the Ostrogoths abandoned the siege of Rome, and the bishop of Rome, released from Arian control, was free to exercise the prerogatives of Justinian's decree of 533, and thenceforth to increase the authority of the "Holy See" (see on v. 8). Exactly 1260 years later (1798), the spectacular victories of the armies of Napoleon in Italy placed the pope at the mercy of the French revolutionary government, which now advised him that the Roman religion would always be the irreconcilable enemy of the Republic, and added that "there is one thing even more essential to the attainment of the end desired, and that is to destroy, if possible, the centre of unity of the Roman Church; and it is for you, who unite in your person the most distinguished qualities of the general and of the enlightened politician, to realize this aim if you consider it practicable" (*Ibid.,* p. 158). In response to these instructions and at the command of Napoleon, Berthier, with a French army, entered Rome, proclaimed the political rule of the papacy at an end and took the pope prisoner, carrying him off to France, where he died in exile.

The overthrow of the papacy in 1798 marks the climax of a long series of events connected with its progressive decline, and also the conclusion of the prophetic period of 1260 years. For a more complete outline of the rise and decline of the papacy, see Additional Note at the end of this chapter.

26. The judgment shall sit. See on vs. 9-11. The judgment will pass sentence of extinction upon the papacy. This power will continue its war against the saints to the very last. Then its dominion over them will be forever removed, and it will be consumed.

27. Shall be given. Here is a reassuring glimpse of the final outcome of all the turmoil and persecution through which the saints have passed. Blessed thought! Christ is soon to return for His saints and usher them into their everlasting kingdom and reward.

All dominions. In the restored earth, the abode of the righteous, there will be no discord or disaffection. One pulse of harmony will beat throughout the entire universe. All who are saved will render willing obedience to God and abide in His blessed presence forever.

28. My cogitations. Or, "my thoughts."

Troubled. Or, "frightened."

Countenance. Aramaic *ziw,* which according to some authorities means "complexion," according to others, "brightness," probably in the sense of "appearance." A revelation of the future history of the saints greatly astonished and saddened the prophet.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 7

The development of the great apostasy that culminated in the papacy was a gradual process that covered several centuries. The same is true of the decline of this power.

With respect to the future, Jesus warned His disciples, "Take heed that no man deceive you," for "many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many," performing "signs and wonders" in confirmation of their deceptive claims, "insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:4, 11, 24).

Paul, speaking by inspiration, declared that men would "arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29, 30). The result would be a "falling away" in which the power he

refers to as "that man of sin" and "the mystery of iniquity" would be revealed, opposing truth, exalting itself above God, and usurping the authority of God over the church (2 Thess. 2:3, 4). This power, which, he warned, was already at work in a limited way (v. 7), would operate "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (v. 9). The subtle manner of its rise was to be so cleverly camouflaged that none but those who sincerely believed and loved the truth would be safe from its deceptive claims (vs. 10-12).

Before the close of the first century the apostle John wrote that "many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1), and a little later, that "many deceivers are entered into the world" (2 John 7). This, he said, is the "spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3).

These predictions warned of the presence of ominous forces already at work in the church, forces that foreshadowed heresy, schism, and apostasy of major proportions. Claiming prerogatives and authority that belong only to God, yet operating on satanic principles and by satanic methods, this instrument would eventually deceive the majority of Christians into accepting its leadership, and thus secure control of the church (see Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3-12).

In apostolic times each local congregation selected its own officers and regulated its own affairs. The church universal was nevertheless "one body" by virtue of the invisible operation of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the apostles, that united believers everywhere in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (see Eph. 4:3-6). Leaders in the local churches were to be men "full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:3), selected, qualified, and guided by the Holy Ghost (see Acts 13:2), and appointed (Acts 6:5) and ordained by the church (Acts 13:3).

As the church "left" its "first love" (Rev. 2:4), it forfeited its purity of doctrine, its high standards of personal conduct, and the invisible bond of unity provided by the Holy Spirit. In worship, formalism took the place of simplicity. Popularity and personal power came more and more to determine the choice of leaders, who first assumed increasing authority within the local church, then sought to extend their authority over neighboring churches.

Administration of the local church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit eventually gave way to ecclesiastical authoritarianism at the hands of a single official, the bishop, to whom every church member was personally subject and through whom alone he had access to salvation. Henceforth leadership thought only of ruling the church instead of serving it, and the "greatest" was no longer one who considered himself "servant of all." Thus, gradually, developed the concept of a priestly hierarchy that interposed between the individual Christian and his Lord.

According to writings attributed to Ignatius of Antioch, who died about 117, the presence of the bishop was essential to the celebration of religious rites and to the conduct of church business. Irenaeus (d. about 200) ranked bishops of the various churches according to the relative age and importance of the churches over which they presided. He accorded special honor to churches founded by the apostles, and held that all other churches should agree with the church in Rome in matters of faith and doctrine. Tertullian (d. 225) taught the supremacy of the bishop over the presbyters—locally elected elders.

Cyprian (d. about 258) is considered the founder of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He advocated the theory that there is but one true church, and that outside of it there is no access to salvation. He put forth the claim that Peter had founded the church in Rome, that the bishop of the church at Rome should therefore be honored above other bishops, and his opinions and decisions should always prevail. He emphasized the importance of direct apostolic succession, asserted the literal priesthood of the clergy, and taught that no church might celebrate religious rites or conduct its affairs without the presence and consent of the bishop.

Factors contributing to the ascendancy and eventual supremacy of the bishop of

Rome were: (1) As capital of the empire and metropolis of the civilized world Rome was the natural place for the headquarters of a world church. (2) The church at Rome was the only one in the West that claimed apostolic origin, a fact which, in those days, made it seem natural that the bishop of Rome should have priority over other bishops. Rome occupied a highly honorable position even before A.D. 100. (3) The removal of the political capital from Rome to Constantinople by Constantine (330) left the bishop of Rome comparatively free of imperial control, and thereafter the emperor rather consistently supported his claims as against those of other bishops. (4) In part, the Emperor Justinian strongly supported the bishop of Rome, and advanced his interests, by an imperial edict recognizing his supremacy over the churches of both East and West—an edict that could not become fully effective until after the breaking of the Ostrogothic hold on Rome in 538. (5) The success of the church at Rome in resisting various so-called heretical movements, notably Gnosticism and Montanism, gave to it a high reputation for orthodoxy, and contending factions elsewhere often appealed to the bishop of Rome to arbitrate their differences. (6) Theological controversies that divided and weakened the church in the East left the church at Rome free to devote itself to more practical problems and to take advantage of opportunities that arose to extend its authority. (7) Repeated instances of success in averting or mitigating barbarian attacks on Rome enhanced the political prestige of the papacy, and often in the absence of civil leadership the pope provided the city with the essential functions of civil government. (8) Mohammedan invasions hindered the church in the East, so eliminating Rome's only important rival. (9) The barbarian invaders of the West were already, for the most part, nominally converted to Christianity, and these invasions freed the pope from imperial control. (10) With the conversion of Clovis (496), king of the Franks, the papacy found a strong army to champion its interests, and effective help in converting other barbarous tribes.

Professing Christianity, Constantine the Great (d. 337) linked church and state, subordinated the church to the state, and made the church an instrument of state policy. His reorganization of the political administration of the Roman Empire became the pattern for the ecclesiastical administration of the Roman Church, and thus of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. About 343 the Synod of Sardica assigned the bishop of Rome jurisdiction over metropolitan bishops, or archbishops. Pope Innocent I (d. 417) claimed supreme jurisdiction over the entire Christian world, but was not able to exercise that power.

Augustine (d. 430), one of the great church Fathers and founder of medieval theology, maintained that Rome had always been supreme over the churches. His classic *The City of God* set forth in bold outline the Catholic ideal of a universal church in control of a universal state, and this provided the theoretical basis for the medieval papacy.

Leo I (the Great, d. 461) was the first bishop of Rome to proclaim that Peter had been the first pope, to assert the succession of the papacy from Peter, to claim primacy directly from Jesus Christ, and to succeed in applying these principles to papal administration of the affairs of the church. Leo I gave to the theory of papal power its final form, and made that power a reality. It was he who procured an edict from the emperor declaring that papal decisions have the force of law. With imperial support he set himself above the councils of the church, assuming the right to define doctrine and to dictate decisions. His success in persuading Attila not to enter Rome (452) and his attempt to stop Gaiseric (Genseric, 455) enhanced his prestige and that of the papacy. Leo the Great was definitely a temporal as well as a spiritual leader of his people. Later papal claims to temporal power were based largely on the supposed authority of forged documents known as "pious frauds," such as the so-called Donation of Constantine.

The conversion of Clovis, leader of the Franks, to the Roman faith about the year 496, when most of the barbarian invaders were still Arians, gave the pope a strong political ally willing to fight the battles

of the church. For more than twelve centuries the sword of France, the "eldest son" of the papacy, was an effective agent for the conversion of men to the Church of Rome and for maintaining papal authority.

The pontificate of Pope Gregory I (the Great, d. 604), first of the medieval prelates of the church, marks the transition from ancient to medieval times. Gregory boldly assumed the role, though not the title, of emperor in the West. He laid the basis for papal power throughout the Middle Ages, and it is from his administration in particular that later claims to papal absolutism date. Extensive missionary efforts begun by Gregory the Great greatly extended the influence and authority of Rome.

When, more than a century later, the Lombards threatened to overrun Italy, the pope appealed to Pepin, king of the Franks, to come to his assistance. Complying with the request, Pepin thoroughly defeated the Lombards and, in 756, presented the pope with the territory he had taken from them. This grant, commonly known as the Donation of Pepin, marks the origin of the Papal States and the formal beginning of the temporal rule of the pope.

From the seventh to the eleventh centuries papal power was, generally speaking, at ebb tide. The next great pope, and one of the greatest of them all, was Gregory VII (d. 1085). He proclaimed that the Roman Church had never erred and could never err, that the pope is supreme judge, that he may be judged by none, that there is no appeal from his decision, that he alone is entitled to the homage of all princes, and that he alone may depose kings and emperors.

For two centuries there was a running struggle between pope and emperor for supremacy, with sometimes one and sometimes the other achieving temporary success. The pontificate of Innocent III (d. 1216) found the papacy at the height of its power, and during the next century it was at the very zenith of its glory. Claiming to be the vicar of Christ, Innocent III exercised all the prerogatives claimed by Gregory a century and more earlier.

A century after Innocent III, the ideal medieval pope, Boniface VIII (d. 1303) attempted unsuccessfully to rule as his illustrious predecessors had ruled before him. He was the last pope to attempt to exercise universal authority as asserted by Gregory VII and maintained by Innocent III. The waning power of the papacy became fully evident during the so-called Babylonian Captivity (1309-77), when the French forcibly removed the seat of the papacy from Rome to Avignon, in France. Soon after the return to Rome, what is known as the Great Schism (1378-1417) broke out. During this time there were at least two, and sometimes three, rival popes, each denouncing and excommunicating his rivals and claiming to be the true pope. As a result the papacy suffered irreparable loss of prestige in the eyes of the peoples of Europe. Long before Reformation times many voices within and without the Catholic Church were raised in criticism of its arrogant claims and its many abuses of both secular and spiritual power. The rebirth of learning (Renaissance) in Western Europe, the age of discovery, the growth of strong national states, the invention of printing, and various other factors contributed to the gradual loss of papal power. By the time of Martin Luther much had already been done to undermine the authority of Rome.

The Reformation, commonly thought of as beginning in 1517, with the posting of the Ninety-five Theses, saw papal power driven from large areas of Northern Europe. Efforts of the papacy to combat the Reformation took such forms as the Inquisition, the Index, and the organization of the Jesuit order. The Jesuits became the intellectual and spiritual army of the church for the extermination of Protestantism. For nearly three centuries the Church of Rome carried on a vigorous but gradually losing struggle against the forces battling for civil and religious freedom.

Finally, during the course of the French Revolution, the Catholic Church was outlawed in France—the first nation of Europe to espouse its cause, the nation that had, for more than twelve centuries, championed its claims and fought its battles, the

nation where papal principles had been tested more fully than in any other land, and had been found wanting. In 1798 the French Government ordered the army operating in Italy under Berthier to take the pope prisoner. Though the papacy continued, its power was shorn, and it has never since wielded the same kind or measure of power that it did in former days. In 1870 the Papal States were completely absorbed into the united kingdom of Italy, the temporal power the papacy had formally exercised for more than 1,000 years came to an end, and the pope voluntarily became "the prisoner of the Vatican" until his temporal power was restored in 1929. See on ch. 7:25.

It is evident from this brief sketch that the rise of papal power was a gradual process covering many centuries. The same is true of its decline. The former process may be thought of as continuing from about A.D. 100 to 756; the latter, from about A.D. 1303 to 1870. The papacy was at the height of its power from the time of Gregory VII (1073-85) to that of Boniface VIII (1294-1303). It is thus clear that no dates can be given to mark a sharp transition from insignificance to supremacy, or from supremacy back to comparative weakness. As is true with all historical processes, the rise and fall of the papacy were both gradual developments.

However, by 538 the papacy was completely formed and functioning in all significant aspects, and by 1798, 1260 years later, it had lost practically all the power it had accumulated over a period of centuries. Inspiration allotted 1260 years to the papacy for a demonstration of its principles, its policies, and its objectives. Accordingly these two dates should be considered as marking the beginning and the end of the prophetic period of papal power.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-28 PK 548, 553, 554
2, 3 GC 440
9, 10 GC 479
10 EW 52; GC 414, 480, 512; LS 241; MH 417; MYP 330; PP 339, 357; 1T 100; 4T 384, 453, 482
13 Ed 132; GC 422
13, 14 GC 424, 426, 480
14 GC 427
18 AH 540; ML 273; PP 342
22 GC 661
25 DA 763; Ev 233; EW 33; GC 51, 54, 439, 446; LS 101; PK 178, 183, 184; SR 328, 331, 382; 1T 76; 9T 230
27 DA 828; EW 151, 280, 295; GC 347, 614; MB 108; PP 170; SR 44, 403; 9T 219
28 PK 553

CHAPTER 8

1 *Daniel's vision of the ram and he goat.* 13 *The two thousand three hundred days of sacrifice.* 15 *Gabriel comforteth Daniel, and interpreteth the vision.*

IN the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar a vision appeared unto me, *even unto* me Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.

2 And I saw in a vision; and it came to pass, when I saw, that I *was* at Shushan *in* the palace, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river of Ulai.

3 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had *two* horns: and the *two* horns *were* high; but one *was* higher than the other, and the higher came up last.

4 I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither *was there any* that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great.

5 And as I was considering, behold, an he goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat *had* a notable horn between his eyes.

6 And he came to the ram that had *two* horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power.

7 And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand.

8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven.

9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant *land.*

10 And it waxed great, *even* to the host of heaven; and it cast down *some* of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.

11 Yea, he magnified *himself* even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily *sacrifice* was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

12 And an host was given *him* against the daily *sacrifice* by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.

13 ¶ Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain *saint* which spake, How long *shall be* the vision *concerning* the daily *sacrifice,* and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

14 And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, when I, *even* I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.

16 And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this *man* to understand the vision.

17 So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end *shall be* the vision.

18 Now as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep on my face toward the ground: but he touched me, and set me upright.

19 And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the last end of the indignation: for at the time appointed the end *shall be.*

20 The ram which thou sawest having *two* horns *are* the kings of Media and Persia.

21 And the rough goat *is* the king of Grecia: and the great horn that *is* between his eyes *is* the first king.

22 Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.

23 And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up.

24 And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people.

25 And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

26 And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days.

27 And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood *it.*

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1. **Third year.** For a discussion of the reign of Belshazzar, see Additional Note on Chapter 5. Beginning with ch. 8 the writer reverts to the Hebrew language (see p. 749), which is used from here to the end of the book.

At the first. Doubtless a reference to the vision of ch. 7.

2. **I was at Shushan.** There has been considerable discussion as to whether the prophet Daniel was bodily present in Susa, or was present there only in vision. As far as the context is concerned, bodily presence need not be inferred. "I saw in a vision," or simply "I saw in vision," may be understood as introducing a series of events seen in vision with no necessary reference to actual presence. Other examples of such transportations taking place in vision, but not in actuality, are the

"visit" of Ezekiel to Jerusalem (see on Eze. 8:3) and that of John to the wilderness (Rev. 17:3). We might mention also the experiences of Ellen G. White (see EW 32, 39). On the other hand, it cannot be proved that Daniel was not bodily in Susa at the time. It is not difficult to imagine that his travels, either on official business or otherwise, may at some time or another have taken him to the former metropolis of Elam. At the time of this vision, if we begin the 1st year of Belshazzar in 553, Elam was probably still a Babylonian province, though it went over to Cyrus at some time before he took Babylon. Josephus alleges that the prophet was actually in Susa at the time of the vision (*Antiquities* x. 11. 7).

Palace. Heb. *birah,* "citadel," or "acropolis." In the Hebrew the term is in apposition to Shushan. The phrase may be translated "in the citadel Shushan," or, employing the form of the name more familiar in modern times, "Susa the capital" (RSV). According to the Greek historian Xenophon, Persian kings later used the city as a winter residence, and spent the rest of the year at Babylon or at Ecbatana. For further information regarding Susa see on Esther 1:2.

Ulai. Assyrian *Ula,* an unidentified river. Classical writers place Susa on the Eulaeus (*Karun*) or on the Choaspes (*Kerkha*). Some scholars see it as a canal between the Choaspes and Coprates rivers.

3. A ram which had two horns. The angel later identifies this symbol as representing the kings of Media and Persia (v. 20).

Higher than the other. Although it rose later than Media, Persia became the dominant power when Cyrus defeated Astyages of Media in 553 or 550. The Medes, however, were not treated as inferiors or as a subjugated people, but rather as confederates. See on ch. 2:39.

4. Pushing westward. Cyrus conquered Lydia in 547 B.C. and Babylon in 539. Cambyses extended the conquests south into Egypt and Nubia in 525. Darius Hystaspes went north against the Scythians in 513 (see Vol. III, pp. 54-59).

The Medo-Persian Empire covered much more territory than its predecessor, Babylon. So successful were Persian arms that in the days of Ahasuerus (Esther 1:1) the empire extended from India to Ethiopia, the eastern and southern extremities of the then-known world. A frequent title of the Persian monarch was "king of kings" or "king of the countries."

Became great. Literally, "did great things," "made himself big," or "magnified himself" (RSV).

5. Goat. Identified by the angel as representing Greece (v. 21), that is, the Macedonian Empire of Alexander (see on ch. 7:6).

From the west. Greece lay west of the Persian Empire.

Touched not the ground. This description of great swiftness appropriately depicts the astonishing speed and completeness of Alexander's conquests (see on ch. 7:6).

Notable horn. According to v. 21 (see also the parallel prophecy, ch. 11:3, 4), this notable horn represents the first great Grecian king, that is, Alexander the Great (see on ch. 7:6).

7. Moved with choler. Heb. *marar,* in the form here found, "to be enraged." Choler is Old English for "anger." The language of this verse depicts the completeness of the subjection of Persia to Alexander. The power of the empire was completely broken. The country was ravished, its armies cut in pieces and scattered, its cities plundered. The royal city of Persepolis, whose ruins still stand as a monument to its ancient splendor, was destroyed by fire.

8. Waxed very great. Or, "magnified himself exceedingly" (see on vs. 4, 9).

When he was strong. Prophecy predicted that Alexander would fall while his empire was at the height of its power. At the age of 32, still in the prime of life, the great leader died of a fever aggravated, no doubt, by his own intemperance. See on ch. 7:6.

Four notable ones. On the four Macedonian (or Hellenistic) kingdoms into which Alexander's empire was divided, see on chs. 7:6; 11:3, 4.

9. Out of one of them. In the Hebrew this phrase presents confusion of gender. The word for "them," *hem,* is masculine. This indicates that, grammatically, the an-

tecedent is "winds" (v. 8) and not "horns," since "winds" may be either masculine or feminine, but "horns," only feminine. On the other hand the word for "one," *'achath,* is feminine, suggesting "horns" as the antecedent. *'Achath* could, of course, refer back to the word for "winds," which occurs most frequently in the feminine. But it is doubtful that the writer would assign two different genders to the same noun in such close contextual relationship. To reach grammatical agreement, either *'achath* should be changed into a masculine, thus making the entire phrase refer clearly to "winds," or the word for "them" should be changed into a feminine, in which case the reference would be ambiguous, since either "winds" or "horns" may be the antecedent. A number of Hebrew manuscripts have the word for "them" in the feminine. If these manuscripts reflect the correct reading, the passage is still ambiguous.

Commentators who interpret the "little horn" of v. 9 to refer to Rome have been at a loss to explain satisfactorily how Rome could be said to arise out of one of the divisions of Alexander's empire. If "them" refers to "winds," all difficulty vanishes. The passage then simply states that from one of the four points of the compass would come another power. Rome came from the west. In the literal explanation of the symbols of the vision Rome is said to arise "in the latter time of their kingdom" (v. 23), that is, the "kingdom" of the four horns. However, v. 23 refers only to the time when the little horn would arise and says nothing of the place of its rising, whereas v. 9 is concerned exclusively with its location.

It should be remembered that the prophet is here giving a running account of the prophetic symbolization, as the scenes were presented to him. He is not yet interpreting the vision. The interpretation of this feature of the vision occurs in v. 23. An important rule to follow when interpreting the symbols of visions is to assign an interpretation only to those features of pictorial representation that were intended to have interpretative value. As in parables, certain features are needed to complete the dramatic presentation, but are not necessarily significant of themselves. Which of these have interpretative value, Inspiration alone can determine. Seeing that in this instance Inspiration (v. 23) speaks only of the *time* when the power represented by this horn was to emerge, and says nothing as to its geographical point of origin, there is no reason for us to lay stress on the phrase, "out of one of them."

Inasmuch as the vision of ch. 8 closely parallels the prophetic outlines of chs. 2 and 7, and inasmuch as in both of those outlines the power succeeding Greece is Rome (see on chs. 2:40; 7:7), the reasonable assumption here is that the "horn" power of v. 8 also applies to Rome. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that Rome precisely fulfilled the various specifications of the vision.

A little horn. This little horn represents Rome in both its phases, pagan and papal. Daniel saw Rome first in its pagan, imperial phase, warring against the Jewish people and the early Christians, and then in its papal phase, continuing down to our own day and into the future, warring against the true church. On this double application see on vs. 13, 23.

Exceeding. Heb. *yether,* basically meaning "remainder." In a few instances it describes, as here, that which is above measure, in the sense of leaving a remainder. It is translated "excellency" (Gen. 49:3), "plentifully" (Ps. 31:23), "much more abundant" (Isa. 56:12). The word translated "very" in Dan. 8:8 is *me'od,* the more common word for "exceedingly." In the OT *me'od* is translated "exceeding" or "exceedingly" 22 times (Gen. 13:13; 15:1; etc.) in its simple form and 9 times in its repeated form. It cannot be argued that *yether* (Dan. 8:9) represents a greater degree than *me'od.* Any excelling greatness in Rome over that of Greece must be proved historically, not on the basis of these words.

Toward the south. Egypt was long an unofficial protectorate of Rome. Her fate was already in Rome's hands in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes, who was seeking to make war on the Ptolemies, was ordered out of the country. Egypt, still under the administration of its Ptolemaic

rulers, was a pawn of Roman Eastern policy for many years before it became, in 30 B.C., a Roman province.

Toward the east. The Seleucid Empire lost its westernmost lands to Rome as early as 190 B.C., and finally became the Roman province of Syria in 65 B.C. or shortly thereafter.

Pleasant land. Heb. *ṣebi,* "ornament," "decoration," "glory." Either Jerusalem or the land of Palestine is here referred to. *Ṣebi* is translated "glorious" in ch. 11:16, 41. However, there the Hebrew has the word for "land," whereas here "land" is understood. Palestine was incorporated into the Roman Empire in 63 B.C.

10. Host of heaven. Daniel is still describing what he saw in vision. Inasmuch as the angel later provides the interpretation (v. 24), we are not left in darkness concerning the significance of what is here described. The "host" and "stars" obviously represent "the mighty and the holy people" (v. 24).

Stamped upon them. This has reference to the fury with which Rome has persecuted the people of God so often throughout the centuries. In the days of the tyrants Nero, Decius, and Diocletian in pagan times, and again in papal times, Rome has never hesitated to deal harshly with those whom she chooses to condemn.

11. Prince of the host. Verse 25 speaks of this same power standing up against the Prince of princes. The reference is to Christ, who was crucified under the authority of Rome. See on chs. 9:25; 11:22.

By him. Heb. *mimmennu,* which may also be rendered "from him," that is, from the "prince of the host." The Hebrew of this passage presents certain difficult problems of translation. A very different reading is found in the Greek version of Theodotion. It reads as follows: "And [this shall be] until the chief captain shall have delivered the captivity: and by reason of him the sacrifice was disturbed, and he prospered; and the holy place shall be made desolate." There is no way of determining to what extent, if any, this version reflects more perfectly the original text of Daniel. The Masoretic text as reflected by the KJV and RSV seems on the whole to be the more natural reading.

Daily sacrifice. Heb. *tamid,* a word occurring 103 times in the OT, used both adverbially and adjectively. It means "continually" or "continual," and is applied to various concepts, such as continual employment (Eze. 39:14), permanent sustenance (2 Sam. 9:7-13), continual sorrow (Ps. 38:17), continual hope (Ps. 71:14), continual provocation (Isa. 65:3), etc. It is used frequently in connection with the ritual of the sanctuary to describe various features of its regular services, such as the "continual bread" that was to be kept upon the table of shewbread (Num. 4:7), the lamp that was to burn continually (Ex. 27:20), the fire that was to be kept burning upon the altar (Lev. 6:13), the burnt offerings that were to be offered daily (Num. 28:3, 6), the incense that was to be offered morning and evening (Ex. 30:7, 8). The word itself does not mean "daily," but simply "continual" or "regular." Of the 103 occurrences it is translated "daily" only in Num. 4:16 and in the five occurrences of it in Daniel (chs. 8:11, 12, 13; 11:31; 12:11). The idea of "daily" was evidently derived, not from the word itself, but from that with which it was associated.

In ch. 8:11 *tamid* has the definite article and is therefore used adjectivally. Furthermore, it stands independently, without a substantive, and must either be understood subjectively as meaning "continuance" or be supplied with a substantive. In the Talmud, when *tamid* is used independently as here, the word consistently denotes the daily sacrifice. The translators of the KJV, who supplied the word "sacrifice," obviously believed that the daily burnt offering was the subject of the prophecy.

As to the meaning of *tamid* in this passage three main views have been held:

1. That the "daily" refers exclusively to the sacrifices offered in the Temple in Jerusalem. Some expositors holding to this view apply the taking away of the "daily" to the interruption of the Temple service by Antiochus Epiphanes for a period of three years, 168-165 or 167-164 B.C. (see on ch. 11:14). Others apply it to the desolation of the Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70.

2. That the "daily" stands for "paganism," in contrast with "the abomination that maketh desolate" (ch. 11:31), or the papacy; that both terms identify persecuting powers; that the word for "daily," correctly meaning "continual," refers to the long continuance of Satan's opposition to the work of Christ through the medium of paganism; that the taking away of the daily and the setting up of "the abomination that maketh desolate" represents papal Rome replacing pagan Rome, and that this event is the same as that described in 2 Thess. 2:7 and Rev. 13:2.

3. That the term "daily"—"continual"—refers to the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1) and to the true worship of Christ in the gospel age; that the taking away of the "daily" represents the substitution by the papacy of compulsory unity in a visible church in place of the voluntary unity of all believers in Christ, of the authority of a visible head—the pope—in place of that of Christ, the invisible head of the church, of a priestly hierarchy in place of direct access to Christ by all believers, of a system of salvation by works ordained by the church in place of salvation by faith in Christ, and, most particularly, of the confessional and the sacrifice of the mass in place of the mediatorial work of Christ as our great high priest in the courts of heaven; and that this system quite completely diverted men's attention from Christ and thus deprived them of the benefits of His ministry.

Further, inasmuch as this third view maintains that the little horn is a symbol of imperial Rome as well as of papal Rome (see on vs. 9, 13), predictions concerning its activities may also be understood as applying to pagan Rome, as well as to papal Rome. Thus the "daily" may also refer to the earthly Temple and its services, and the taking away of the "daily" to the desolation of the Temple by Roman legions in A.D. 70 and the consequent cessation of the sacrificial services. It was this aspect of the activity of "the abomination of desolation" to which Christ referred in His delineation of future events (see on Dan. 11:31; cf. Matt. 24:15-20; Luke 21:20).

In comment on these three views it may be said that the Antiochus view must be ruled out for the reason that Antiochus does not fit the time periods or other specifications of the prophecy (see on Dan. 9:25).

Both the second and the third interpretations have been held by various able expositors within the Advent Movement. Some devout Bible students have considered that the "daily" refers to paganism, and other equally devout Bible students, that the "daily" refers to the priestly ministry of our Lord. Perhaps this is one of the passages of Scripture on which we must wait until a better day for a final answer. As with other difficult passages of Scripture, our salvation is not dependent upon our understanding fully the meaning of Dan. 8:11.

On the historical development of the second and third views, see pp. 60-64.

Place. Heb. *makon,* "site." *Makon* is used in the phrase "for the house of God to set it up in his place" (Ezra 2:68). The primary reference here may be to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Dan. 9:26).

12. Host. Heb. *ṣaba',* generally meaning "host," or "army," and a few times meaning "service," such as military or compulsory labor (see Job 7:1; 10:17; 14:14; Isa. 40:2). Interpreted as "host," or "army," the prediction may refer to the multitudes that fell under the influence of this power. The power would become mighty, "but not by his own power" (Dan. 8:24). See further on Dan. 10:1.

Cast down the truth. The papacy loaded the truth with tradition and obscured it by superstition.

13. How long? The question is tersely stated in the Hebrew, which reads literally, "How long the vision, the continual, the desolating transgression to give both sanctuary and host to trampling."

Daily sacrifice. See on v. 11.

The transgression of desolation. This term covers *both* pagan and papal systems of false religion in conflict with the religion of God (see on vs. 9, 11).

Sanctuary. See on v. 14.

Host. See on v. 10.

14. Unto me. The LXX, Theodotion, and the Syriac read, "unto him."

Days. Heb. *'ereb boqer,* literally, "evening morning," an expression comparable with the description of the days of creation, "the evening and the morning were the first day" (Gen. 1:5), etc. The LXX has the word "days" following the expression "evening and morning."

In an attempt to make this period roughly conform to the three years of the devastation of the Temple by Antiochus IV, some have ingeniously assigned to the expression "2300 evening morning" only 1150 literal days.

Concerning this, Keil has remarked that the prophetic period of the 2300 evening-mornings cannot be understood as "2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at creation constituted not the half but the whole day." After quoting the foregoing statement, Edward Young says, "Hence, we must understand the phrase as meaning 2300 days" (*The Prophecy of Daniel,* p. 174).

Commentators have tried, but without success, to find some event in history that would fit a period of 2300 literal days. As Wright observes, "All efforts, however, to harmonise the period, whether expounded as 2300 days or as 1150 days, with any precise historical epoch mentioned in the Books of the Maccabees or in Josephus have proved futile. . . . Professor Driver is justified in stating, 'It seems impossible to find two events separated by 2300 days (=6 years and 4 months) which would correspond with the description' " (Charles H. H. Wright, *Daniel and His Prophecies,* 1906, pp. 186, 187). The only way that consistency can be given to these "days" is to apply them in a prophetic sense by the application of the year-day principle.

The time here involved is specific and definite, but in ch. 8 no date is indicated for its beginning. However, in ch. 9 such a date is specifically mentioned (see on v. 25). This will be shown to be 457 B.C. From this date as a beginning, the 2300 prophetic days, designating as many solar years (see on ch. 7:25), reach to the year A.D. 1844. For a consideration of contextual evidence that ch. 9:24-27 provides an explanation of the vision of ch. 8:13, 14, and thus locates the starting point of the 2300 days or years, see on ch. 9:21. For comment on the validity of the date 457 B.C. see on ch. 9:25. For comment on a nonexistent LXX reading "2400" instead of 2300, formerly often cited but based on a misprint, see p. 58.

Sanctuary. Inasmuch as the 2300 years project us far into the Christian Era, the sanctuary cannot refer to the Temple at Jerusalem, which was destroyed in A.D. 70. The sanctuary of the new covenant is clearly the sanctuary in heaven, "which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2; GC 411-417). Of this sanctuary Christ is the high priest (Heb. 8:1). John foresaw a time when special attention would be directed toward "the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (Rev. 11:1). The symbols employed by the revelator are strikingly similar to those employed in Dan. 8:11-13.

Be cleansed. From the Heb. *ṣadaq,* "to be just," "to be righteous." The verb occurs in the form here found (niphal) only this once in the OT, which may suggest that a specialized meaning of the term is indicated. Lexicographers and translators suggest various meanings, such as "be put right," or "be put in a rightful condition," "be righted," "be declared right," "be justified," "be vindicated." The translation "shall be cleansed" is the reading of the LXX, which here has the verb form *katharisthēsetai.* It is not known whether the translators of the LXX gave an adapted meaning to the Heb. *ṣadaq* or translated from manuscripts employing a different Hebrew word, perhaps *ṭahar,* the common Hebrew word for "to be clean," "to cleanse." The Vulgate has the form *mundabitur,* which also means "cleansed." See on ch. 9:24.

As an aid to determining what event in connection with the heavenly sanctuary is here referred to, it is helpful to examine the services of the earthly sanctuary, for the priests in the earthly sanctuary served "unto the example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5). The services in the wilderness tabernacle and in the Temple consisted of two main divisions, the daily and the yearly. Christ's daily ministration as our high priest was typified in the daily services. The annual Day of Atonement typified a work that Christ

would undertake at the close of the age. For a detailed discussion of these two phases of service see on Lev. 16; see also GC 418-432. The prophecy of Dan. 8:14 announces the time for the beginning of this special work. The cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary comprehends the entire work of final judgment, beginning with the investigative phase and ending with the executive phase, which results in the permanent eradication of sin from the universe.

A significant feature of the final judgment is the vindication of God's character before all the intelligences of the universe. The false charges that Satan has lodged against the government of God must be demonstrated as utterly groundless. God must be shown to have been entirely fair in the selection of certain individuals to make up His future kingdom, and in the barring of others from entrance there. The final acts of God will evoke from men the confessions, "Just and true are thy ways" (Rev. 15:3), "Thou art righteous, O Lord" (Rev. 16:5), and, "True and righteous are thy judgments" (Rev. 16:7). Satan himself will be led to acknowledge God's justice (see GC 670, 671). The word translated "just" and "righteous" is *dikaios,* equivalent to the Heb. *ṣaddiq,* derived from *ṣadaq,* a form of which is translated "shall be cleansed" in Dan. 8:14. Thus the Heb. *ṣadaq* may convey the additional thought that God's character will be fully vindicated as the climax to "the hour of his judgment" (Rev. 14:7), which began in 1844. See *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 174-177.

15. Sought for the meaning. Daniel did not understand the meaning of what he had seen. Many times the bearers of a prophetic message need to study that message themselves in order to discover its meaning (1 Peter 1:10-12). It is the duty of the prophet faithfully to relate what he has seen and heard (see Rev. 1:11).

16. Gabriel. In the OT the name Gabriel occurs only here and in ch. 9:21. The NT reports the appearance of this heavenly being to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20), again to announce to Mary the birth of the Messiah (Luke 1:26-33). The angelic visitor declared of himself, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). Gabriel occupies the position from which Satan fell (see DA 693; cf. DA 99). Gabriel was also the bearer of the prophetic messages to John (Rev. 1:1; cf. DA 99). See on Luke 1:19.

17. Time of the end. The vision reached until the time when the desolating power would be destroyed, an event associated with the coming of Jesus (2 Thess. 2:8).

The fact that the last events represented in the vision will be fulfilled at the end of this world's history must be borne in mind when seeking an interpretation of the symbols of the vision. Any exposition that finds a complete fulfillment of the vision in an earlier period such as in the time of the Maccabees (see on Dan. 8:25) falls short of meeting fully the angel's specifications, and must be considered erroneous and misleading.

19. End of the indignation. See on v. 17.

20. The ram. See on vs. 3, 4.

21. Rough. Heb. *śa'ir,* "hairy," or "shaggy." *Śa'ir* is also used independently to describe a he-goat (Gen. 37:31; Lev. 4:23; etc.). On the interpretation see on Dan. 8:5.

Great horn. A symbol of Alexander the Great, the "first king" of the Greco-Macedonian world empire that was destined to replace the Persian Empire (see on vs. 5-8; ch. 7:6).

22. Four kingdoms. Compare v. 8; ch. 11:4. On the Hellenistic kingdoms that developed out of Alexander's empire see on ch. 7:6. The accurate fulfillment of these features of the vision assures us that what follows will surely come to pass as predicted.

23. Latter time. That is, after the divisions of Alexander's empire had existed for some time. The empire of Rome arose gradually, and attained supremacy only after the divisions of the Macedonian Empire had become weak. The prophecy applies to Rome in both its pagan and papal forms. There appears to be a blending of application, certain features applying to both, others more specifically to one or the other (see on ch. 8:11). That papal Rome was, for all practical purposes,

the continuation of the Roman Empire is a well-established fact of history:

"Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left . . . were . . . put under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the Emperor's disappearance. . . . *The Roman Church in this way privily pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation;* the empire has not perished, but has only undergone a transformation. . . . That is no mere 'clever remark,' but the recognition of the true state of the matter historically, and the most appropriate and fruitful way of describing the character of this Church. It still governs the nations. . . . It is a political creation, and as imposing as a World-Empire, because the continuation of the Roman Empire. The Pope, who calls himself 'King' and 'Pontifex Maximus,' is Caesar's successor" (Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?* [New York; G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903], pp. 269, 270, italics in the original).

The transgressors. The Greek versions read "sins," a translation that may be obtained from the Hebrew by a change in the Masoretic pointing.

Come to the full. There may be a reference here to various nations, or possibly specifically the Jews, filling up the cup of their iniquity (see Gen. 15:16; Ed 173-177).

Fierce countenance. Probably an allusion to Deut. 28:49-55.

Dark sentences. Heb. *chidoth,* "enigmatic statements," as in Num. 12:8, "riddles," as in Judges 14:12; Eze. 17:2, or "perplexing questions," as in 1 Kings 10:1. Some believe the meaning here is "ambiguous speech," or "double dealing."

Stand up. That is, to assume power.

24. Not by his own power. Compare, "an host was given him" (v. 12). Some see a reference here to the fact that the papacy reduced the civil power to subservience and caused the sword of the state to be wielded on behalf of its religious objectives.

Destroy wonderfully. Better, "cause frightful destruction." This power persecuted even unto death those who opposed its blasphemous claims, and would have extinguished "the holy people" had not the Lord intervened on their behalf.

25. Craft. Better, "deceit." The methods of this power are the perfection of subtlety and deceit.

By peace. Better, "while they live at ease," that is, while many feel they are living in security they will be destroyed unawares.

Prince of princes. Evidently the same being designated "the prince of the host" in v. 11, none other than Christ. It was a Roman governor who sentenced Christ to death. Roman hands nailed Him to the cross, and a Roman spear pierced His side.

Without hand. This implies that the Lord Himself will eventually destroy this power (see ch. 2:34). The ecclesiastical system represented by this power will continue until destroyed without human hands at the second coming of Christ (see 2 Thess. 2:8).

A number of commentators have set forth the view that the "little horn" power of ch. 8 symbolizes the career of Antiochus Epiphanes (see on ch. 11:14). However, a careful examination of the prophecy makes evident the incompleteness with which this persecuting Seleucid king fulfilled the specifications set forth. The four horns of the goat (ch. 8:8) were kingdoms (v. 22), and it is natural to expect the little horn to be a kingdom also. But Antiochus was only one king of the Seleucid empire, hence was a part of one horn. Therefore he could not be *another* complete horn. Further, this horn grew great toward the south, the east, and the pleasant land of Palestine (v. 9). Antiochus' advance into Egypt ended in humiliation from the Romans, his successes in Palestine were short-lived, and his push to the east was cut short by his death. His policy of enforced Hellenism utterly failed, nor did his craft bring him outstanding prosperity (v. 12).

Furthermore, Antiochus did not come at the latter end (v. 23), but about the middle of the period of the divided Hellenistic kingdoms; his might could hardly be attributed to anything but his own power (v. 22); his craft and policy failed more than they prospered (v. 25); he did not stand up against any Jewish "Prince

of princes" (v. 25); his casting of the truth to the ground (v. 12) was temporary and completely unsuccessful, for it drove the Jews to the defense of their faith against Hellenism. Even though he spoke proud words, oppressed the people of God, and briefly desecrated the Temple, and though some other points might be argued for as partly true of his activities, nevertheless the inadequacy of Antiochus as a fulfillment of many specifications of the prophecy is obvious. See further on v. 14; chs. 9:25; 11:31.

26. Evening and the morning. A clear reference to the time prophecy of v. 14 (see comments there). At the present the angel does not enlarge upon the 2300-day vision but merely emphasizes its truthfulness.

Shut thou up. Compare similar instructions recorded in ch. 12:4 (see comments there).

For many days. The fulfillment of the various details of the vision of this chapter would extend into the distant future.

27. I Daniel fainted. Daniel was doubtless deeply concerned about the events that had been revealed to him. Instead of predicting an immediate end to the indignation, Gabriel informed the prophet that the ultimate end would be many years in the future.

None understood it. Further information was given later (see on ch. 9:23).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-27 PK 548, 553, 554
12 EW 74
13, 14 PK 554
14 Ev 223; EW 42, 54, 63, 243, 250, 253; GC 326, 328, 352, 399, 409, 417, 424, 426, 457, 486; LS 58, 63, 278; SR 369, 375, 377; 1T 52, 58
16 DA 234
26, 27 PK 554
27 GC 325

CHAPTER 9

1 *Daniel, considering the time of the captivity,* 3 *maketh confession of sins,* 16 *and prayeth for the restoration of Jerusalem.* 20 *Gabriel informeth him of the seventy weeks.*

IN the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

2 In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 ¶ And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

7 O Lord, righteousness *belongeth* unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, *that are* near, and *that are* far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

8 O Lord, to us *belongeth* confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

9 To the Lord our God *belong* mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him;

10 Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his

laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

11 Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that *is* written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

12 And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

13 As *it is* written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

15 And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

16 ¶ O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people *are become* a reproach to all *that are* about us.

17 Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.

18 O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.

20 ¶ And whiles I *was* speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God;

21 Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

22 And he informed *me,* and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

23 At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee;* for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

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1. **The first year of Darius.** For the identity and date of Darius the Mede see Additional Note on ch. 6. It is seldom that the prime minister of a conquered kingdom is appointed as a high official by the conqueror, but such was the case with Daniel. Because of his abilities and integrity, the Persians did not execute him but established him in high office.

2. **Understood by books.** Although busy amid the affairs of state, the prophet did not cease to study the Word of God. Daniel was obviously perplexed as to how to

relate what had been revealed to him in the vision of ch. 8 to the events of the immediate future—the return of the Jews at the end of the 70 years (Jer. 29:10). See on Dan. 9:21.

Seventy years. On the dating of these years see Vol. III, pp. 96, 97. This period had now almost expired. Little wonder that Daniel's attention was focused upon the time prophecy. He was anxious lest the Lord should delay the liberation of His captive people.

3. To seek by prayer. Although the Lord had promised deliverance to His people at the time appointed, Daniel knew of the conditional nature of many of God's promises (see Jer. 18:7-10). He may have feared that the impenitence of his people might postpone the fulfillment of the promise (see SL 48). Moreover, the vision of Dan. 8 had predicted further desolation for the sanctuary and the city. His lack of understanding of "the vision of the evening and the morning" (v. 26) must have left him in deep perplexity.

4. I prayed. Verses 4-19 record one of the outstanding prayers of the OT. It is a prayer on behalf of the people of God, offered by a sincere petitioner.

Great and dreadful God. Compare Neh. 1:5; 9:32. The word translated "dreadful" (Heb. *nora'*) means "awe-inspiring," or "revered" (see on Ps. 111:9).

Keeping the covenant. Daniel begins his prayer with an acknowledgment of the faithfulness of God. God never fails to keep His promises. He is a covenant-keeping God. He will fulfill His part of the agreement. If the covenant fails, man is to blame (see Heb. 8:8).

Love him. Love to God and the keeping of His commandments always go together. Those who love God are admonished to demonstrate that love by keeping His commandments (John 14:15). The one essential carries the other with it. Love for God will result in glad and willing obedience. The true church at the close of time will be distinguished by its commandment keeping (Rev. 12:17).

5. We have sinned. Compare 1 Kings 8:47; Ps. 106:6. Daniel identifies himself with his people. There is no self-righteousness in his prayer.

6. The prophets. It had been the prophets' duty to call the attention of the people to their neglect of the divine precepts, as well as to give direction in present emergencies. But the guidance thus graciously bestowed had been almost totally ignored. The people's sin was not due to ignorance but to willful disobedience.

7. Righteousness. Daniel contrasts the righteousness of God with the unrighteousness of Israel. In all His dealings with mankind in general and with Israel in particular, God has always manifested righteousness.

9. Mercies and forgivenesses. Literally, "the compassions and the forgivenesses." Despite Israel's backsliding and rebellion, Daniel remained confident that the Lord, because of His great mercy, was ever ready to forgive those who should come to Him with a contrite heart. In this confidence Daniel pleads with God for the people of Israel. He sets forth in bold relief the compassion of God, in contrast with the sinfulness of the people.

11. Is poured. Moses had foretold that a curse would descend upon all who were willfully disobedient to God's law (Lev. 26:14-41; Deut. 28:15-68). Such treatment was no more than they deserved.

The servant of God. Moses is similarly titled in Deut. 34:5 and Joshua 1:13.

13. As it is written. See Deut. 29:21, 27.

14. Watched. Heb. *shaqad,* meaning "to be on the alert," "to be wakeful."

15. Brought thy people forth. Daniel cites the former great deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and bases his petition upon the great act of mercy performed by the Lord at the time of the Exodus.

16. Righteousness. In Hebrew the noun is in the plural, suggesting, doubtless, the many deeds of righteousness that God had done on behalf of His people. Daniel does not present his plea on the ground of any goodness of his people; he cites the Lord's gracious dealings with Israel in times past as a basis for his petition.

Thy holy mountain. Israel should have been a light to all the world (see on 2 Sam. 22:44, 50; 1 Kings 8:43; 2 Kings 23:27), but because of stubborn rebellion, Jeru-

salem and Israel were now a byword and a reproach among the nations of earth.

17. Cause thy face to shine. An expression signifying, "look with favor" (see Num. 6:25).

Sanctuary. Daniel's mind centered upon the sanctuary in Jerusalem. Throughout the many years of captivity the city and the sanctuary had lain in ruins, and now the time for rebuilding was at hand.

19. Defer. Heb. *'achar,* "to delay," "to hesitate." Daniel is anxious that the promised deliverance be no longer delayed. The Lord delights to have us appeal to Him in this way, asking Him to hasten His promised salvation.

21. Gabriel. See ch. 8:15, 16. This is the same being who had explained the first three sections of the vision of ch. 8. He now returns with the purpose of completing his assigned task.

Some commentators have missed the close connection between chs. 8 and 9, and thus the relationship between the 2300 "days" of ch. 8 and the 70 "weeks" of ch. 9. The context, however, requires precisely this relationship, as the following facts make evident:

1. All symbols of the vision of ch. 8:2-14 are explained fully in vs. 15-26, with the exception of the 2300 "days" of vs. 13, 14 (see GC 325). In fact, all of vs. 13 and 14 is explained in vs. 24, 25 *except the time element involved.* In v. 26 Gabriel mentions the time element, but breaks off his explanation before saying anything further about it (see No. 3, below).

2. Daniel knew that the 70 years of captivity foretold by the prophet Jeremiah were nearly at an end (ch. 9:2; see Vol. III, pp. 90-92, 94-97; see on Jer. 25:11).

3. Daniel did not understand the 2300-day time period, the only part of the vision not yet explained (ch. 8:27; see No. 1, above), and evidently feared that it implied an extension of the Captivity and the continued desolation of the sanctuary (see ch. 9:19). He knew that the promise of restoration was conditional upon Israel's sincere repentance (SL 48; see Vol. IV, p. 34).

4. The prospect of terrible persecution during the course of the 2300 "days" (Dan. 8:10-13, 23-25) proved more than the aged Daniel could bear, and as a result he "fainted, and was sick certain days" (ch. 8:27; GC 325). Accordingly, the angel discontinued the explanation of the vision at this time.

5. During the interval preceding the angel's return (ch. 9:21) Daniel turned to the prophecies of Jeremiah for a clearer understanding of the divine purpose in the Captivity (see Vol. IV, p. 31), particularly with respect to the 70 years (ch. 9:2).

6. Concluding that Israel's transgression as a nation was responsible for what he evidently took to be an extension of the 70 years (see No. 3, above), Daniel interceded most earnestly with God for forgiveness, for the return of the captive exiles, and for the restoration of the now desolate sanctuary in Jerusalem (see ch. 9:3-19). His prayer closes with a reiteration of the petition that God will "forgive" the sins of the nation and "defer not" the promise of restoration (v. 19).

7. Note particularly that the unexplained portion of the vision of ch. 8 had foretold that "the sanctuary and the host" would be "trodden under foot" (vs. 13, 14, 24) for a period of 2300 "days." In his prayer Daniel pleads with God that the time allotted to the Captivity should not be extended (see vs. 16-19). A careful comparison of the prayer of ch. 9 with the problem of ch. 8 makes it clear beyond possible doubt that Daniel had the problem in mind as he prayed. He thought that the vision of the 2300 "days" of desolation for the sanctuary and persecution for God's people implied that God would "defer" the restoration (ch. 9:19).

8. In answer to this prayer, Gabriel, who had been commissioned to explain the vision of ch. 8 (ch. 8:15-19) but had not as yet completed the explanation (see No. 4, above), greeted Daniel with the announcement, "I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding" (ch. 9:22).

9. The explanation of ch. 9:24-27 is clearly Heaven's reply to Daniel's prayer (v. 23), and the solution of the problem about which he was praying (see Nos. 6, 7, above). Compare the original command to Gabriel to explain the vision to Daniel (ch. 8:16) with the renewal of the command at the time of Daniel's prayer (ch. 9:23),

and Gabriel's command to Daniel to "understand" and "know" (ch. 8:17, 19), with similar expressions in ch. 9:23.

10. Note particularly that Daniel was told to "understand the matter, and consider the vision" (ch. 9:23), that is, the vision he had seen "at the beginning" (v. 21). This can refer only to the vision of ch. 8:2-14, as no other vision had been given since that one. Compare the words "understand the vision" (ch. 8:16) with "consider the vision" (ch. 9:23).

11. The context thus makes certain beyond the possibility of doubt that the explanation of ch. 9:24-27 is a continuation, and completion, of the explanation begun in ch. 8:15-26, and that the explanation of ch. 9:24-27 deals exclusively with the unexplained portion of the vision, that is, with the time element of the 2300 "days" of ch. 8:13, 14. The angel is Gabriel in both instances (chs. 8:16; 9:21), the subject matter is identical, and the context makes evident that the concluding portion of the explanation picks up the thread of explanation at the point it was laid down in ch. 8.

Swiftly. How comforting to know that heaven is near to earth. Whenever we need help and ask for it, the Lord commissions a holy angel to come to our aid without delay.

Touched. Heb. *naga'*, which may mean merely "reached," or "approached." We cannot be certain which meaning is here intended.

Oblation. Heb. *minchah*. In Levitical law this is the common word for "grain offerings" (or "meat offerings," KJV). A specified grain offering accompanied the evening and morning burnt offering (see Num. 28:3-8). Daniel evidently prayed at the time when the evening offering had been made in the Temple.

22. Understanding. Doubtless with respect to the vision mentioned in ch. 8:26, 27, which "none understood" (ch. 8:27). Daniel could not understand the relation between the 70 years' captivity foretold by Jeremiah (Jer. 29:10) and the 2300 days (years) that were to elapse before the cleansing of the sanctuary. He had fainted away when the angel informed him that the vision was to be for "many days" (Dan. 8:26).

23. Consider the vision. A reference to "the vision of the evening and the morning" (ch. 8:26). In his last words to Daniel at the time of his previous visit Gabriel stated that the vision of the 2300 evening mornings was "true." Thus in ch. 9:24 the divine instructor begins where he left off in ch. 8:26.

24. Seventy weeks. This expression seems to be a rather abrupt introduction, but the angel had come for the specific purpose of causing Daniel to understand the vision. He launched immediately into his subject.

The word here translated "week," *shabua'*, describes a period of seven consecutive days (see Gen. 29:27; Deut. 16:9; Dan. 10:2). In the pseudepigraphical Book of Jubilees, as well as in the Mishnah, *shabua'* is used to denote a period of seven years. The RSV translation "weeks of years" is obviously interpretative, based on such a usage, the translators evidently holding to a late date for Daniel. It is simpler to arrive at the fact that the 70 weeks are weeks of years by the application of the prophetic year-day principle (see on Dan. 7:25).

Are determined. Heb. *chathak*, a word occurring only here in the Bible. It occurs in post-Biblical Hebrew with the meaning "to cut," "to cut off," "to determine," "to decree." The LXX has *krinō*, "to decide," "to judge," etc. Theodotion's version has *suntemnō*, "to shorten," "to abbreviate," etc., which meaning is reflected in the Vulgate reading *abbreviare*. The exact shade of meaning here intended must be determined from the context. In view of the fact that ch. 9 is an exposition of the unexplained portion of the vision of ch. 8 (see on ch. 9:3, 21-23), and inasmuch as the unexplained portion had to do with the 2300 days, it is logical to conclude that the 70 weeks, or 490 years, were to be "cut off" from that longer period. Furthermore, in the absence of contrary evidence, it may be assumed that the 70 weeks would be cut off from the beginning of that period. Viewed in the light of these observations, the translation of *chathak* as "to cut" seems singularly appropriate. In so far as the 490 years were especially assigned to the Jews with re-

spect to their role as God's chosen people, the translations "determine" and "decree" are also appropriate to the context.

Thy people. The 490 years applied especially to the Jewish nation.

To finish. Heb. *lekalle'* from the root *kala',* "to restrain." The passage may have reference to the restraining power that God would exercise upon the forces of evil during the period allotted to the Jews. However, some 40 Hebrew manuscripts read *lekalleh,* a form clearly from *kalah,* "to bring to completion." If *kalah* is the root, then the passage evidently refers to the fact that within this period the Jews would fill the cup of their iniquity. God had suffered long with the Israelites. He had given them many opportunities, but they continually disappointed Him (see pp. 32, 33).

To make an end of sins. This phrase may be parallel in meaning to the one preceding it, "to finish the transgression." Some expositors note that the word here translated "sins" (Heb. *chaṭṭa'oth,* or *chaṭṭa'th,* according to some manuscripts and the Masoretes) may mean either "sins" or "sin offerings." Of the 290 occurrences in the OT *chaṭṭa'th* has the meaning "sin" 155 times, and "sin offering" 135 times. If "sin offerings" is the intended meaning, the following interpretation is suggested: When Christ on Calvary became the antitype of the sacrificial offerings of the sanctuary, it was no longer necessary for the sinner to bring his sin offering (see John 1:29). However, the plural form *chaṭṭa'oth* almost invariably describes sins and only once, unless this be an exception also, denotes sin offerings (Neh. 10:33).

To make reconciliation. Heb. *kaphar,* generally translated "to make atonement" (see Ex. 30:10; Lev. 4:20; etc.). By His vicarious sacrifice on Calvary Christ provided reconciliation for all who accept His sacrifice.

Everlasting righteousness. Christ did not come to earth simply to provide for the blotting out of sin. He came to reconcile man to God. He came so that it might be possible to impute and to impart His righteousness to the penitent sinner. When men accept Him, He bestows on them the robe of His righteousness, and they stand in God's presence as though they had never sinned (see SC 62). God loves repentant, believing souls as He loves His only Son, and for Christ's sake accepts them into His family. By His life, death, and resurrection, Christ has made everlasting righteousness available to every child of Adam who, in simple faith, is willing to accept it.

To seal up. Here evidently not in the sense of "shutting up," but of "confirming," or "ratifying." The fulfillment of the predictions connected with the first coming of the Messiah at the time specified in the prophecy gives assurance that the other features of the prophecy, notably the 2300 prophetic days, will be as precisely fulfilled.

The most Holy. Heb. *qodesh qodashim,* "something most holy," or, "someone most holy." The Hebrew phrase is applied to the altar (Ex. 29:37; 40:10), other vessels and furniture pertaining to the tabernacle (Ex. 30:29), the holy perfume (Ex. 30:36), specified meat offerings (Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:17; 10:12), trespass offerings (Lev. 7:1, 6), the shewbread (Lev. 24:5-9), devoted things (Lev. 27:28), the holy district (Num. 18:10; Eze. 43:12), and the most holy place of the sanctuary (Ex. 26:33, 34). The phrase is nowhere applied to persons, unless, as some suggest, it is so applied in the text under consideration and in 1 Chron. 23:13. The latter text may be translated, "Aaron was separated to anoint him a most holy one," although it may also be rendered as in the KJV. Jewish expositors and many Christian commentators have held that the Messiah is referred to.

In view of the fact that the Hebrew phrase cannot elsewhere be shown to refer definitely to a person, and in view of the fact that the heavenly sanctuary is under discussion in the larger aspects of the vision (see on Dan. 8:14), it is reasonable to conclude that Daniel is here speaking of the anointing of the heavenly sanctuary prior to the time of Christ's inauguration as high priest.

25. Going forth of the commandment. At the time this vision was given, Jerusalem and the Temple were still in ruins. Heaven announces that a command

will be issued to rebuild and restore, and that from that date a definite number of years will reach to the long-looked-for Messiah.

Three decrees dealing with the repatriation of the Jews are recorded in the book of Ezra: the first in the first year of Cyrus, about 537 (Ezra 1:1-4); the second in the reign of Darius I, soon after 520 (Ezra 6:1-12); the third in the 7th year of Artaxerxes, 458/457 B.C. (Ezra 7:1-26). See further Vol. III, pp. 97-104.

In their decrees neither Cyrus nor Darius made any genuine provision for the restoration of the civil state as a complete unit, though a restoration of both the religious and the civil government was promised in the prophecy of Daniel. The decree of the 7th year of Artaxerxes was the first to give the Jewish state full autonomy, subject to Persian overlordship.

One of the double-dated papyri found at Elephantine, Egypt, a Jewish colony (see Vol. III, pp. 103-107), was written in Artaxerxes' accession year in January, 464 B.C. From this, the only known document of that year, compared with other ancient records, it can be deduced that by Jewish reckoning his "beginning of reign," or "accession year" (see Vol. II, pp. 138, 139), began after the Jewish New Year of 465 B.C. and ended at the next New Year in the fall of 464. Hence his "first year" (his first full calendar year) would be from the fall of 464 to the fall of 463. The 7th year of Artaxerxes would then extend from the fall of 458 to the fall of 457. The specifications of the decree were not carried out until after Ezra returned from Babylon, which was the late summer or early fall of 457 B.C. For a discussion of Ezra 7 and the historical accuracy of the date 457 B.C. as the 7th year of Artaxerxes, see Vol. III, pp. 100-104. For a full discussion of the subject see S. H. Horn and L. H. Wood, *The Chronology of Ezra 7* (rev. ed., 1970).

Messiah. Heb. *mashiach,* from the verb *mashach,* "to anoint." Hence, *mashiach* describes an "anointed one" such as the high priest (Lev. 4:3, 5, 16), Israel's kings (1 Sam. 24:6, 10; 2 Sam. 19:21), Cyrus (Isa. 45:1), etc. Theodotion's Greek version translates *mashiach* literally, *christos,* a word that comes from the verb *chriō,* "to anoint," and hence means simply "an anointed one." The title "Christ" is a transliteration of *Christos.* In later Jewish history the term *mashiach* was applied to the expected Deliverer who was to come (see John 1:41; 4:25, 26).

Daniel predicted that the long-looked-for Prince Messiah would appear at a specified time. To this time Jesus referred when He declared, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15; DA 233). Jesus was anointed at the time of His baptism in the autumn of A.D. 27 (see Luke 3:21, 22; Acts 10:38; cf. Luke 4:18).

Prince. See on ch. 11:22.

Seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks. The natural method of calculating these weeks is to consider them consecutive, that is, the 62 weeks begin where the 7 weeks end. These divisions are components of the 70 weeks mentioned in v. 24 thus: 7+62+1=70. For the one week see on v. 27.

Beginning with the autumn of 457 B.C., when the decree went into effect, 69 prophetic weeks, or 483 years, reach to the baptism of Jesus in 27 A.D. It is to be noted that if the 483 years had been reckoned from the beginning of 457 B.C., they would have extended to the close of A.D. 26, for 483 years requires 457 full years B.C. plus 26 full years A.D. Since the period began many months after the beginning of 457, it would end as many months after the end of A.D. 26, that is, in 27. This is due to the fact that historians (unlike astronomers) never count a year zero (see Vol. I, p. 178). Some have been puzzled as to how Christ could begin His work in A.D. 27 when the record says that He was about 30 years of age when He started His public ministry (Luke 3:23). This is due to the fact that when the Christian Era was first computed, an error of about four years occurred. That Christ was not born in A.D. 1, is evident from the fact that when He was born Herod the Great was still alive, and Herod died in 4 B.C. (see Matt. 2:13-20).

A number of modern expositors place an entirely different interpretation upon these time periods. The "messiah" is var-

iously identified as Cyrus, Zerubbabel, or the high priest Joshua (see Ezra 3:2; Zech. 3:1, 3; 6:11-13). The "commandment to restore and to build" is regarded by some as that given through Jeremiah that Jerusalem should be rebuilt (see Jer. 29:10). These expositors believe that this "commandment" became effective in 586 B.C., the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that the "seven weeks," or 49 years, reach roughly to the decree of Cyrus. Further, these expositors hold that the 62 weeks, or 434 years, were intended to reach to the Maccabean era. By the covenant of the 70th week they understand Antiochus' consorting with the renegade Jews. They translate "midst of the week" (Dan. 9:27) as "half a week" (see on ch. 9:27) and apply the "half a week" to Antiochus' sacrilege of the Temple from 168 to 165 B.C. (see 1 Macc. 1:54; 4:52, 53). Translators of this school of interpretation follow an alternate punctuation in Dan. 9:25 to suit this idea (see RSV; RV; ASV, margin).

As shown above, only a distortion of the chronological figures enables these expositors to arrive at the events they assume fulfill the prophetic requirements. When these figures are applied to Christ, His ministry and death, and the gospel to the Jews, perfect synchronism is achieved. See further on ch. 8:25.

Street. Heb. *rechob,* "a broad place."

Shall be built. Some interpreters attach special import to the period of "seven weeks," or 49 years, as representing the time during which the building of the street and wall would be completed. However, historical information for this period is extremely meager. Little is known of the condition of Jerusalem in the time from Artaxerxes to Alexander. What may be gleaned from the Bible and from historical sources is fragmentary.

Wall. Heb. *charuṣ,* used in the present sense only here in the OT. In Mishnaic Hebrew it means "a trench." In the Akkadian the word means "a city-moat." "Wall" is the reading of Theodotion's Greek version and of the Vulgate.

Troublous times. For a summary history of this period see Vol. III, pp. 73-79.

26. After threescore and two weeks. The cutting off of the Messiah would take place, not within this period, but after its completion. This expression is not intended to fix the exact time when the calamitous event of the death of the Messiah would take place. That is done in v. 27, where the event is placed "in the midst of the week."

Cut off. According to this prophetic statement, Messiah would not appear as the Jews expected, a glorious conqueror and emancipator. Instead, He would meet a violent death; He would be "cut off." On the term "cut off" meaning death, see Gen. 9:11.

But not for himself. Literally, "and nothing to him." The meaning of this phrase is not clear. Many possible meanings have been suggested, such as "and shall have nothing," "he shall not be," "and there was no helper to him."

And the people. The marginal reading, "and they [the Jews] shall be no more his people," found in some Bibles, is unsupported by the Hebrew.

The city and the sanctuary. An obliteration of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, is here foretold. This was fulfilled by the Romans in A.D. 70. The Roman soldiers took blazing firebrands and deliberately set them in the interior woodwork of the Temple structure, with the result that it was soon utterly demolished. For "the people of the prince that shall come" the LXX reads "the king of nations."

With a flood. That is, in the sense of being overwhelming (see Isa. 8:7, 8).

Desolations are determined. The passage may literally be rendered, "unto the end [shall be] war, a determination of ruins."

27. He shall confirm the covenant. The "he" here spoken of is the Messiah of the preceding verses. Interpreting the verse thus makes the entire 70 weeks, or 490 years, of prophecy a consistent, continuous unit. The statements made meet a unique fulfillment in the time of the Messiah. The confirming of the covenant may be considered to be the continuation of the Jewish nation as the chosen people of God through the period named. On the other hand the "confirming" may be that of the everlasting covenant (see on ch. 11:28).

For one week. This week, the 70th, began in A.D. 27 with the opening of Christ's

public ministry at the time of His baptism. It extended beyond the crucifixion "in the midst of the week," in the spring of A.D. 31, to the rejection of the Jews as the covenant people in the autumn of A.D. 34 (490 years after 457 B.C. is A.D. 34; see on v. 25 for the method of computation). The "vineyard" was then "let out . . . unto other husbandmen" (Matt. 21:41; cf. Isa. 5:1-7; GC 328, 410). For about 3½ years the authorities in Jerusalem tolerated the preaching of the apostles, but their spite was finally translated into decisive action in the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and the general persecution that then broke upon the church. Until this time the apostles and other Christian workers appear to have confined their efforts largely to the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem (see Acts 1:8; 8:1).

Inasmuch as the 70 weeks, or 490 years, are part of the longer period of 2300 years, and inasmuch as the first 490 years of the period extend to the autumn of A.D. 34, it is possible to calculate the ending date of the 2300 years. Adding the remaining 1810 years of the 2300 years to A.D. 34 brings us to the autumn of 1844 as the time when the heavenly sanctuary would be "cleansed" (see on ch. 8:14).

It is to be noted, also, that the fulfillment of the predictions of the prophecy concerning the 70 weeks was to "seal up the vision" (v. 24), that is, the vision of the longer period of 2300 days (see on v. 21). The accurate fulfillment of events foretold for the 70th week, having to do with the ministry and crucifixion of our Lord, provides incontestable evidence of the certainty of events at the close of the 2300 days.

In the midst. Heb. *chaṣi,* a word meaning either "half" (Ex. 24:6; 25:10, 17; etc.) or "middle" (Ex. 27:5; 38:4; etc.), the particular meaning to be assigned in any instance being determined by the context. A number of the more recent versions read "half." This translation is based on the assumption that the context is speaking of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, for a period of about three years, suspended the services of the Temple at Jerusalem. But Antiochus does not fit into the prophetic chronology. He cannot be the subject of the present prediction. As has already been shown, the prophetic periods reach to the time of the Messiah, and the fulfillment must be found in His day.

The midst of the week would be the Passover season of A.D. 31, 3½ years after Christ's baptism in the autumn of A.D. 27. For evidence as to the length of Christ's public ministry, see on Matt. 4:12. For a discussion of "half" and "midst" see *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 184-187.

To cease. The sacrifices met their antitypical fulfillment in the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. The rending of the Temple veil by an unseen hand at the instant of Christ's death was heaven's announcement that the sacrifices and oblations had lost their significance.

Overspreading. Literally, "wing." Here the desolater is poetically pictured as being carried along upon the wing of abominations. This has reference in part at least to the horrors and atrocities that were perpetrated upon the Jewish nation by the Romans in A.D. 70.

The consummation. That is, the end of that which was to come upon the Jewish nation. Sad was the fate of those who rejected their hope of salvation.

Desolate. Better, "desolater." The desolater himself would eventually be destroyed (see on Matt. 23:38).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 PK 556
2 PK 554
3-9 PK 555
4-6 SL 46
5 SL 48
5-7 5T 636
15 GC 470
16 PK 555
16, 17 SL 48
17-19 PK 556
18 GC 470
18, 19 SL 47
19 4T 534
20 GC 470
21 SL 48
22, 23 GC 325
23 FE 87; PK 555; 5T 635
24 7T 149
24, 25 DA 233; PK 698
24-27 GC 323, 326, 351
25 DA 31, 98, 579; GC 313, 327, 345, 347; PK 556
27 DA 233; GC 327; PK 699

CHAPTER 10

1 *Daniel having humbled himself seeth a vision.* 10 *Being troubled with fear he is comforted by the angel.*

IN the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which *is* Hiddekel;

5 Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

6 His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7 And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

8 Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

10 ¶ And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands.

11 And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

12 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

14 Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days.

15 And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb.

16 And, behold, *one* like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength.

17 For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.

18 Then there came again and touched me *one* like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,

19 And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

20 Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come.

21 But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and *there is* none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

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1. Third year of Cyrus. Counted from the fall of Babylon by either the spring or the fall year, this would be 536/535 B.C. (see on Dan. 10:4, also on Ezra 1:1). Daniel was now apparently near the end of his life (see Dan. 12:13), about 88 years old, considering that he was 18 when he was taken captive (see 4T 570) in 605 B.C. (see on ch. 1:1). Dan. 10:1 introduces

the final section of the book, ch. 10 providing the setting in Daniel's experience for his fourth great prophecy, recorded in chs. 11 and 12. The main body of the prophetic narrative begins with ch. 11:2 and closes with ch. 12:4, the remainder of ch. 12 being a sort of postscript to the prophecy. On the year reckonings from the spring and the fall see Vol. II, pp. 109-111.

King of Persia. This is the only prophecy of Daniel's dated in terms of Cyrus' reign. Cyrus is here given the title "king of Persia," which would seem to imply that the whole empire was ruled by the Persians, as contrasted with the more limited title, "king over the realm of the Chaldeans," ascribed to Darius in ch. 9:1. Arising from comparative obscurity as prince of the little country of Anshan located in the highlands of Iran, Cyrus overthrew successively within a few years the Median, Lydian, and Babylonian kingdoms, and united them under his rule into the largest empire yet known. It was with such a monarch that Daniel and his people now had to deal, and with whom the powers of heaven are here revealed (ch. 10:13, 20) as striving.

A thing. A unique expression used by Daniel to describe his fourth great prophetic outline (chs. 10-12), which was apparently revealed without a preceding symbolic representation and without any allusion to symbols (cf. chs. 7:16-24; 8:20-26). The word *marah*, "vision," of vs. 7, 8, 16 refers simply to the appearance of Daniel's two celestial visitants, mentioned in vs. 5, 6 and 10-21 respectively. Accordingly, some have considered the fourth prophetic outline a further, more detailed explanation of events pictured symbolically in the "vision" of ch. 8:1-14. On this basis chs. 10-12 would be interpreted in terms of the vision of chs. 8, 9. However, the relationship between chs. 10-12 and 8, 9 is by no means so clear or certain as that between ch. 8 and ch. 9 (see on ch. 9:21).

Belteshazzar. See on ch. 1:7.

Time appointed. Heb. *ṣaba'*, the exact meaning of which here is doubtful. The phrase translates a single Hebrew word. *Ṣaba'* occurs nearly 500 times in the OT in the sense of "army," "host," "warfare," and "service." Its plural form, *ṣeba'oth*, forms part of the divine title "Lord God of Hosts." The KJV translates *ṣaba'* "appointed time," or "time appointed," only three times (Job 7:1; 14:14; and here). Inasmuch as the word everywhere else apparently has to do with an army, or warfare, or hard service, and inasmuch as in these three passages the same ideas of warfare, or hard service, make excellent sense, these definitions probably ought to be retained here. The present text seems to emphasize an intensity of struggle rather than an extended period of time. The passage may be translated, "even a great warfare" (RV), or "it was a great conflict" (RSV).

He understood. In contrast with the three other visions (chs. 2; 7; 8-9), which were couched in highly symbolic terms, this final revelation was given largely in literal language. The angel stated specifically that he had come to make Daniel "understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days" (ch. 10:14). This is the subject matter of chs. 11 and 12. It is not until near the end of this vision (ch. 12:8) that Daniel encounters a revelation concerning which he confesses, "I heard, but I understood not."

2. Mourning. Daniel does not state specifically the cause of mourning, but an indication of the reason may be found in the events that were occurring among the Jews in Palestine at this time. It was evidently a serious crisis that occasioned Daniel's three weeks of mourning. It was probably about the time when opposition was raised by the Samaritans against the Jews who under Zerubbabel had recently returned from exile (Ezra 4:1-5; see PK 571, 572). Whether the events of this chapter occurred before or after the Jews had actually laid the foundation stone (Ezra 3:8-10) of the Temple depends upon varying interpretations of the chronology of this period (see Vol. III, p. 97), and on a possibility that Daniel might have used a different reckoning in Babylonia from that of the Jews in Palestine in that time of transition. Daniel's period of mourning seems to have been contemporary with the serious threat that Cyrus' decree might not be carried to completion after all, because of the false reports sent by the Samaritans to the court of Persia, in an

attempt to stop the building operations. The significant fact that during these three weeks the angel was struggling to influence Cyrus (vs. 12, 13) indicates that a vital decision of the king was at stake. While praying for further light on subjects not yet fully explained in earlier visions, the prophet doubtless engaged in another period of intensive intercession (see ch. 9: 3-19) that the work of the adversary might be checked and that God's promises of restoration might be fulfilled to His chosen people.

3. Pleasant bread. That is, delicacies. During Daniel's period of fasting, he took but the simplest of food, sufficient only to maintain his strength.

Anoint myself. The use of oils for soothing the skin was in great popularity among ancient peoples, especially among those who lived in countries where the climate was very hot and dry. During his period of fasting and prayer the prophet saw fit to forgo this personal luxury.

4. Four and twentieth day. This is the only date in the book of Daniel given to the exact day and month. Nothing is said, of course, as to whether the reckoning here is in terms of the Babylonian-Persian calendar (which Daniel's contemporary Ezekiel may have used), or in accordance with the Jewish calendar (as Ezra and Nehemiah later reckoned). If Daniel's date is on the basis of the Babylonian-Persian calendar (beginning the year in the spring), the first month of Cyrus' third year would be about March/April, 536 B.C. If, on the other hand, Daniel reckoned by the Jewish method (which began the year in the fall), the first month of Cyrus' third year would come 12 months later and would correspond roughly to March/April, 535 B.C. For an explanation of the differences between Babylonian and Jewish calendars, see Vol. II, pp. 112-122.

Since the three weeks of Daniel's fasting ended on the 24th day of the first month, they must have begun on the 4th day, and thus his fast extended through the Passover season. But to what degree the feast was observed in captivity is not known.

Hiddekel. This Hebrew name represents the Akkadian *Idiqlat,* Old Persian *Tigrā,* which has come into modern languages as Tigris. The Tigris is the smaller of the two great rivers of Mesopotamia. A river by the same name is mentioned in Gen. 2:14. However, there reference is to the antediluvian stream. Precisely where on the Tigris the incident occurred is not stated.

5. A certain man. The heavenly Being appeared in human form (see Gen. 18:2; Dan. 7:13; Rev. 1:13). The description closely resembles that given by John when Christ was revealed to him. It was, indeed, the same Being who appeared to Daniel (see SL 50; GC 470, 471).

Uphaz. The location of Uphaz is not known. The name occurs elsewhere in the OT only in Jer. 10:9, where Uphaz is again identified as a source of gold. Some have suggested that it is identical with Ophir, which was famous for its fine gold (see 1 Kings 9:28). Such an identification is not impossible. The names Uphaz and Ophir are similar when written in Hebrew characters.

6. Beryl. Heb. *tarshish,* perhaps indicating the place at which the product was obtained.

Lamps of fire. Compare Rev. 1:14.

Polished brass. Compare Rev. 1:15.

7. Daniel alone saw. The revelation was given only to the Lord's chosen servant, yet the effect of the presence of a being from heaven was felt by those who were with the prophet. Compare the experience of Saul and his companions (Acts 9:3-7; 22:6-9).

8. Remained no strength. Compare Rev. 1:17. For a discussion of the physical state of prophets in vision see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics,* pp. 51-61.

9. Deep sleep. From the Heb. *radam,* a word occurring elsewhere only in Judges 4:21; Ps. 76:6; Dan. 8:18; Jonah 1:5, 6. Here it seems to mean "to be benumbed."

10. Hand touched me. Compare Eze. 2:2; 3:24; Rev. 1:17. The hand is evidently that of Gabriel (PK 571, 572).

Set. From the Heb. *nua'.* In the form here used *nua'* means literally, "to cause to tremble," "to set tottering." Though Daniel was lifted from his position of complete collapse upon the ground, his strength was still not such that he could support himself without trembling.

11. Greatly beloved. Heb. *chamudoth,*

translated "pleasant" in v. 3. This was the second time that Daniel had been so wonderfully reassured of God's love for him (see ch. 9:23).

12. Fear not. Compare Rev. 1:17. These words doubtless encouraged the prophet personally in the presence of the angel, for he "stood trembling" (v. 11), and also reassured Daniel that even though he had been praying for three weeks without an apparent answer, yet from the very first God had heard his supplication and set Himself to answer it. Daniel needed not to fear for his people; God had heard him, and God was in control.

13. Prince. Heb. *śar,* a word occurring 420 times in the OT, but apparently never with the meaning "king." It refers to a king's chief servants (Gen. 40:2, translated "chief"), to local rulers (1 Kings 22:26, translated "governor"), to Moses' subordinates (Ex. 18:21, translated "rulers"), to the nobles and officials of Israel (1 Chron. 22:17; Jer. 34:21, translated "princes"), and especially to military commanders (1 Kings 1:25; 1 Chron. 12:21, translated "captains"). In this last sense it appears in the expression *śar haṣṣaba',* "commander of the army" (the same expression translated "prince of the host," Dan. 8:11), on one of the Lachish ostraca, a letter written by a Judean army officer to his superior, probably at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Judah in 588-586 B.C., during the time that Daniel was in Babylon (see Vol. II, pp. 97, 98; see Jer. 34:7).

The heavenly Being who appeared to Joshua at Jericho is termed "the captain [Heb. *śar*] of the Lord's host" (Joshua 5:14, 15). Daniel frequently uses this word in reference to supernatural beings (Dan. 8:11, 25; 10:13, 21; 12:1). On the basis of these observations some have conjectured that *śar* denotes a supernatural being who at that time was standing in opposition to the angels of God, and who was trying to direct the course of the kingdom of Persia against the best interests of God's people. Satan has ever been eager to declare himself the prince of this world. The basic issue here was the welfare of God's people as against their heathen neighbors. Inasmuch as Michael is declared to be the "prince [*śar*] which standeth for the children of thy people" (ch. 12:1), it does not seem unreasonable that the "prince of the kingdom of Persia" would be a self-styled "guardian angel" for that country from among the hosts of the adversary. That the conflict was against the powers of darkness is clear: "For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus. . . . All that heaven could do in behalf of the people of God was done. The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses" (PK 571, 572).

On the other hand, *śar* may be used in the common sense of "ruler," and in that sense would refer to Cyrus, king of Persia. So understood, the angels of heaven are seen striving with the king, that he might render a verdict favorable to the Jews.

Withstood me. The prophet provides a glimpse of the mighty struggle going on between the forces of good and the forces of evil. The question may be asked, Why did the Lord allow the powers of evil to struggle for control of Cyrus' mind for 21 days, while Daniel continued in mourning and supplication? This question must be answered with the truth in mind that these events have to be understood in the light of the "broader and deeper purpose" of the plan of redemption, which "was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. . . . Before all the universe it [the death of Christ] would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan" (PP 68, 69; cf. DA 625). "Yet Satan was not then destroyed [at the death of Christ]. The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed" (DA 761). See on ch. 4:17.

In order to refute Satan's claim that God is a tyrant, the heavenly Father has seen fit to withhold His hand and allow the adversary an opportunity to demonstrate his methods and seek to win men to his cause. God does not force men's wills. He allows Satan a degree of freedom, while through His Spirit and His angels He pleads with men to resist evil and

follow the right. Thus God demonstrates to the onlooking universe that He is a God of love, and not the tyrant Satan has accused Him of being. It was for this reason that Daniel's prayer was not immediately answered. The answer waited until the king of Persia made his choice for good and against evil, by his own free will.

Here is revealed the true philosophy of history. God has set the ultimate goal, which most surely will be reached. By His Spirit He works on the hearts of men to cooperate with Him in attaining that goal. But the question as to which way any individual chooses to go is entirely his own decision to make. Thus the events of history are the product both of supernatural agencies and of human free choice. But the final outcome is God's. In this chapter, as perhaps nowhere else in Scripture, the veil that separates heaven from earth is drawn aside, and the struggle between the powers of light and darkness is revealed.

Michael. Heb. *Mika'el,* literally, "who [is] like God?" He is here described as "one of the chief princes [Heb. *śarim*]." Later He is described as Israel's particular protector (ch. 12:1). His identity is not definitely stated here, but a comparison with other scriptures identifies Him as Christ. Jude 9 terms Him "the archangel." According to 1 Thess. 4:16, the "voice of the archangel" is associated with the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Jesus. Christ declared that the dead will come forth from their graves when they hear the voice of the Son of man (John 5:28). It thus seems clear that Michael is none other than the Lord Jesus Himself (see EW 164; cf. DA 421). The name Michael appears in the Bible only in apocalyptic passages (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7). Moreover, it is used only in instances where Christ is in direct conflict with Satan. The name in Hebrew, signifying "who is like God?" is at once a question and a challenge. In view of the fact that Satan's rebellion is essentially an attempt to install himself on the throne of God and "be like the most High" (Isa. 14:14), the name Michael is a most fitting one for Him who has undertaken to vindicate the character of God and disprove Satan's claims.

I remained there. The LXX, followed by Theodotion, reads: "and I left him [Michael] there." Such a reading has been adopted by several modern versions (Goodspeed, Moffatt, RSV), doubtless because it did not seem clear why the angel should state that *he* was left with the kings of Persia when Michael had come to his aid. Compare with this reading the statement, "But Michael came to his help, and then he remained with the kings of Persia" (EGW, Supplementary Material, on Dan. 10:12, 13).

Some see another possible meaning in the Hebrew text as it stands. The struggle here described was essentially one between the angels of God and "the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus" (see PK 571, 572). With the entrance into the contest of Michael, the Son of God, the powers of heaven gained the victory, and the evil one was forced to retreat. The word translated "remained" is elsewhere used in the sense of "to remain over" when others have left or been taken away. Thus this verb is used of Jacob when he remained behind at the brook Jabbok (Gen. 32:24), and of those heathen whom Israel allowed to remain in the land (1 Kings 9:20, 21). It is also the word applied by Elijah to himself when he believed that everyone else had departed from the true worship of Jehovah: "I, even I only, am left" (1 Kings 19:10, 14). As used by the angel in the present passage, it could mean that with the coming of Michael, the evil angel was forced to leave, and God's angel "was left remaining there beside the kings of Persia." "The victory was finally gained; the forces of the enemy were held in check" (PK 572). Two translations that have suggested this same thought are those of Luther, "there I gained the victory with the kings in Persia," and Knox, "and there, at Persia's court, I was left master of the field."

Kings of Persia. Two Hebrew manuscripts read, "kingdom of Persia." The ancient versions read, "king of Persia."

14. In the latter days. Heb. *be'acharith hayyamim,* "in the latter part [or end] of the days." This is an expression frequently used in Biblical prophecy, point-

ing to the final part of whatever period of history the prophet has in view. Thus Jacob used the term "last days" in reference to the ultimate fortune of each of the twelve tribes in the land of Canaan (Gen. 49:1); Balaam applied the term to the first advent of Christ (Num. 24:14); Moses used it in a general sense of the distant future, when Israel would suffer tribulation (Deut. 4:30). The expression may, and often does, refer directly to the final events of history. See on Isa. 2:2.

For many days. As indicated by italics, there is no word for "many" in the Hebrew text. The word "days" here seems to have the same meaning as in the clause immediately preceding. The angel came to tell Daniel what would befall the saints throughout the centuries until Christ's second coming. The emphasis of this final clause of the verse is not so much upon the length of time in prospect, as upon the fact that the Lord has still further truth to be conveyed to Daniel by a vision. Translated literally, this verse reads, "And I have come to cause you to understand that which will happen to your people in the latter part of the days, for still there is a vision for the days."

16. Like the similitude. Gabriel veiled his brightness and appeared in human form (see SL 52).

The vision. Some commentators consider that Daniel here refers to the vision of chs. 8 and 9; others believe that it was the present revelation that afflicted the prophet so acutely. In view of the fact that the term "vision" in both vs. 1 and 14 seems to apply to the revelation in chs. 10-12, and also because Daniel's statement here in ch. 10:16 is a logical continuation of his reaction (v. 15) to the angel's declaration concerning "the vision" (v. 14), it seems reasonable to conclude that the prophet is here speaking of the vision of divine glory he was witnessing.

19. Greatly beloved. See on v. 11.

20. With the prince. The KJV may be understood as meaning either that the angel was to fight on the side of the prince of Persia, or that he was to fight against him. The Greek versions are likewise ambiguous. The preposition *meta,* "with," which it employs, may imply either alliance, as in 1 John 1:3, or hostility, as in Rev. 2:16. The Hebrew of this passage, however, seems to give a clear indication of its meaning. The verb *lacham,* "to fight," is used 28 times in the OT, followed, as here, by the preposition *'im,* "with." In these instances the context clearly indicates that the word is to be taken in the sense of "against" (see Deut. 20:4; 2 Kings 13:12; Jer. 41:12; Dan. 11:11). It seems certain, then, that the angel is here speaking of further conflict between himself and the "prince of Persia." That this struggle did continue long after the time of Daniel's vision is shown by Ezra 4:4-24. "The forces of the enemy were held in check all the days of Cyrus, and all the days of his son Cambyses, who reigned about seven and a half years" (PK 572).

Prince of Grecia. The Hebrew word here for "prince," *śar,* is the same as that employed previously (see on v. 13). The angel had told Daniel that he was returning to continue the struggle with the powers of darkness that contended for control of the mind of the king of Persia. Then he looked further toward the future and indicated that when he finally would withdraw from the struggle, a revolution would ensue in world affairs. As long as God's angel held at bay the evil forces seeking to dominate the Persian government, that empire stood. But when divine influence was withdrawn and the control of the leaders of the nation was left entirely to the powers of darkness, ruin for their empire quickly followed. Led by Alexander, the armies of Greece swept over the world and quickly extinguished the Persian Empire.

The truth stated by the angel in this verse throws light on the revelation that follows. The ensuing prophecy, a record of war upon war, assumes greater meaning when understood in the light of what the angel has here observed. While men struggle with one another for earthly power, behind the scenes, and hidden from human eyes, an even greater struggle is going on, of which the ebb and flow of earthly affairs is a reflection (see Ed 173). As God's people are shown to be preserved throughout their troubled history—recorded prophetically by Daniel—

so it is sure that in that greater struggle, the legions of light will have the victory over the powers of darkness.

21. Noted. Heb. *rasham,* "to inscribe," "to write down."

Scripture. Heb. *kethab,* literally, "a writing," from the verb *kathab,* "to write." The eternal plans and purposes of God are here represented as written down. Compare Ps. 139:16; Acts 17:26; see on Dan. 4:17.

None that holdeth. This phrase may also be translated, "there is no one who exerts himself." This cannot be taken to mean that all were oblivious of the struggle except the two heavenly beings mentioned here. "The controversy was one in which all heaven was interested" (PK 571). The probable meaning of the passage is that Christ and Gabriel assumed the special work of contending with the hosts of Satan who attempted to secure control of the empires of this earth.

Your prince. The fact that Michael is spoken of specifically as *your* (the Hebrew pronoun is plural) prince, places Him in sharp contrast with the "prince of Persia" (vs. 13, 20) and "the prince of Grecia" (v. 20). Michael was the champion on God's side of the great controversy.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 6T 406
2-6 SL 49
7, 8 SL 50
8 DA 246; GC 471; MB 15; SC 29
11 GC 470
11-13 SL 51
13 PK 572
15, 16, 19 SL 51
21 DA 99

CHAPTER 11

1 *The overthrow of Persia by the king of Grecia.* 5 *Leagues and conflicts between the kings of the south and of the north.* 30 *The invasion and tyranny of the Romans.*

ALSO I in the first year of Darius the Mede, *even* I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him.

2 And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than *they* all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.

3 And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.

4 And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.

5 ¶ And the king of the south shall be strong, and *one* of his princes; and he shall be strong above him, and have dominion; his dominion *shall be* a great dominion.

6 And in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement: but she shall not retain the power of the arm; neither shall he stand, nor his arm: but she shall be given up, and they that brought her, and he that begat her, and he that strengthened her in *these* times.

7 But out of a branch of her roots shall *one* stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail:

8 And shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, *and* with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the north.

9 So the king of the south shall come into *his* kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

10 But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces: and *one* shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through: then shall he return, and be stirred up, *even* to his fortress.

11 And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, *even* with the king of the north: and he shall set forth a great multitude; but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

12 *And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down *many* ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened *by it.*

13 For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches.

14 And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall.

15 So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither *shall there be any* strength to withstand.

16 But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.

17 He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her: but she shall not stand *on his side,* neither be for him.

18 After this shall he turn his face unto the isles, and shall take many: but a prince for his own behalf shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he shall cause *it* to turn upon him.

19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

20 Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes *in* the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle.

21 And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

22 And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflown from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

23 And after the league *made* with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

24 He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do *that* which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches: *yea,* and he shall forecast his devices against the strong holds, even for a time.

25 And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

26 Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

27 And both these kings' hearts *shall be* to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end *shall be* at the time appointed.

28 Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart *shall be* against the holy covenant; and he shall do *exploits,* and return to his own land.

29 At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south; but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

30 ¶ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

31 And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice,* and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits.*

33 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days.

34 Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

35 And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of

the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

37 Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

38 But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

39 Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

40 And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

41 He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

42 He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.

43 But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall be* at his steps.

44 But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

45 And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

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1. **Also I.** This verse is a continuation of the angel's statement in ch. 10:21. The chapter division at this point is unfortunate. It gives the false impression that a new part of the book begins here, when the narrative is clearly continuous. Gabriel informs Daniel that Darius the Mede had been honored of Heaven (see PK 556). The vision was given in the third year of Cyrus (ch. 10:1). The angel is telling Daniel of an event that took place in the first year of Darius. In that year Darius the Mede had been honored of Heaven by a visit of the angel Gabriel "to confirm and to strengthen him" (PK 556).

2. **The truth.** The substance of the fourth great revelation in Daniel begins with this verse. All that precedes, from chs. 10:1 to 11:1, is background and introduction.

Three kings in Persia. Inasmuch as this vision was given to Daniel in the third year of Cyrus (ch. 10:1), the reference is doubtless to the three kings who followed Cyrus on the throne of Persia. These were: Cambyses (530-522 B.C.), the False Smerdis (Gaumata, whose Babylonian name was Bardiya; see Vol. III, pp. 348, 349), a usurper (522 B.C.), and Darius I (522-486 B.C.).

The fourth. Commentators generally agree that the context points to Xerxes as "the fourth" king, but differ as to the enumeration of the various kings referred to in this verse. Some hold that "the fourth" king, thus designated, was actually the last of the three who were yet to "stand up." They reckon Cyrus as the first of the four, and omit the False Smerdis, because he was not of the legitimate line and held the throne but a few months. Others omit Cyrus as the first of the four and include the False Smerdis as one of the three that were to follow him. Either way, Xerxes is "the fourth." However, the second of the two views seems to represent more nearly the natural sense of the text.

Far richer. Xerxes is to be identified with the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther (see Vol. III, p. 459; see also on Esther 1:1). Of him it is recorded that he was particularly proud of "the riches of his glorious kingdom" (see Esther 1:4, 6, 7). Herodotus, who wrote at length of Xerxes, leaves a vivid, detailed account of his military might (vii. 20, 21, 40, 41, 61-80).

Stir up all. This passage may be translated in two different ways. It has usually been taken, as in the KJV, to mean

that Xerxes would stir up the nations of the world against Greece. That this occurred is a well-known fact of history. By the time of Xerxes, the Greek peninsula remained the only important area in the eastern Mediterranean not under Persian domination. In 490 B.C., Darius the Great, predecessor of Xerxes, while attempting to subdue the Greeks, had been stopped at Marathon. With the accession of Xerxes, new plans on a lavish scale were laid for the conquest of Greece. Herodotus (vii. 61-80) enumerates over 40 nations that furnished troops for Xerxes' army. Included in the vast army were soldiers from such widely separated lands as India, Ethiopia, Arabia, and Armenia. Even the Carthaginians seem to have been induced to join in the assault by attacking the Greek colony of Syracuse in Sicily.

By 480 B.C., the Greeks had the vast Persian Empire in arms against them. The Greek city-states, so often at war with one another, rallied to save their freedom. At first they suffered a series of setbacks. They were defeated at Thermopylae, and Athens was taken and partially burned by the Persians. Then the tide turned. The Greek navy, under Themistocles, found itself bottled up by superior Persian squadrons in the Bay of Salamis, on the coast of Attica not far from Athens. Soon after battle was joined it became evident that the Persian ships were in too tight formation for effective maneuvering. Under persistent Greek onslaughts many were sunk, and only a fraction of the navy escaped. With this Greek victory the Persian sea forces were eliminated from the struggle for Greece. The following year, 479 B.C., the Greeks decisively defeated the troops of Persia at Plataea and drove them forever from Greek soil.

The reading of this text as it appears in the KJV strikingly fits the fact that Xerxes did "stir up all against the realm of Grecia." But it is possible to translate the somewhat obscure Hebrew of this passage differently. The problem is whether the Heb. *'eth,* here translated "against," is to be understood as a preposition meaning "against," or as a sign of the direct object of the verb. It is a fact that with certain other verbs denoting strife and warfare *'eth* is sometimes so used (see Gen. 14:2). But it is also a fact that the verb here translated "stir up" occurs 12 other times in the OT followed by *'eth,* in every one of which passages the context clearly indicates that *'eth* is to be taken as the sign of the direct object. If *'eth* is so taken here, the passage reads: "He shall rouse all the realm of Greece."

If this latter translation of the passage be preferred, the following interpretation is reasonable: From the long-range viewpoint of world history, the war between Persia and the Greeks constitutes one of the great historical epochs. The subsequent history of Europe, and of the world, might well have been much different had the decision at Salamis and Plataea been otherwise. Western civilization, then confined almost entirely to its homeland of Greece, succeeded in saving itself from being engulfed by Oriental despotism. The Greek states came to feel a sense of unity they had not previously known. The victory at Salamis proved to Athens the importance of sea power, and soon the city established itself as the head of a maritime empire. Viewed in this light, the last sentence of Dan. 11:2 forms an appropriate setting for ch. 11:3.

Grecia. Heb. *Yawan,* transliterated "Javan" in Gen. 10:2 (see comments there). The Greeks, or Ionians, were descendants of Javan. See on Dan. 2:39.

3. A mighty king. Heb. *melek gibbor,* "a valiant [warrior] king." This clearly refers to Alexander the Great (336-323 B.C.).

Great dominion. Alexander's dominion extended from Macedonia and Greece to northwestern India, from Egypt to the Jaxartes River east of the Caspian Sea—the largest empire the world had yet known (see on ch. 2:39; 7:6).

4. When he shall stand up. Alexander had scarcely reached the pinnacle of his power when he was cut down. In 323 B.C. this king who ruled from the Adriatic to the Indus suddenly fell ill, and 11 days later was dead (see on ch. 7:6).

Shall be broken. Alexander left no one in his immediate family who could be expected to hold together the territories he had won. Some of the leading generals tried, for a number of years, to hold the

empire intact in the name of Alexander's half brother and his posthumous son (both under regents), but in less than 25 years after Alexander's death, a coalition of four generals had defeated Antigonus, the last aspirant to the control of the whole empire, and Alexander's territory was divided into four kingdoms (later reduced to three). For this division, see on chs. 7:7; 8:22; see also maps on pp. 824, 825.

The four winds. Representing the four quarters of the compass. The same division is represented by the four heads of the leopard (see on ch. 7:6) and by the four horns of the goat (see on ch. 8:8, 22).

Not to his posterity. Alexander's posthumous son was called king, but he was killed while still a child, in the struggle between the generals over the actual rule of the empire. Thus there was no descendant of Alexander who ruled.

5. The king of the south. From this point on through much of the chapter, the prophecy focuses on the two kingdoms emerging from Alexander's empire with which God's people, the Jews, had most to do. These were Syria, ruled by the Seleucids, and Egypt, ruled by the Ptolemies. From the geographical standpoint of Palestine, the former was north, and the latter, south. The original Greek translation, in fact, has "king of Egypt" for "king of the south"; also v. 8 points to Egypt as king of the south. A similar designation can be demonstrated from historical sources. One of the best known south Arabian inscriptions (Glaser No. 1155) refers to a war between Persia and Egypt and calls the respective kings the Lord of the North and the Lord of the South.

At the point in history referred to in this verse, the king of Egypt was Ptolemy I Soter (also called son of Lagus, 306-283 B.C.), one of Alexander's best generals, who established the most enduring of all the Hellenistic monarchies.

One of his princes. This evidently applies to Seleucus I Nicator (305-280 B.C.), another of Alexander's generals, who made himself ruler of most of the Asiatic part of the empire. That he should here be spoken of as "one of his [Ptolemy's] princes" (Heb. *śarim,* "generals"; see on ch. 10:13) is probably to be understood in the light of his relations with Ptolemy. In 316 B.C., Seleucus was driven from Babylonia, which he had held since 321, by his rival Antigonus (see on ch. 7:6). Thereupon Seleucus placed himself under the command of Ptolemy, whom he assisted in defeating Demetrius, son of Antigonus, at Gaza in 312 B.C. Shortly after this, Seleucus succeeded in regaining his territories in Mesopotamia.

Strong above him. That is, Seleucus, who at one time could be considered one of Ptolemy's "princes," later became stronger than the Egyptian king. When Seleucus died in 280 B.C., his realm extended from the Hellespont to northern India. Arrian, the leading ancient historian for this period, states that Seleucus was "the greatest king of those who succeeded Alexander, and the most royal mind, and ruled over the greatest extent of territory, next to Alexander" (*Anabasis of Alexander* vii. 22).

6. End of years. The prophetic view next focuses on a crisis about 35 years after the death of Seleucus I.

Join themselves. To solidify peace between the two kingdoms after a long and costly war, Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.), grandson of Seleucus I, married Berenice, a daughter of the Egyptian king, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Antiochus also deposed his former wife and sister, Laodice, from her position of priority and debarred her children from succession to the throne.

King of the north. This term is used here for the first time in this prophecy. In the present context it refers to the Seleucids, whose territories were north of Palestine. The then "king of the north" was Seleucus II Callinicus (246-226 B.C.), son of Antiochus II and Laodice. On the expressions "king of the north" and "king of the south" see on v. 5 and on Isa. 41:25.

Shall not retain the power. After a son had been born to the new marriage, a reconciliation was effected between Antiochus and Laodice.

Neither shall he stand. Antiochus died suddenly, poisoned, according to popular opinion, by Laodice.

His arm. This is also the reading of the LXX. By a simple change in Hebrew vow-

els several ancient versions (Theodotion, Symmachus, Vulgate) read "his seed." This would then refer to Antiochus' son by Berenice, whom Laodice killed.

Given up. That is, Berenice, who along with her infant son was killed by the henchmen of Laodice.

They that brought her. Many of Berenice's Egyptian ladies in waiting perished with her.

He that begat her. Heb. *yoledah,* correctly, according to Masoretic tradition, "her begetter." This would of course apply to Berenice's father, Ptolemy II, who had died shortly before in Egypt. It is not clear, however, why his death should be mentioned here, as it was entirely apart from the vengeance wreaked by Laodice. Several ancient translations read *yaldah,* "maid," doubtless having in mind Berenice's entourage. A simple change in vowel pointing permits us to read "her child" (see RSV). This would, of course, refer to her son, who was killed by command of Laodice.

He that strengthened her. Probably Antiochus, Berenice's husband.

7. A branch of her roots. Ptolemy III Euergetes, son of Ptolemy II and brother of Berenice, succeeded his father in 246 B.C., and invaded Syria in revenge for his sister's murder.

Shall prevail. Ptolemy III seems to have been entirely victorious in his campaign against Seleucus II. He pressed his conquests inland at least as far as Mesopotamia—though he boasted of having penetrated to Bactria—and he established Egyptian sea power on the Mediterranean.

8. Egypt. This sole occurrence (until v. 42) of the actual name of the country of "the king of the south" establishes beyond doubt the identity of that land.

Their gods. The Decree of Canopus (239/238 B.C.) states in praise of Ptolemy III: " 'And the sacred images carried off from the land by the Persians, the king having made a foreign campaign, recovered into Egypt, and restored to the temples from which each of them had been carried away' " (translation in J. P. Mahaffy, *A History of Egypt Under the Ptolemaic Dynasty* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899], p. 113). Jerome (*Commentariorum in Danielem Liber,* ch. XI, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina,* vol. 25, col. 561) states that Ptolemy III brought back immense booty to Egypt.

He shall continue. Literally, "he shall stand," that is, "he shall refrain from attacking the king of the north" (RSV). Although it is possible to translate the Hebrew as does the KJV, the fact that Ptolemy III died in 222 B.C., not two years after Seleucus III, would seem to make such a rendering not very meaningful. On the other hand, since in his latter years Ptolemy was not engaged in warfare of any importance, the alternative translation of the Hebrew seems more reasonable.

9. King of the south. The Hebrew here may be understood either as in the KJV, where "king of the south" is taken as the subject of the sentence (so also Vulgate, Syriac), or as in the LXX, Theodotion, ASV, and RSV, where "king of the south" is attached to "kingdom." The latter versions support the reading, "He will come into the kingdom of the king of the south." This translation seems preferable because it follows more naturally the Hebrew word order; it does not necessitate the insertion of the word "his" before kingdom, and it makes the verse more meaningful and less redundant. If this translation is accepted, the verse is doubtless to be interpreted as a reference to the fact that after Ptolemy III had returned to Egypt, Seleucus re-established his authority and marched against that country, hoping to retrieve his riches and regain his prestige.

Return into his own land. Seleucus was defeated and forced to return to Syria empty-handed (about 240 B.C.).

10. His sons. That is, the two sons of Seleucus II, Seleucus III Ceraunus Soter (226/225-223/222 B.C.), who was murdered after a short reign, and Antiochus III, the Great (223/222-188/187 B.C.).

Overflow, and pass through. In 219 B.C., Antiochus III initiated his campaign for southern Syria and Palestine by retaking Seleucia, the port of Antioch. Thereafter he set out upon a systematic campaign to conquer Palestine from his rival, Ptolemy IV Philopator (222-204 B.C.), during which he penetrated Transjordan.

11. Moved with choler. For the meaning of the expression see on ch. 8:7. In 217 B.C., Ptolemy IV met Antiochus at Raphia near the Palestine-Egyptian border.

He. The antecedents of the various pronouns in this verse become clearer when it is recognized that the passage is in the form of a Hebrew inverted parallelism in which the first and fourth elements, and the second and third, are in parallel. Thus in this verse the references are as follows: King of the south, king of the north, he (king of the north), his (king of the south). See Vol. III, p. 27.

A great multitude. Polybius, the leading ancient historian for this period, states that Antiochus' army numbered 62,000 infantry, 6,000 cavalry, and 102 elephants (*Histories* v. 79). Ptolemy's troops seem to have been of about the same number. Compare the reference to "ten thousands" in v. 12.

Given into his hand. The Battle of Raphia (217 B.C.), between Antiochus III and Ptolemy IV, resulted in a stinging defeat for the former, who is reported to have lost 10,000 infantry and 300 cavalry, plus 4,000 prisoners.

12. He. That is, Ptolemy IV.

Not be strengthened. Indolent and dissolute, Ptolemy failed to make the best of his victory at Raphia. In the meantime, during the years 212-204 B.C., Antiochus III turned his energies to recovering his eastern territories, and campaigned successfully as far as the border of India. Ptolemy IV's death (205? B.C.) was concealed for some time; then a son, aged four or five, succeeded him as Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204-180 B.C.).

13. Shall return. The accession of the child Ptolemy V presented Antiochus III with the opportunity of avenging himself upon the Egyptians. In 201 B.C. he invaded Palestine again.

After certain years. Literally, "at the end of times, years." The reference is probably to the period of some 16 years (217-201 B.C.) between the Battle of Raphia (see on v. 11) and Antiochus' second campaign against the south.

14. In those times. Beginning with this verse, interpretations of the remainder of the chapter differ widely. One group of commentators considers that vs. 14-45 continue to narrate the subsequent history of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kings. Others hold the view that with v. 14 the next great world empire, Rome, enters the scene, and that vs. 14-35 sketch the course of that empire and of the Christian church.

Here or at some point later in the chapter many commentators find reference to Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who ruled from 175 to 164/163 B.C., and to the national crisis that his policy of Hellenization brought upon the Jews. It is, of course, an undeniable historical fact that the attempt of Antiochus to force the Jews to give up their national religion and culture, and to adopt in its place the religion, culture, and language of the Greeks, is the most significant event in Jewish history during the entire intertestament period.

The threat posed by Antiochus Epiphanes confronted the Jews with a crisis comparable to the crises precipitated by Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Haman, and Titus. During his brief reign of 12 years Antiochus very nearly exterminated the religion and culture of the Jews. He stripped the sanctuary of all its treasures, plundered Jerusalem, left the city and its walls in ruins, slew thousands of Jews, and carried others into exile as slaves. A royal edict commanded them to abandon all rites of their own religion and to live as heathen. They were forced to erect pagan altars in every Judean town, to offer swine's flesh upon them, and to surrender every copy of their Scriptures to be torn up and burned. Antiochus offered swine before a pagan idol set up in the Jewish Temple. His suspension of the Jewish sacrifices (either 168-165 or 167-164 B.C., by two methods of reckoning the Seleucid Era; see Vol. V, p. 25n) endangered the survival of the Jewish religion and the identity of the Jews as a people.

Eventually the Jews rose in revolt and drove the forces of Antiochus from Judea. They even succeeded in repelling an army sent by Antiochus for the specific purpose of exterminating them as a nation. Free once more from his oppressive hand, they restored the Temple, set up a new altar, and again offered sacrifice (1 Macc. 4:36-

54). Entering into an alliance with Rome a few years later (161 B.C.), the Jews enjoyed nearly a century of comparative independence and prosperity under Roman protection, until Judea became a Roman ethnarchy in 63 B.C. Those who hold that Antiochus Epiphanes is mentioned in vs. 14, 15 see the "robbers" as those Jews who turned traitors to their own countrymen and assisted Antiochus in the execution of his cruel and blasphemous decrees and policies. For a detailed account of the bitter experiences of the Jews during this evil time, see 1 Macc. 1 and 2; Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 6. 7; *Wars* i. 1.

It is possible that the crisis occasioned by the policies of Antiochus Epiphanes is referred to in ch. 11, though there is considerable difference of opinion as to which part of the prophecy takes notice of him. To recognize that the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes are referred to in ch. 11 does not require that he be considered the subject of prophecy in chs. 7 or 8, any more than the mention of other Seleucid kings requires that they be considered the subject of prophecy in those chapters.

The robbers of thy people. Literally, "the sons of the breakers of thy people." This expression may be understood subjectively, "the children of the violent among thy people" (ASV; cf. RSV). Thus understood, it probably applies to those among the Jews who saw in the international strife of their times an opportunity to further their own national interests, and were willing to go beyond the bounds of law to accomplish them. On the other hand, if understood objectively, the passage would mean, "those who act violently against thy people." In this sense it has been taken as referring to the Romans, who eventually (63 B.C.) robbed the Jews of their independence, and later (in A.D. 70 and 135) destroyed the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. It was, in fact, during the reign of Antiochus III (see on vs. 10-13) that the Romans, interfering to protect the interests of their allies, Pergamum, Rhodes, Athens, and Egypt, first made themselves felt in the affairs of Syria and Egypt.

15. King of the north. Following the parenthetical remarks of v. 14, this verse continues the narrative begun in v. 13 concerning Antiochus' second campaign in Palestine.

Mount. Heb. *solelah,* "a mound," that is, "siegeworks."

The most fenced cities. Heb. *'ir mibṣaroth,* literally, "a city of fortifications." The reference is possibly to Gaza, which fell to Antiochus III in 201 B.C., after a considerable siege. Some commentators understand this passage to refer to Sidon, where Antiochus cornered an Egyptian army in this same war, and after a siege forced the Egyptians to surrender.

Arms. A symbol of strength (see vs. 22, 31).

16. Glorious land. That is, Palestine (see on ch. 8:9). According to the view that the Romans are introduced in v. 14, the conquest of Palestine here described is believed to be that of Pompey, who, in 63 B.C., intervened in a dispute between the two brothers, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, rivals to the throne of Judea. The defenders shut themselves behind the Temple defenses and for three months held out against the Romans. It was on this occasion that, according to Josephus (*Antiquities* xiv. 4. 4), Pompey lifted the veil and gazed upon the holy of holies, now empty, of course, for the ark had been hidden since the Exile (see on Jer. 37: 10).

17. Upright ones. Heb. *yesharim.* The meaning of the Hebrew of this passage is obscure. The phrase reads literally, "and upright [ones] with him and he shall make." One attempt at the meaning is that which appears in the KJV. Other versions take *yesharim* as equivalent to *mesharim,* "uprightnesses," or "equities." *Mesharim* is used in v. 6 of an equitable agreement between the king of the north and the king of the south. If *mesharim* is the correct reading there may be a possible reference to the fact that when Ptolemy XI Auletes died in 51 B.C., he placed his two children, Cleopatra and Ptolemy XII, under the guardianship of Rome.

The daughter of women. An unusual expression, possibly emphasizing the femininity of the woman referred to. Some have applied this expression to Cleopatra, the daughter of Ptolemy XI. She was

placed under Roman guardianship in 51 B.C., and three years later became the mistress of Julius Caesar, who had invaded Egypt. After Julius Caesar was assassinated, Cleopatra turned her affections to Mark Antony, the rival of Caesar's heir, Octavian. Octavian (later Augustus) defeated the combined forces of Cleopatra and Antony at Actium (31 B.C.). The next year Antony's suicide (said by some to have been engineered by Cleopatra) opened the way for the new victor. Then Cleopatra, finding that she could not ingratiate herself with Octavian, committed suicide.

With Cleopatra the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt ended, and from 30 B.C. onward Egypt was a province of the Roman Empire. Cleopatra's devious career fits well the specifications of the final clause of this verse, for Cleopatra did not stand for Caesar, but for her own political interests.

18. The isles. Heb. *'iyyim,* "sea lands," or "sea coasts." War in other parts of the empire drew Julius Caesar from Egypt. The party of Pompey was soon defeated on the coastlands of Africa. In Syria and Asia Minor, Caesar was successful against Pharnaces, king of the Cimmerian Bosporus.

A prince. Heb. *qaṣin,* a man in authority generally, as in Isa. 1:10, or more specifically a military commander, as in Joshua 10:24.

Without. The Hebrew of the last sentence of this verse is obscure. The following translation probably reflects the sense of this passage: "Indeed he shall turn his insolence back upon him" (RSV).

19. Stumble and fall. In 44 B.C., Julius Caesar was assassinated in Rome.

20. A raiser of taxes. Heb. *ma'abir nogeś,* literally, "one who causes an oppressor to pass through." The participle *nogeś,* from the verb *nagaś,* "to oppress," "to exact," is used of Israel's taskmasters in Egypt (Ex. 3:7) and of foreign oppressors (Isa. 9:4). The passage thus refers to a king who would send oppressors, or exactors, throughout his realm. Most commentators have understood the reference here to be to a taxgatherer, who to the average man in ancient times was the very embodiment of royal oppression. Luke 2:1 records that "it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed [literally, "enrolled," or "registered," see on Luke 2:1]." Augustus, who succeeded Julius Caesar, is regarded as having established the Roman Empire, and after a reign of more than 40 years died peacefully in his bed in A.D. 14.

21. A vile person. That is, one lightly esteemed or despised. Augustus was succeeded by Tiberius (A.D. 14-37). Certain historians maintain that there was a deliberate attempt by Suetonius, Seneca, and Tacitus to blacken the character of Tiberius. Doubtless the picture was overdrawn. Nevertheless sufficient factual evidence remains to show that Tiberius was an eccentric, misunderstood, and unloved person.

They shall not give. Literally, "they did not give." The Hebrew is better translated in the past tense. The reference is probably to the fact that Tiberius was not originally in line for succession to the throne, but became the son of Augustus by adoption, and was appointed heir to the empire only when he had reached middle life.

Peaceably. When Augustus died, Tiberius ascended the throne peacefully. He was only the stepson of his predecessor, and his accession to the imperial dignity was to a considerable extent due to the maneuverings of his mother, Livia.

22. Arms of a flood. "Arms" denotes power, and here, particularly, military power (see vs. 6, 15). The picture is evidently that of floodlike armies of soldiers (see ch. 9:26). Tiberius was eminently successful in leading several military campaigns, both in Germany and in the East on the frontiers of Armenia and Parthia.

Prince of the covenant. Identical with the Prince who confirms the covenant in ch. 9:25-27 (see ch. 8:11). That this was the Messiah, Jesus Christ, is clear from the prophecy of ch. 9. It was when Tiberius reigned (A.D. 14-37), and upon the order of his procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate, that Jesus was crucified, in the year A.D. 31.

23. After the league. Some commentators

have suggested that here Daniel goes back in point of time to the league of assistance and friendship arranged between the Jews and the Romans in 161 B.C. (see Josephus *Antiquities* xii. 10. 6). This view assumes that the Hebrew expression translated "time" in v. 24 designates a prophetic "time" of 360 years (see on chs. 7:25; 11:24). Others, who hold to the chronological continuity of the prophetic narrative of ch. 11, find a reference here to the Roman policy of arranging what today would be called mutual assistance pacts, as, for example, the league of assistance and friendship with the Jews. In these treaties the Romans recognized the participants as "allies," and the treaties were intended, presumably, to protect and promote mutual interests. Rome thus appeared in the role of friend and protector, only to "work deceitfully" by turning these agreements to her own advantage. She often imposed the burdens of conquest on her "allies," but usually reserved the rewards of conquest for herself. Eventually these "allies" were absorbed into the Roman Empire.

24. For a time. Heb. *'ad-'eth,* "until a time." This expression points to a [point of] time when the devices of the power here set forth were brought to an end. The word *'eth,* "time," is here probably not to be taken as a specific period of time, nor as a period of prophetic time. The word translated "times" in chs. 4:16; 7:25 is the Aramaic *'iddanin,* and in ch. 12:7 the Heb. *mo'adim. 'Ad-'eth* seems to point to a time at an undetermined distance from the speaker. The evil power was to work until that God-ordained limit was reached (see ch. 11:27; cf. ch. 12:1).

Those who believe that prophetic time is here indicated see in the events narrated a reference to the period of time that the city of Rome would continue as the seat of the empire. The beginning date is considered to be 31 B.C., the year of the Battle of Actium, when Augustus waged a successful campaign against Mark Antony and Cleopatra. From 31 B.C., 360 years reach to A.D. 330, the year that the seat of the empire was moved from Rome to Constantinople.

Some see in the statement of this verse a prediction of Roman policy toward the conquered regions of the empire. History records that the plunder of conquest was distributed generously among the nobility and army commanders, and that it was common practice for even the ordinary soldier to receive a grant of land in conquered regions. "For a time"—a considerable period of time, in fact—no "strong holds" were able to withstand the determined pressure of the invincible legions of Rome.

25. Stir up his power. According to one exposition referred to previously (see on v. 24), this verse refers to the struggle between Augustus and Antony, which culminated in the Battle of Actium, and the defeat of Antony.

26. They that feed. Some see a reference in this phrase to royal favorites. From the days of the early Caesars, palace intrigue marks the rise and fall of the emperors of Rome. In later years, particularly, when one army officer after another succeeded to the throne of the Caesars, often each at the price of the head of his predecessor, the prediction that royal favorites would rise and "destroy" those who had befriended them and that "many" would "fall down slain" as a result, met a singularly apt fulfillment. In the ancient Orient those who ate food provided by another person were expected to remain loyal to him.

Overflow. The Syriac and the Vulgate read, "be washed," or "be swept away" (see RSV). According to the exposition referred to above (v. 24), this verse describes the fate of Antony. When Cleopatra, frightened by the din of battle, withdrew from Actium, taking with her the 60 ships supplied by the Egyptian navy, Antony followed her and thereby conceded the victory to Augustus. Antony's supporters went over to Augustus. Finally Antony committed suicide. According to those who emphasize the chronological continuity of the chapter (see on v. 23), the unstable political situation that plagued the empire between the reigns of Nero and Diocletian is here foretold.

27. To do mischief. Some see in this phrase a reference to the intrigues of Octavian (later Augustus) and Antony,

both of them aspirants to universal control. Others see a reference to the struggle for power during the closing years of the reign of Diocletian (284-305) and during the years between the death of Diocletian and the time that Constantine the Great (306-337) succeeded in reuniting the empire (323 or 324).

Time appointed. Evil men and their machinations can last only as long as God suffers them to continue. The true philosophy of history is demonstrated throughout the book of Daniel. God "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand" (ch. 4:35).

28. Then shall he return. Some expositors see in this prediction a reference to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70. Others, who hold to the chronological continuity of the prophetic narrative (see on v. 23), see a further description of the work of Constantine the Great.

Against the holy covenant. Christ is spoken of as "prince of the covenant" (v. 22), and it is He who was to "confirm the covenant with many for one week" (ch. 9: 27). That covenant is the plan of salvation, laid in eternity and confirmed by the historic act of Christ's death. It seems reasonable, then, to understand the power here referred to as one which at heart would be in opposition to that plan, and to its outworking in the souls and lives of men. Some see specific reference here to the invasion of Judea by the Romans and to the capture and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Others suggest that Constantine is the subject of the prediction. They observe that although Constantine professed conversion to the Christian faith, he was actually "against the holy covenant," his objective being to make use of Christianity as an instrument for uniting the empire and solidifying his control over it. He extended great favors to the church, but in return expected the church to support his political policies.

29. It shall not be. According to the interpretation that the career of Constantine is here delineated, the following is suggested: In spite of all Constantine's attempts to revive the former glory and power of the Roman Empire, his efforts at best met with only partial success.

The former. The passage may be translated, "it shall not be as the former [time], so the latter." Some believe the reference here is to the removal of the seat of the empire to Constantinople. This removal has been designated the signal of the downfall of the empire.

30. Chittim. The name Chittim, or Kittim, appears several times in the OT and later ancient Jewish writings, and is used in an interesting variety of ways. In Gen. 10:4 (see comments there; cf. 1 Chron. 1:7), Kittim is listed as a son of Javan and grandson of Japheth. The area occupied by Kittim's descendants was probably Cyprus. The principal Phoenician city of Cyprus, on the southeast coast, was known in Phoenician as *Kt,* in Greek as *Kition,* and in Latin as *Citium.* Balaam makes the statement in his prophecy (Num. 24:24) that "ships shall come from the coast [direction] of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur." Some have applied this prediction to the overthrow of Persia in Mesopotamia by Alexander the Great, who came from the coastlands of the Mediterranean (see on Num. 24:24). The "isles of Chittim" of Jer. 2:10 and Eze. 27:6 apparently refer also to the Mediterranean coastlands.

In Jewish literature outside the Bible the term appears in 1 Macc. 1:1 as descriptive of Macedonia. In addition, two of the Dead Sea scrolls contain the name. The forms *ktyy 'shwr,* "Kittim of Ashur" (Assyria), and *hktyym bmṣrym,* "the Kittim in Egypt," appear in *The War Between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness.* The designations may, perhaps, refer to the Seleucids and the Ptolemies —the kings of the north and south. The geographical association of the term Kittim with the Mediterranean coastlands appears to be entirely lost, and Kittim becomes a generalized term for the enemies of the Jews. The *Habakkuk Commentary* among the Dead Sea scrolls also mentions the Kittim. The author of this work believed that the prophecies of Habakkuk referred to the troubles of the Jews in his own day (probably about the middle of the 1st century B.C.). He interpreted Hab. 1:6-11, where the prophet describes the Chaldeans, as

referring to the Kittim, who were despoiling the Jews in his time. In the historical context of that work the term probably means the Romans. See Vol. I, pp. 31-34.

It is interesting in this connection to note that the LXX of Dan. 11:30, translated perhaps in the 2d century B.C., reads "Romans" rather than "Chittim." It seems clear, therefore, that although the word *Kittim* originally referred to Cyprus and its inhabitants, it later was extended to include the Mediterranean coastlands to the west of Palestine, and still later it came to apply in general to foreign oppressors, whether they came from the south (Egypt), the north (Syria), or the west (Macedonia and Rome).

In point of time of authorship the book of Daniel lies much nearer to the references in Jeremiah and Ezekiel than to those of post-Biblical origin, which, indeed, probably arose as an extension of Biblical usage. The phraseology of the present verse, however, is clearly reminiscent of Num. 24:24, where the reference is to conquerors from the west (see comments there). Although students of the Bible do not all agree as to the exact historical reference of the "Chittim" in this verse, it seems clear that in interpreting this passage, two thoughts should be kept in mind: first, that in Daniel's day the word referred, geographically, to the lands and peoples to the west; and second, that the emphasis may already have been in process of shifting from the geographical meaning of the word to the thought of the Chittim as invaders and destroyers from any quarter.

Some see in the "ships of Chittim" a reference to the barbarian hordes who invaded and broke up the Western Roman Empire.

Covenant. See on v. 28. Some see in the indignation here described a reference to Rome's efforts to destroy the holy covenant by the suppression of the Holy Scriptures and the oppression of those who believed in them.

31. Stand. That is, "stand up."

On his part. Heb. *mimmennu,* "from him." This word modifies the subject rather than the verb of the clause: "Arms [forces] from him shall stand up"; that is, forces belonging to this power (see under "sanctuary of strength") would rise up to carry out the work of profanation here described.

Pollute. Heb. *chalal,* "to profane." Although the translation "pollute" has the implication of uncleanness, the Hebrew word indicates, rather, that something sacred has been made common. Thus the word is used of profaning a stone altar by using a tool upon it (Ex. 20:25), and of desecrating the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14). It also describes the deeds of those who profaned God's name by sacrificing children to a heathen god (Lev. 20:3). For comment on this revolting practice, see on Lev. 18:21.

Sanctuary of strength. Literally, "the holy place, the refuge." The words are in apposition. Some understand them to apply to the city of Rome, the seat of power in the ancient world, and thus "the sanctuary of strength." Accordingly, the destructive attacks of barbarian powers are foretold.

Others believe that the heavenly sanctuary is the subject under consideration here. The Heb. *ma'oz,* translated "strength," is from the verb *'azaz,* "to be strong," and is used repeatedly in this chapter (vs. 7, 10, 19, 38, 39), though not uniformly translated.

The earthly sanctuary in Jerusalem was surrounded by fortifications. The heavenly sanctuary, where Christ pleads His blood on behalf of sinners, is the pre-eminent place of refuge. Accordingly, this passage has been understood to describe the action of the great apostate power in Christian history that substituted a false sacrifice and ministration for the true sacrifice of Christ and His ministration as high priest in the heavenly sanctuary.

Daily. See on ch. 8:11.

Abomination that maketh desolate. The work of the papacy is here delineated. This is the first time this expression occurs in the book of Daniel, although similar words appear in the clause "for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate" (ch. 9:27). In the LXX this clause is rendered, "upon the temple abomination of desolations." Christ's words concerning the "abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15) may be considered as apply-

ing particularly to this earlier reference in Dan. 9:27 rather than to Dan. 11:31. Speaking of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70, Jesus identified the Roman armies surrounding the city as "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15; cf. Luke 21:20).

In view of the fact that Dan. 9:27 is part of the angel's explanation of Dan. 8: 11-13, the natural conclusion is that Dan. 8:11-13 is a blended prophecy (similar to that of Matt. 24; see DA 628) that applies both to the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem by the Romans and to the work of the papacy in the Christian centuries.

It should further be noted that Jesus' explicit reference to the work of the "abomination of desolation" as yet future in His time makes it certain that Antiochus Epiphanes did *not* meet the specifications of the prophecy. See further on Dan. 8:25.

32. Covenant. See on v. 28.

He. That is, the papacy.

Flatteries. Heb. *chalaqqoth,* "smooth, slippery things" (see ch. 8:25). It has ever been Satan's method to make his way appear easier than God's. Throughout Christian history God's own people have clung to the road described by Christ when He said, "Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matt. 7:14).

Do exploits. Heb. *'aśah,* "to do," "to make," "take action" (RSV). As in v. 28, "exploits" is a supplied word. This passage doubtless refers to those who, within lands under the jurisdiction of Rome and beyond, resisted the papal encroachments and maintained a bright faith as, for example, the Waldenses, the Albigenses, and others.

The true church is distinguished not only in that God's people react against sin by withstanding temptation, but even more in that they carry forward a positive program of action for Him. Christianity cannot be passive. Every child of God has a commission to perform.

33. Shall instruct many. Christ's commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matt. 28:19) is as imperative in times of persecution as it is in periods of peace, and often proves more effective at such times.

Fall. During the centuries in which God's true people were most bitterly persecuted, those fearless enough to stand forth and bear witness to their convictions were made the particular objects of destruction.

Many days. The Hebrew text, the LXX, and Theodotion's version read simply "days." There are some Hebrew manuscripts, however, that do contain the word *rabbim,* "many." The period referred to is apparently the same as the 1260 days of Dan. 7:25; 12:7 and Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5; the time during which the power of apostasy most blatantly blasphemed God, exercised its usurped authority, and persecuted those who dissented from its authority (see on Dan. 7:25).

34. A little help. Although in His wisdom God has not always seen fit to deliver His saints from death, every martyr for Him has had the opportunity to know that his life was "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

Throughout the bitter days of apostasy and persecution described in Dan. 11:33, God repeatedly sent His sorely pressed people "a little help" in the person of leaders who spoke forth in the darkness, calling for a return to the principles of Scripture. Among such were the Waldensian ministers of the 12th century onward, John Wyclif of England in the 14th century, and John Huss and Jerome of Prague in the 15th century. In the 16th century the tremendous upheaval in the political, economic, social, and religious life of Europe, which in its spiritual phase made possible the Protestant Reformation, opened the way for many more voices to be added to the faithful ones heard during previous generations.

35. Make them white. At times God allows His children to suffer, even to the point of death, that their characters may be purified and made fit for heaven. Even Christ "learned . . . obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). Compare Rev. 6:11.

Time of the end. Heb. *'eth qeṣ.* This expression occurs elsewhere in chs. 8:17; 11:40; 12:4, 9. In the context of ch. 11:35 *'eth qeṣ* seems to be definitely related to the 1260 years, as marking the end of that

period. When these Scripture passages are compared with DA 234; 5T 9, 10; GC 356, it becomes clear that the year A.D. 1798 marked the beginning of the "time of the end."

A time appointed. Heb. *mo'ed,* from the verb *ya'ad,* "to appoint." *Mo'ed,* a common Hebrew word, was applied to Israel's appointed meetings with God (Ex. 23:15; see on Lev. 23:2). The word was used both for the time of meeting (Hosea 12:9) and for the place of meeting (Ps. 74:8). In Dan. 11:35 the idea of time is intended. Even more important is the fact that it is an *appointed* time. "The time of the end" is an appointed time in God's program of events.

36. The king. Among Adventist expositors two views concerning the interpretation of vs. 36-39 have generally been held. One interpretation identifies the power described here as revolutionary France in the year 1789 and following. The other interpretation holds that the power delineated here is the same apostate, persecuting power described in the preceding verses.

Those who understand "the king" to refer to the power of France during the Revolution emphasize that it must be a new power that is introduced here, because it appears immediately after the mention of the "time of the end" and because, presumably, it must fulfill certain specifications that have not been stated concerning the power depicted in the previous verses, particularly that its willfulness will be manifested in the direction of atheism. It is, of course, a fact of common historical knowledge that the guiding philosophy of the French Revolution was not only anticlerical but atheistic as well, and that this philosophy had far-reaching effects on 19th- and even 20th-century thought. Furthermore, that revolution and its aftermath mark the close of the 1260-year period of prophecy.

Those who believe that "the king" of this verse is the power depicted in v. 32, point to the fact that in the Hebrew the definite article precedes the word "king." This would seem to imply that the ruler here brought to view has already been referred to. They contend that the reference to "the time of the end" in v. 35 may point forward and does not necessarily indicate that vs. 36-39 are to be put exclusively *after* the beginning of that time in 1798 (see on v. 35), especially inasmuch as not until v. 40 is an event specifically said to occur "at the time of the end." They understand the description of the power in vs. 36-39 to indicate, not atheism, but rather an attempt to supplant all other religious power. Those who hold this view also call attention to the parallelism of chs. 2; 7; 8-9. They conclude that ch. 11 may be expected to carry out the same parallel, and that it is concerned with the culmination of the same apostate power depicted in the other prophecies of the book of Daniel.

Magnify himself. According to the view that France is here described, these words are understood to describe the excesses of atheism indulged in by some of the more radical leaders of the Revolution. As an example of this, on Nov. 26, 1793, the Commune, or governing body, of the city of Paris took official action abolishing all religion in the capital of France. Although this action was reversed by the National Assembly a few days later, it nevertheless illustrates the influence to which atheism attained during that period.

Those who understand these verses to apply to the great apostate power of Christian history, consider this passage parallel to Dan. 8:11, 25; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:2, 6; 18:7. They see the prediction of the present verse fulfilled in the papal claim that the pope is the vicegerent of Christ on earth, in the power claimed for the priesthood, and in "the power of the keys"—the claimed authority to open and close heaven to men.

Speak marvellous things. According to the view that France is the subject under consideration, this clause refers to the boastful words of the revolutionists who abolished all religion and set up the worship of the Goddess of Reason. When later the worship of the Supreme Being was introduced the reactionaries made clear that he was not to be identified with the God of the Christian religion.

On the fulfillment of this passage according to the view that the papacy is

here under consideration see on ch. 7:11, 25; cf. 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:5, 6.

37. Desire of women. Those who believe that France is the power here described see a fulfillment of this passage in the declaration of the revolutionists that marriage was a mere civil contract, that without further formality it could be broken at will by the parties concerned.

Those who believe that the papacy is here described see a possible reference to the regard paid to celibacy and virginity by that power.

Nor regard any god. According to one position the words apply to the atheistic power in revolutionary France that attempted to abolish all religion in that country (see on v. 36). According to the other position the words are to be understood in a comparative sense; that is, the power here portrayed is not atheistic, but considers itself to be a spokesman for God and does not regard God as He should be regarded. It blasphemously seeks to put itself in His place (see 2 Thess. 2:4).

38. In his estate. Heb. *'al-kanno,* "in his place," that is, in place of the true God.

God of forces. Heb. *'eloah ma'uzzim.* Commentators have varied considerably in their interpretation of this expression. Some regard it as a proper name, "the god Mauzzim." However, a god by such a name is unknown elsewhere. Inasmuch as *ma'uzzim* seems quite plainly to be the plural of the Heb. *ma'oz,* "refuge," "fortress," which appears repeatedly in this chapter (vs. 7, 10, 19, 31), it seems best to understand these words as meaning "the god of fortresses," or "god of refuges."

Some interpret this verse as referring to the worship of Reason instituted at Paris in 1793. Realizing the necessity of religion if France was to remain strong to accomplish her aim of spreading the Revolution throughout Europe, some of the leaders in Paris attempted to establish a new religion, with reason personified as a goddess. This was later followed by the worship of a "Supreme Being"—nature deified—who might appropriately be considered as a "god of forces."

Others understand a reference here to the prayers directed to the saints and to the Virgin Mary; still others, to Rome's alliance with civil powers and her studied efforts to get the nations to do her bidding.

Pleasant things. Heb. *chamudoth,* "desirable, precious things." A similar word from the same root is employed in Isa. 44:9 to describe the costly ornaments with which the heathen decked their images. Some see the fulfillment of this passage in the priceless gifts that have been bestowed upon images of the Virgin and of the saints (see Rev. 17:4; 18:16).

39. Do in the most strong holds. This passage is obscure and has been translated in various ways. The verb here translated "do," *'aśah,* meaning "to make," "to do," "to work," is without a direct object, but it is followed by two prepositions, *le,* "to," or "for," and *'im,* "with." In Gen. 30:30; 1 Sam. 14:6; and Eze. 29:20 *'aśah,* without an object and followed by *le,* as here, has the sense, "to work for [someone]." *'Aśah* followed by *'im* occurs in 1 Sam. 14:45, with the meaning "work with." In view of these usages it would seem reasonable to translate the present passage, "And he will work for the strongest refuges (*ma'uzzim*) with a foreign god." Inasmuch as the *'eloah ma'uzzim* (v. 38) appears to be parallel with "a god whom his fathers knew not," it is to be expected that here they are to be closely identified with the "foreign god."

Some see in this passage a reference to the strategic place atheistic and rationalistic ideas occupied among the leaders of France during the Revolution. Others see here a description of the support the Roman Church has given to the worship of "protectors"—the saints—and to festivals held in various cities around the world in honor of the sacrifice of the mass and the virgin Mary.

Divide the land. Some understand these words to describe the breakup of the great estates of the nobility of France, and to the selling of these estates by the government to small landholders. It has been estimated that two thirds of the landed property of France was confiscated by the government during the Revolution.

Others believe these words met their fulfillment in papal domination over temporal rulers and in frequent receipts of revenue from them. It has been suggested

that the division of the New World between Spain and Portugal by Pope Alexander VI, in 1493, may be considered one example of the fulfillment of this passage.

For a historical review of Adventist interpretation of Dan. 11:36-39 and an evaluation of present positions see *Ministry*, March, 1954, pp. 22-27.

40. Time of the end. Here the king of the north and the king of the south are mentioned as such for the first time since vs. 14, 15. Seventh-day Adventist expositors who find the career of France during the Revolution the subject of vs. 36-39 hold that Turkey is the king of the north of vs. 40-45. Those who apply vs. 36-39 to the papacy here find a prophetic picture of the climax of its career. Some of the latter group identify the papacy as the king of the north, while others distinguish between the two. A few consider that vs. 40-45 met their fulfillment in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1922. See on v. 45.

45. Come to his end. Compare similar predictions in the parallel prophecies of ch. 2 (vs. 34, 35, 44, 45), ch. 7 (vs. 11, 26), chs. 8 and 9 (chs. 8:19, 25; 9:27), and elsewhere in Scripture (Isa. 14:6; 47:11-15; Jer. 50:32; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 18:6-8, 19, 21).

In general, Seventh-day Adventists have held that the fulfillment of v. 45 is yet future. The prudent words spoken by the Advent pioneer James White in 1877 regarding caution in the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy are still good counsel today:

"In exposition of unfulfilled prophecy, where the history is not written, the student should put forth his propositions with not too much positiveness, lest he find himself straying in the field of fancy.

"There are those who think more of future truth than of present truth. They see but little light in the path in which they walk, but think they see great light ahead of them.

"Positions taken upon the Eastern question are based upon prophecies which have not yet met their fulfillment. Here we should tread lightly, and take positions carefully, lest we be found removing the landmarks fully established in the advent movement. It may be said that there is a general agreement upon this subject, and that all eyes are turned toward the war now in progress between Turkey and Russia as the fulfillment of that portion of prophecy which will give great confirmation of faith in the soon loud cry and close of our message. But what will be the result of this positiveness in unfulfilled prophecies should things not come out as very confidently expected, is an anxious question" (James White, RH Nov. 29, 1877).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-45 9T 14
1 PK 556
35, 40 GC 356

CHAPTER 12

1 Michael shall deliver Israel from their troubles. 5 Daniel is informed of the times.

AND at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

5 ¶ Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this

side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

6 And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be to* the end of these wonders?

7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.

8 And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*

9 And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

10 Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

11 And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

12 Blessed *is* he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

13 But go thou thy way till the end *be:* for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

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1. At that time. Heb. *ba'eth hahi',* "at that time," or "in that time." Some hold that these words point back to the phrase *be'eth qeṣ,* "at [or in] the time of the end" (ch. 11:40); that is, that the events to be narrated take place within that general period of time. However, the context warrants the conclusion that "that time" refers to the time of the disappearance of the power described at the end of ch. 11. It should be noted that the words "at that time" do not specify whether the events here foretold are to occur simultaneously with those of ch. 11:45, or whether they immediately precede or follow. The important point is that the events of the last verse of ch. 11 and those of the first of ch. 12 are closely related in point of time.

Michael. See on ch. 10:13. Here the divine Champion in the great controversy takes action to deliver His people.

Stand up. Heb. *'amad.* The same word is used later in the verse to describe Michael's standing "for the children of thy people." The sense seems clearly to be that Christ arises to deliver His people (see GC 613, 633, 641, 642, 657).

Prince. Heb. *śar* (see on ch. 10:13).

Standeth for. Heb. *ha'omed 'al,* "who stands over," that is, in protection.

Time of trouble. When Christ's mediation ceases and God's Spirit is withdrawn from men, then all the pent-up powers of darkness descend with indescribable fury upon the world. There will be a scene of strife such as no pen can picture (see GC 613, 614).

Delivered. What a consolation that in this great controversy the outcome is not in doubt! Compare chs. 7:18, 22, 27; 10:14.

The book. That is, the book of life (see on Dan. 7:10; cf. Phil. 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 20:15; 21:27; 22:19.

2. Shall awake. A special resurrection precedes Christ's second advent. "All who have died in the faith of the third angel's message" will arise at that time. In addition, those who beheld with mockery Christ's crucifixion, and those who have most violently opposed the people of God, will be brought forth from their graves to see the fulfillment of the divine promise and the triumph of truth (see GC 637; Rev. 1:7).

Contempt. Heb. *der'on,* a word that appears in the Bible elsewhere only in Isa. 66:24. It is related to the Arabic *dara',* "to repel," and has the sense of "abhorrence." After witnessing the awfulness of sin during the millenniums of the great controversy, the inhabitants of the universe will regard sin with a feeling of strong revulsion. When the controversy is finished and God's name is fully vindicated, a mighty abhorrence of sin and of all it has contaminated will sweep through the universe. It is this abhorrence that makes possible the assurance that sin will never again mar the harmony of the universe.

3. They that be wise. Heb. *hammaśkilim,* from the verb *śakal,* "to be prudent." The form may be understood either in a simple sense, as "those who are prudent," "those who have insight," or in a causative sense, "those who cause to have insight," that is, "those who teach." The man who truly has insight into the things of God realizes that, by virtue of that very fact, these things must be shared with others. Divine wisdom leads him to be a teacher of that wisdom to others.

Maśkilim appears in ch. 11:33, where it is translated, "they that understand." There they are shown as persecuted for their faithful endeavors; here they are rewarded with eternal glory. Compare v. 10.

4. Shut up the words. Compare the similar admonition in regard to Daniel's earlier vision (ch. 8:26). This instruction did not apply to the whole of the book of Daniel, for a portion of the message has been understood and thus been a blessing to believers for centuries. It applied, rather, to that part of Daniel's prophecy that dealt with the last days (AA 585; DA 234). Not until that time was reached could a message, based on the fulfillment of these prophecies, be proclaimed (see GC 356). Compare the "little book open" in the hand of the angel of Rev. 10:1, 2 (see TM 115).

Run to and fro. Heb. *shuṭ,* a word occurring 13 times in the OT (Num. 11:8; 2 Sam. 24:2, 8; 2 Chron. 16:9; Job 1:7; 2:2; Jer. 5:1; 49:3; Eze. 27:8, 26; Dan. 12:4; Amos 8:12; Zech. 4:10). In most of these occurrences *shuṭ* describes a physical roving about.

Many interpreters believe that *shuṭ* is here used in a metaphorical sense and describes an earnest search throughout the pages of the Bible, with the result that there is an increase of knowledge concerning the prophecies of the book of Daniel (see under "knowledge shall be increased"; cf. DA 234; GC 356). Others believe that Daniel here predicts a multiplication of travel and of means of travel such as have marked the last century.

The LXX exhibits a vastly different reading: "And thou, Daniel, cover up the commands and seal the book until the time of the end, until many will rave violently [literally, "go mad"] and the earth shall be filled with unrighteousness." Theodotion's version is nearer the Masoretic: "And thou, Daniel, close the words and seal the book to the time of the end; until many are taught, and knowledge is increased."

Knowledge shall be increased. This clause may be considered the logical sequel to the immediately preceding clause: When the sealed book is opened at the time of the end, knowledge concerning the truths contained in these prophecies will be increased (see PK 547; cf. Rev. 10:1, 2). At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century a new interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was awakened in widely separated places of earth. The study of these prophecies led to a widespread belief that the second advent of Christ was near. Numerous expositors in England, Joseph Wolff in the Middle East, Manuel Lacunza in South America, and William Miller in the United States, together with a host of other students of the prophecies, declared, on the basis of their study of the prophecies of Daniel, that the second advent was at hand. Today, this conviction has become the driving force of a worldwide movement.

This prophecy has also been interpreted as pointing to the stupendous advances of science and general knowledge in the last century and a half, advances that have made possible a widespread proclamation of the message of these prophecies.

5. I Daniel looked. Verses 5-13 form an epilogue to the vision of chs. 10-12 and may be considered, in a less definite sense, as an epilogue to the entire book.

Other two. Two additional heavenly beings appear here, joining the one who has been narrating the prophecy to Daniel. Some have suggested that they are possibly the two "saints" mentioned in ch. 8:13.

The river. That is, the Hiddekel, or Tigris (see on ch. 10:4).

6. Man clothed in linen. Daniel had seen this heavenly Being at the beginning of his vision (see ch. 10:5, 6).

The casualness with which Daniel refers to "the river" (v. 5) and "the man clothed in linen," without making fuller identi-

fication, strongly suggests that ch. 10, where these both are introduced, is a part of this same vision.

How long? The angel here states the unexpressed question that must have been uppermost in Daniel's mind. The prophet's great burden was for the speedy and complete restoration of the Jews (see on Dan. 10:2). True, the decree of Cyrus had already been passed (Ezra 1:1; cf. Dan. 10:1), but much remained to be done. After the long, intricate recital of future events under which the people of God were to suffer, the prophet was naturally anxious to know how long "these wonders" would continue, and when the promise that "thy people shall be delivered" (Dan. 12:1), would be fulfilled. Daniel did not fully understand the relationship of what he had seen to the future. A portion of the prophecy was sealed and would be understood only at "the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4).

7. His right hand. See Deut. 32:40. Lifting both hands would indicate that the greatest solemnity and assurance were attached to the declaration.

Him that liveth. No greater oath could be sworn (see Heb. 6:13; cf. Rev. 10:5, 6).

A time, times, and an half. That is, the 1260-year period, A.D. 538-1798, which is first introduced in ch. 7:25 (see comments there). There the Aramaic *'iddan,* "a specified time," or "a definite time," is used; here its Hebrew counterpart, *mo'ed,* appears, a word that emphasizes the fact that the heavenly Being speaks of an "appointed time" (see on ch. 11:35). God has sworn to meet His appointment.

8. I understood not. In the introductory verse of this vision (ch. 10:1) Daniel states that he "had understanding of the vision." In the course of the vision the prophet was assured by the angel that he had come to make him "understand" (ch. 10:14). The revelation that followed was given in literal language. Now after the time element of 1260 years had been introduced in answer to the question, "How long?" Daniel confessed, "I understood not." The part of this vision that Daniel did not understand, then, would seem to be the time element. He was praying for the speedy restoration of the Temple (see on ch. 10:2)—an immediate problem. He seemed unable to fit the time element into his conception of an early deliverance for his people.

End. Though he had already been commanded to seal this part of the revelation (v. 4), the aged prophet still desired to know more of its meaning.

9. Go thy way. God's venerable seer and servant was not permitted to know the full import of the revelations he recorded. The complete significance would be appreciated only by those who should see the historical fulfillment of these prophecies, for only then could the world be given a message based upon the fact that they had been fulfilled (see GC 356).

10. Be purified, and made white. Or, "purify themselves and make themselves white," or, "show themselves to be pure and white." While man cannot of his own power purify himself, he can show forth by his life the fact that God has purified him. This forms a contrast with the following clause, "but the wicked shall do wickedly."

Shall understand. A guarantee that those in the last days who study devoutly and intelligently will understand God's message for their time.

11. The daily sacrifice. See on ch. 8:11.

Taken away. The clause may be translated literally, "and from the time of the taking away of the continual, even in order to set up the abomination." This would indicate that the "taking away" was done with the direct intent of setting up the abomination. The focus may be upon the preparatory "taking away" rather than upon the subsequent "setting up."

The words of this passage are so clearly similar to those of ch. 8:11, 12, and ch. 11:31 (see comments there) that they must all refer to the same event.

A thousand two hundred and ninety days. This time period is mentioned in close connection with the "time, times, and an half" (v. 7), or 1260 days, and the events to occur at the end of these periods are presumably identical. It seems reasonable to understand, then, that these two periods cover approximately the same historical era. The excess of the 1290 over the 1260 is probably to be understood in view of the fact that the beginning of

the 1290 days is focused on the taking away of the "daily sacrifice," preparatory to the establishment of the "abomination."

Those who hold to the view that the "daily" represents "paganism" (see on ch. 8:11) subtract 1290 from 1798 and arrive at the date 508. They see in the events surrounding this date, such as the conversion of Clovis, the king of the Franks, to the Catholic faith, and in the victory over the Goths, an important stage in the establishment of the supremacy of the Catholic Church in the West.

Those who hold to the view that the "daily" refers to the continual priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary and to the true worship of Christ in the gospel age (see on ch. 8:11) find no satisfactory explanation of this text. They believe that this is one of those Scripture passages on which future study will shed further light.

12. Blessed is he. The time periods of vs. 7, 11, 12 reach down to the "time of the end" referred to in vs. 4, 9. "Happy" (see on Matt. 5:3), says the angel, is the person who witnesses the dramatic events of the closing scenes of earth's history. Then, those portions of Daniel that were to be sealed would be understood (see on Dan. 12:4), and soon "the saints of the most High" would "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever" (ch. 7:18).

Waiteth. This implies that the following prophetic period may be expected to continue beyond the end of the 1290 days. If the 1290 and the 1335 days begin at the same time, the latter period reaches to the year 1843, a significant date in relationship to the great advent awakening in America, generally known as the Millerite movement.

13. Stand in thy lot. The fulfillment of Daniel's prophecies would reach many years into the future. Daniel was to rest in the grave, but " 'at the end of the days'—in the closing period of this world's history—he [Daniel] would again be permitted to stand in his lot and place" (PK 547; see also EGW, Supplementary Material, on this verse).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 179; Ev 241; EW 33, 34, 36, 43, 56, 67, 71, 85, 282; GC 481, 613, 622, 635, 649; LS 101, 117; MM 38; PP 201, 256; 1T 125, 203, 206, 353; 4T 251; 5T 152, 212; 8T 50; 9T 17, 210, 244

2 GC 637, 644; EW 285

3 CE 70; CM 155; ChS 109; EW 61; FE 199; GW 145; LS 254; ML 247, 325; 1T 112, 512; 5T 449, 488, 621; 6T 451; 7T 26, 249

4 AA 585; DA 234; FE 409; GC 356, 360; PK 547

8-13 TM 115

9, 10 PK 547

10 COL 155; DA 234; EW 140; 2T 184; 4T 527; 5T 452

13 PK 547

A VERSE-BY-VERSE

Commentary on the BOOK of REVELATION



A SECTION OF

VOLUME VII OF THE

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST BIBLE COMMENTARY



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To the Reader



As stated on the title page, the following material is a section of Volume VII of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary.* The same printing plates are used and therefore the paging is the same as that in the *Commentary.*

It is not the custom of publishers to break up a large work by separately printing a small section of it. The reason why this has been done in the present instance is explained by the action of the General Conference Committee at its meeting on August 18, 1955: "VOTED, To request the Review and Herald Publishing Association to make available in textbook form for use in our denominational colleges *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* material on Daniel and the Revelation."

This verse-by-verse commentary on the Revelation represents the labors of a group of contributors, plus extended time spent by the editors in providing special notes, maps, et cetera, in addition to general editing. It is made available to our readers in the devout hope that it may aid them in their study of this important prophetic book.

THE PUBLISHERS

THE REVELATION

of

St. John the Divine



THE REVELATION

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INTRODUCTION

1. Title. The earliest extant Greek manuscripts, as well as the writings of several Church Fathers beginning with Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–c. 202), entitle this book simply "Apocalypse of John." Later, medieval manuscripts elaborated the title to "Apocalypse of John the Theologian and Evangelist" and "Apocalypse of St. John the Theologian." The name as it stands in the KJV is a variant English rendering of this last title. The Greek word *apokalupsis,* "apocalypse," "revelation," means literally, "an unveiling," and in religious literature, especially, an unveiling of the future. The apocalyptic was a characteristic literary form among the Jews of the intertestamental and early Christian periods (see Vol. V, pp. 87-90), and also among certain writers of the primitive church (see below on "theme").

2. Authorship. The author of the Revelation repeatedly identifies himself as "John" (chs. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). The Greek form of this name, *Iōannēs* (see on Luke 1:13), represents the common Hebrew name *Yochanan,* "Johanan," which appears numerous times in the later books of the OT, the Apocrypha, and Josephus. This identifies the author as a Jew.

Various evidences clearly indicate that the name John was that of the author, and not a pseudonym, such as many Jewish and early Christian apocalyptic works bore. First is the fact that, in identifying himself as John, the author of the Revelation makes no attempt to establish himself as holding any position in the church. Various Jewish and Christian apocalypses are attributed to Hebrew patriarchs and prophets and to Christian apostles. If the Revelation were also pseudonymous, it would be expected that its author would attempt to identify himself specifically as an apostle. But the simple statement of the author that his name is John, "your brother" (Rev. 1:9; cf. Peter's reference to Paul, 2 Peter 3:15), is testimony that he is giving his true name. Obviously the writer was so well known to the churches that his name alone was sufficient to identify him and to lend credence to his record of the visions he had seen.

Furthermore, it appears that the practice of pseudonymity did not flourish when the exercise of the gift of prophecy was vigorous. On the other hand, during the intertestamental period, when, so far as we know, there was no rec-

ognized prophet among the Jews, religious writers often felt it necessary to attach the name of some ancient personage of high repute to their work in order to gain for it general acceptance. There was apparently no true prophet speaking for God, as the OT prophets had done. But with the coming of Christianity the gift of prophecy once more flourished. In the Christian church of the 1st century the supposed need for pseudonymity did not exist; Christians were convinced that their apostles and prophets spoke directly for God. But when the prophetic office among Christians fell into disrepute and finally disappeared in the 2d century, pseudonymous works bearing names of various apostles began to appear (see Vol. VI, pp. 41, 42). In the light of these facts it is reasonable to conclude that the Revelation, coming from the 1st century, is not pseudonymous, but is the work of a man whose real name was John.

Who was this John? The NT mentions several men by this name, the Baptist, the son of Zebedee, who was one of the Twelve, John, who was surnamed Mark, and a certain relative of the high priest Annas (see on Acts 4:6). Obviously the author of the Revelation could not be John the Baptist, for that John died before the crucifixion of Jesus; nor is there any reasonable probability that it was the relative of Annas, of whom there is no indication that he ever became a Christian. Similarly, there is little evidence that John Mark was the author of the Revelation. The style, wording, and approach of the second Gospel are quite different from those of the Revelation, and there is no evidence that anyone in the early church ever seriously connected the Revelation with Mark.

By a process of elimination, John the son of Zebedee and the brother of James is left for consideration. He was not only one of the Twelve but also a member of Jesus' inner circle. Almost unanimously early Christian tradition recognizes him as the author of the Revelation. In fact, every Christian writer until the middle of the 3d century, whose works are extant today and who mentions the matter at all, attributes the Revelation to John the apostle. These writers are Justin Martyr at Rome (c. A.D. 100–c. 165; *Dialogue With Trypho* 81), Irenaeus at Lyons (c. A.D. 130–c. 202; *Against Heresies* iv. 20. 11), Tertullian at Carthage (c. A.D. 160–c. 240; *On Prescription Against Heretics* 36), Hippolytus at Rome (died c. A.D. 235; *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist* xxxvi), and Clement of Alexandria (died c. A.D. 220; *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* xlii). These testimonies demonstrate the strong and widespread belief in the early church that the author of the Revelation was the apostle John. Furthermore, several early Christian traditions associate the later years of John with the city of Ephesus. Thus Irenaeus (*op. cit.* iii. 3. 4; *ANF,* vol. 1, p. 416) declares that in his youth he had seen the aged Polycarp of Smyrna, who "conversed with many who had seen Christ," among them John, who had remained permanently at Ephesus until the days of Trajan (A.D. 98-117). Polycrates (A.D. 130–c. 200), bishop of Ephesus, the eighth of his family to be a Christian bishop, testifies that the John "who reclined on the Lord's bosom, . . . he rests at Ephesus" (*Epistle to Victor and the Roman Church Concerning the Day of Keeping the Passover; ANF,* vol. 8, p. 773). These statements coincide with the fact that John addresses himself to Ephesus and the other churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4, 11).

The only testimony during this period that would seem to discount the view that the author of the Revelation was the apostle John comes from the early Christian Father Papias (died c. A.D. 163). The works of Papias are lost, and all that is extant from his works is contained in highly fragmentary form in

quotations preserved by later writers. Two of these relate to John's death. One, a manuscript from the 7th or 8th century A.D., which appears to be an epitome of the Chronicle by Philip of Side (5th century), declares: " 'Papias in his second book says that John the Divine and James his brother were slain by the Jews' " (in R. H. Charles, *Revelation* [International Critical Commentary], vol. 1, p. xlvi). Similarly, a manuscript of the Chronicle of Georgius Hamartolus (C. A.D. 860) says, " 'For Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, being an eyewitness of this, in the second book of the Lord's sayings, says that he [John] was destroyed by the Jews, plainly fulfilling, with his brother, Christ's prediction concerning them' " (Greek text in H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John,* p. clxxv).

At first sight these quotations would seem to indicate that a Christian official living in the late 1st and early 2d centuries and in the vicinity of Ephesus testified that the apostle John was, like his brother, killed by the Jews too early to have written the Revelation in the time of either Nero or Domitian, the periods in which scholars usually place it (see below on "historical setting"). On closer scrutiny, however, several questions must be raised in regard to these quotations. The fact that the passage from the Oxford manuscript refers to John as "the theologian" indicates that the quotation has undergone some modification by a medieval scribe, for this title is not applied to John in any extant Bible manuscript before the 8th century, and it is virtually inconceivable that Papias could have used it. The second quotation, from Georgius Hamartolus, is found in only one manuscript of that writer. Other manuscripts of his work say simply that John died in peace, but apparently they do not quote Papias at all. Consequently it is difficult to know just what Papias said regarding the death of John. If he did write that John, like James, was killed by the Jews, by no means does it follow that their deaths occurred at, or even near, the same time. The Revelation itself reveals that at the time of its writing the Jews still were causing difficulty for Christians, and if John did finally suffer a martyr's death, it may well have been the result of Jewish machinations.

A third quotation from Papias is recorded by the church historian Eusebius (d. A.D. 340):

"And I shall not hesitate to append to the interpretations all that I ever learnt well from the presbyters and remember well, for of their truth I am confident. . . . But if ever anyone came who had followed the presbyters, I inquired into the words of the presbyters, what Andrew or Peter or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, had said [Gr. *eipen*], and what Aristion and the presbyter John, the Lord's disciples, were saying [Gr. *legousin*]. For I did not suppose that information from books would help me so much as the word of a living and surviving voice" (*Ecclesiastical History* iii. 39. 3, 4; Loeb ed., vol. 1, pp. 291, 293).

This passage has been the subject of much conjecture. Eusebius interpreted it to mean that there were two men by the name of John who had lived in Asia in the late 1st century—the apostle, and another man who was a presbyter, or elder. Eusebius' opinion was that this latter man was the one whom Papias had known personally and that it was he who had written the Revelation, whereas the apostle had been the author of the Gospel.

It is possible, however, to interpret Papias' words in another way. As the German New Testament scholar Zahn (*Introduction to the New Testament,* 2d ed., vol. 2, pp. 451-453) has pointed out, in Papias' statement there is no real distinction made between presbyters and apostles. Papias says that he "inquired

into the words of the presbyters," and immediately goes on to list apostles; then when he mentions "the presbyter John" he identifies him at once as one of "the Lord's disciples." The real distinction between the two groups he mentions lies in the words *eipen,* "said," and *legousin,* "were saying," which suggests that those in the first group mentioned were disciples of Jesus who had lived and borne their testimony before Papias' time, whereas those in the second group were still living, and available for information in his day. If Irenaeus' testimony (see p. 716) is accepted, the apostle John would be included in both groups, and so might conceivably be mentioned twice.

Eusebius' effort to derive two Johns from Papias' statement is made more understandable by the fact that his conclusions were influenced by the work of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria (d. A.D. 265; see Eusebius *op. cit.* vii. 24, 25). In reaction against some Christians who were stressing a literal millennium, Dionysius wrote a work entitled *A Treatise on the Promises,* in which he sought to show by scholarly arguments that the Revelation was not written by the apostle John, but by another man of the same name. Dionysius is the first Church Father to question the apostolic authorship of the Revelation, and his arguments have remained the classic ones for those scholars who share his point of view.

Dionysius centered his criticisms chiefly about the fact that there are obvious differences between the language of the Gospel and that of the Revelation. The vocabularies of the two books portray marked differences; a number of words that occur with particular frequency in one are found but infrequently in the other. The following examples are particularly striking: *kosmos,* "world," appears in John 79 times, but in the Revelation only 3 times; *alētheia,* "truth," in John 25 times, in the Revelation not at all; *phōs,* "light," in John 22 times, in the Revelation 3 times; *agapaō,* "to love," in John 37 times, in the Revelation 4 times; *pisteuō,* "to believe," in John 100 times, in the Revelation not at all; *alla,* "but," in John more than 100 times, in the Revelation 13 times; *enōpion,* "before," in John once, in the Revelation 36 times; *emos,* "mine," in John 42 times, in the Revelation once. In referring to Christ as "the Lamb," the Gospel always uses the word *amnos,* whereas the Revelation always uses *arnion,* both of which mean "lamb." In the Gospel, Jerusalem is always *Hierosoluma,* whereas in the Revelation it is consistently *Hierousalēm.*

Dionysius also pointed out the fact that the Greek of the Gospel of John is correct and idiomatic, whereas that of the Revelation contains a number of passages that are unusual and cannot be explained in terms of correct Greek grammar and syntax. In view of these marked differences between the Gospel and the Revelation, Dionysius concluded that they were not by the same author. These criticisms appear to have had a wide influence upon the thinking of the Eastern Church in regard to the apostolicity, and therefore the canonicity, of the Revelation. Not only did Eusebius record the details of Dionysius' arguments, but he sought to establish them further by the passage from Papias quoted above. Similarly, in regard to the canonicity of Revelation, he reported:

> Of the writings of John in addition to the gospel the first of his epistles has been accepted without controversy by ancients and moderns alike but the other two are disputed, and as to the Revelation there have been many advocates of either opinion up to the present (*op. cit.* iii. 24. 17, 18; Loeb ed., vol. 1, pp. 255, 257).

Although the evidence adduced by Dionysius to indicate two Johns is weighty, several other facts must be considered before a judgment is made. The view of Dionysius and Eusebius rests chiefly on two points—the ambiguous quotation from Papias, and Dionysius' arguments from linguistic differences between the Gospel and the Revelation. Although it cannot be proved that Papias did not refer to two different men by the name of John, if he did, his testimony—in so far as it may be used as evidence for the nonapostolic authorship of the Revelation—is contradicted by a half dozen other Church Fathers (see p. 716). Particularly important in this regard are the statements of Irenaeus, who himself had personal contact with Polycarp, a contemporary of both John and Papias. He seems to have known of only one John, the apostle, and states clearly that this one wrote the Revelation. In view of this, it seems reasonable to conclude that Papias' ambiguous statement must not be pressed strongly as proof of the existence of two Johns.

The linguistic differences between the Gospel and the Revelation are significant. Although differences in subject matter and style, which obviously exist between the two books, may account to some extent for the divergent vocabularies, one writer does not ordinarily vary so widely in his use of such words as *alla, enōpion,* and *emos* (see p. 718). Regardless of subject matter or literary form, the same writer commonly uses or omits such words quite unconsciously. When two works vary as widely as do the Gospel and the Revelation in the employment of these words, it may seem difficult at first to think that they represent the work of the same writer.

However, this fact in itself does not necessarily mean that John was not the author of both works. The circumstances under which the two books seem to have been written may reasonably account for such differences as exist. In the Revelation, John declares that he received its visions while he "was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus" (ch. 1:9). That John was an exile there would imply that he was forced to rely upon his own linguistic abilities in the composition of the Revelation. Therefore it is not surprising that the language of this book is not always idiomatic, that Semiticisms sometimes shine through the Greek, and that its author was not at all times sure of his grammar. Such a situation is quite in keeping with the circumstances under which John is known to have written the Revelation. Furthermore, the visions were apparently written down as the scenes passed vividly before the prophet's eyes (see ch. 10:4). John may have purposely avoided revision lest the sense of drama be lost.

On the other hand, early Christian tradition indicates that the Gospel was written under entirely different conditions. The Muratorian Fragment, composed at Rome probably about A.D. 170—only a few decades after John's disciple Polycarp had visited there—declares:

> The fourth of the Gospels is of John, one of the disciples. When encouraged by his fellow-disciples and bishops, he said to them: "Fast together with me the next three days, and whatever shall be revealed to each of us we shall recount to one another." That night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that while they all revised, John should narrate it all in his own name (Latin text in S. P. Tregelles, ed., *Canon Muratorianus,* pp. 17, 18).

Although this story obviously has fanciful features, such as the presence of Andrew and other apostles with John at the time he wrote the Gospel, it

still may retain a kernel of truth, suggesting that in the composition of the Gospel, John may have had assistance. That this may have been so is indicated also by a statement attributed to Papias, preserved in a 10th-century manuscript:

> This Gospel, then, it is clear, was written after the Apocalypse, and was given to the churches in Asia by John, being still in the body, as the bishop of Hierapolis, Papias by name, a beloved disciple of John, who wrote this Gospel with John by dictation, recounts in his *Exoterica,* that is, in the last five books (Latin text in Wordsworth and White, *Novum Testamentum . . . Latine,* vol. 1, pp. 490, 491).

Although the details of this account cannot be taken as proved, these two statements strongly suggest that in the 2d century the idea was abroad that John had composed his Gospel with the assistance of others. In the light of this very early tradition, the statement at the end of his Gospel, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true" (ch. 21:24), would seem to be the affidavit of John's helpers to the truth of his account. If this reconstruction of the evidence is correct, it is not difficult to account for the linguistic and literary differences that exist between the Revelation, written probably when John was alone on Patmos, and the Gospel, written with the help of one or more fellow believers at Ephesus.

To the foregoing evidence may be added the fact that there are certain striking literary parallels between the Revelation and the Gospel of John that suggest identity of authorship. Thus the Revelation speaks of "water of life" (chs. 21:6; 22:17), and the Gospel of "living water" (chs. 4:10; 7:38). The Revelation invites, "Let him that is athirst come" (ch. 22:17), and the Gospel declares, "If any man thirst, let him come" (ch. 7:37). The word *opsis,* "appearance," or "face," is used in the NT only in the Johannine writings (John 7:24; 11:44; Rev. 1:16). The same is true of the expression *tērein ton logon,* "keep my saying [or, "word"]" (John 8:51, 52, 55; 14:23, 24; 15:20; 17:6; 1 John 2:5; Rev. 3:8, 10; 22:7, 9), and *onoma autō,* "his name," literally, "a name to him" (John 1:6; 3:1; Rev. 6:8). Except where direct reference is made to OT symbolism, Christ is characterized as the Lamb only in the Gospel of John and in the Revelation (John 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6; and 28 other times).

Therefore, although evidence may be presented against the Johannine authorship of the Revelation, it must be recognized that the arguments for the traditional view, that the author of the Revelation was the apostle John, are reasonable and sound. This commentary accepts the traditional view. Compare AA 578-585.

3. Historical Setting. Modern scholars are divided as to whether the writing of the Revelation should be assigned to a comparatively early date during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68; see Vol. VI, p. 81) or to that of Vespasian (A.D. 69-79; see Vol. VI, p. 86), or to a later date toward the end of the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96; see Vol. VI, p. 86).

Generally, those scholars who prefer an early date for the Revelation identify the persecution referred to in the letters to the seven churches as that suffered by Christians under Nero (A.D. 64), or possibly subsequently under Vespasian, although it is not clear to what extent the latter emperor persecuted the church. They believe that the disordered world portrayed by the Revelation reflects the troubles that disturbed the city of Rome from the last years of Nero to the early years of Vespasian. They see in the beast that suffers a deadly wound

and is healed (ch. 13:3) and in the beast that "was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (ch. 17:8) a representation of Nero, of whom, after his death, a popular legend declared that he would one day reappear. Similarly they see the mystic number 666 (ch. 13:18) as symbolic of Nero Caesar, when spelled in Hebrew consonantal letters (*Nrwn Qsr*). These evidences have led a number of outstanding scholars to date the Revelation in the late 60's or 70's of the 1st century.

This reasoning, though apparently based on historical incidents, depends for its plausibility on the interpretation given to certain of the statements in the Revelation. But such an interpretation is, of course, subjective, and has not been accepted by many able scholars in the past. Nor is it accepted by this commentary, which believes that the prophecies of the Revelation have an application also to what is beyond the immediate and local situation (cf. on ch. 1:11). Any evidence for the date of the writing of the Revelation must be based primarily, at least, on other kinds of evidence and reasoning.

The testimony of early Christian writers is almost unanimous that the book of Revelation was written during the reign of Domitian. Irenaeus, who claims to have had a personal connection with John through Polycarp, declares of the Revelation, "For that was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign" (*op. cit.* v. 30. 3; *ANF,* vol. 1, pp. 559, 560). Victorinus (died c. A.D. 303) says, "When John said these things he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines by Cæsar Domitian. There, therefore, he saw the Apocalypse" (*Commentary on the Apocalypse,* on ch. 10:11; *ANF,* vol. 7, p. 353; see on Rev. 1:9). Eusebius (*op. cit.* iii. 20. 8, 9) records that John was sent to Patmos by Domitian, and that when those who had been unjustly banished by Domitian were released by his successor, Nerva (A.D. 96-98; see Vol. VI, p. 87), the apostle returned to Ephesus.

Such early Christian testimony leads the authors of this commentary to place the writing of the Revelation during the time of Domitian's reign, which ended in A.D. 96.

It is interesting, therefore, to mention briefly something of the conditions existing in the empire particularly as they affect Christians during the time of Domitian. It was under this emperor that the question of emperor worship became, for the first time, a crucial issue for Christians. Nowhere was this more true than in the Roman province of Asia, the area to which the letters to the seven churches were first directed. See on ch. 1:1, 11.

Emperor worship existed in some Mediterranean lands before Alexander the Great. He had been deified, as had his successors. When the Romans conquered the East, their generals and proconsuls were often hailed as deities. This was especially true in the province of Asia, where the Romans had always been popular. It was common to build temples to the goddess Roma, a personification of the spirit of empire, and with her worship was associated that of the emperors. In 195 B.C. a temple was erected to her at Smyrna. In 29 B.C. Augustus granted permission for the building of a temple at Ephesus for the joint worship of Roma and Julius Caesar, and of one at Pergamum for the worship of Roma and himself. This was the first instance of a cult for a living emperor. Augustus did not urge the worship of himself, but in view of the desires of the local people he doubtless considered such worship a wise measure from a political point of view. Gradually, in these cults, the worship of Roma

became less important and that of the emperor became the salient feature. Worship of the emperor by no means replaced that of the local gods, but was added, and served as a means of uniting the empire. Rituals in worship of the emperor were not always easily distinguishable from patriotic ceremonies. At the same time the worship of a living emperor was discouraged at Rome, although the Senate did officially deify certain dead emperors.

Gaius Caligula (A.D. 37-41) was the first emperor to urge the worship of himself. He persecuted the Jews for refusing to worship him, and doubtless would also have directed his wrath at Christians had they been significant enough at the time for his notice. His successors were more lenient on the question and did not persecute for nonconformity.

The next emperor to make an issue over the worship of himself was Domitian (A.D. 81-96). Christianity was as yet without legal recognition by the Roman government (see p. 753), but even such a religion as that was not likely to be persecuted by the Romans unless it ran afoul of the law. Now Christianity did just that. Domitian zealously sought to establish his claim to deity in the minds of the populace, and to force his subjects to worship him. Suetonius records that he issued a circular letter in the name of his procurators, beginning with the words, " 'Our Master and our God bids that this be done' " (*Domitian* xiii. 2; Loeb ed., *Suetonius* vol. 2, p. 367).

An intriguing passage from the Roman historian Dio (*Roman History* lxvii. 14. 1-3; Loeb ed., vol. 8, p. 349) seems to throw some light on this persecution:

> And the same year [A.D. 95] Domitian slew, along with many others, Flavius Clemens the consul, although he was a cousin and had to wife Flavia Domitilla, who was also a relative of the emperor's. The charge brought against them both was that of atheism, a charge on which many others who drifted into Jewish ways were condemned. Some of these were put to death, and the rest were at least deprived of their property. Domitilla was merely banished to Pandateria.

Although on first sight this passage seems to record a persecution of Jews (and according to the Jewish historian H. Graetz, Domitian's cousin was a Jewish proselyte [*History of the Jews,* vol. 2, pp. 387-389]), scholars have suggested that it is really Christianity for which Flavius Clemens and his wife were punished. From the standpoint of a pagan historian not intimately acquainted with Christianity, "Jewish ways" would be a logical description for Christianity, and "atheism" might well represent the refusal of Christians to worship the emperor. Eusebius (*op. cit.* iii. 18. 4), apparently confusing the relationship between Domitilla and Clemens, says that Domitian exiled a niece of Clemens, named Flavia Domitilla, because she was a Christian. Probably the two references are to the same person, and they suggest that the persecution involved even the imperial family.

Such conditions of persecution for refusal to worship at the emperor's shrine doubtless constitute the immediate background of John's exile to Patmos, and thus of the writing of the book of Revelation. Apparently all the twelve apostles but John were dead, and he was an exile on the isle of Patmos. Christianity had entered its second generation. Most of those who had known the Master were now in their graves. The church was faced with the fiercest external threat it had yet known, and it needed a new revelation of Jesus Christ. Thus, the visions given to John met a specific need in their own time. Through them

heaven was opened to the suffering church, and Christians, who refused to bow to the pomp and circumstance of the emperor, were given reassurance that their Lord, now ascended and standing at the throne of God, infinitely transcended in majesty and power any earthly monarch who might demand their worship. See AA 581-583. For the significance of emperor worship in relation to John's statement regarding the "Lord's day" see on ch. 1:10.

4. Theme. At the very beginning (ch. 1:1) this book announces itself as an apocalypse, an unveiling of the mysteries of the future culminating in the triumph of Jesus Christ. Apocalyptic writings had been a prominent type of Jewish religious literature for more than two centuries. Indeed, the first-known apocalypse, the book of Daniel, appeared at the time of the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century B.C. When the Maccabean wars once more brought political independence to the Jews 400 years later, Messianic expectations looking toward the expected new Jewish kingdom ran high, and gave rise to a body of apocalyptic literature that drew to a greater or less degree on the literary form and symbols of Daniel. When, in the following century, Roman conquest dashed the hopes of the Jews for the realization of a Messianic kingdom through the Hasmonaeans (see Vol. V, p. 34), Messianic expectations became, if anything, more intense as the Jews anticipated a messiah who would overthrow the Romans. During the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. such hopes continued to provide the incentive for more apocalyptic works. For a survey of Jewish apocalyptic literature see Vol. V, pp. 87-90.

It is not surprising, then, that in the NT, written largely, if not entirely, by Jews for a church that was chiefly Jewish in its religious background, God would place an apocalypse setting forth the Christian view of the events that would lead up to and usher in the Messianic kingdom. In His messages to men through the prophets God expresses His will in human languages and in literary forms with which the people to whom His messages were originally addressed were familiar.

Although apocalypse is, indeed, prophecy, it differs from other Biblical prophecy (such as that in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets) in several important aspects, and these distinctive features are the earmarks of apocalyptic literature. Particularly significant among these distinguishing characteristics are the following:

1. *The Cosmic Sweep of Apocalyptic.* Whereas most prophecy is concerned largely with national and international problems centering chiefly in the history of Israel and the glorious future that might have been hers (see Vol. IV, pp. 25-38), apocalyptic plays upon the grander stage of the universe, and takes as its central theme the great controversy between God and Christ on the one hand, and Satan on the other.

2. *The Basis of Apocalyptic in Visions and Dreams.* The apocalyptic writer records the dreams and visions granted him while "in the Spirit" (see on ch. 1:10). He is often snatched away and carried to distant places, where he beholds scenes of majesty and grandeur that defy adequate description in human language, and where he converses with angels. Although such experiences are found repeatedly in the other prophets also, they are particularly characteristic of apocalyptic writings; so much so, in fact, that they form virtually the whole content of the apocalyptic sections of Daniel and of the Revelation.

3. *The Use of Allegory in Apocalyptic.* In prophecy, generally speaking, the symbols are concrete object lessons from everyday life; for instance, the potter and the clay (Jer. 18:1-10), the yoke (Jer. 27:2), and the tile (Eze. 4:1, 2). In apocalyptic prophecy, on the other hand, the symbols employed are almost always creatures never seen as such in actual life, such as multiheaded beasts, angels flying in heaven, and animals that speak and act with intelligence. Similarly, time periods, though rare in conventional prophecy, are generally given there in literal years (see Jer. 29:10), whereas in Daniel and in the Revelation, time periods repeatedly are used, and usually are to be understood on the basis of the year-day principle.

4. *The Literary Form of Apocalyptic.* Much prophecy is in poetic form, whereas apocalyptic prophecy (and similarly noncanonical literature) is almost entirely in prose, with only an occasional insertion of poetry, particularly in the case of hymns (see Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 10; 11:17, 18; 15:3, 4; 18:2-24; 19:1, 2, 6-8).

These considerations give point to the rule that to be rightly interpreted apocalyptic writing must be understood in terms of its characteristic literary structure and theological emphasis. Central to its message is the theme of the great controversy, with particular focus upon the cataclysmic end of this world and the establishment of the new. All this is portrayed in highly symbolic language, which may not always admit of exact interpretation (see on Eze. 1:10). In speaking of supernal things, literal language is sometimes utterly inadequate to convey the subtler realities of heaven. In some respects the figurative language of apocalyptic is similar to that of parables, and the same precautions are to be taken in interpreting both (see Vol. V, p. 204; cf. Vol. III, p. 1111).

The book is a revelation of Jesus Christ at work perfecting a people on earth so that they may reflect His flawless character, and guiding His church through the vicissitudes of history toward the accomplishment of His eternal purpose. Here more completely than elsewhere in Holy Writ the curtain that separates the invisible from the visible is drawn aside in order to reveal, "behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will" (Ed 173).

Revelation consists of four major divisions, or lines of prophecy: (1) the seven churches, chs. 1-3; (2) the seven seals, chs. 4 to 8:1; (3) the seven trumpets, chs. 8:2 to 11; and (4) closing events of the great controversy, chs. 12-22.

Particularly in view of the fact that the language of the book is often highly figurative, it is essential to discover the intent and purpose of the inspired writer, and the meaning the book conveyed to the readers to whom it was originally addressed. Otherwise, the interpretation of its figures, and thus its message, may reflect mere personal opinion. Those first intended readers were Greek-speaking Christians who, whether Jew or Gentile, considered the writings of the OT canon to be the inspired Word of God (see on John 5:39; Acts 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17), and who would be disposed to interpret the new revelation in terms of the old. Accordingly, the following observations and principles will be found useful in an interpretation of the book.

"In the Revelation all the books of the Bible meet and end," and in a special sense, it "is the complement of the book of Daniel" (AA 585). Much of what was sealed in the book of Daniel (see on Dan. 12:4) is unsealed in the book of Revelation, and the two must be studied together. The Revelation

contains citations from, or allusions to, 28 of the 39 books of the OT. According to one authority there are 505 such citations and allusions, some 325 of which are to the prophetic books of the OT—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel in particular. Of the Minor Prophets, references to Zechariah, Joel, Amos, and Hosea are most common. Of the books of the Pentateuch, greatest use is made of Exodus, and of the poetic sections, Psalms (see on Luke 24:44). Some also find reflections from the NT books of Matthew, Luke, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Thessalonians. For illustrations of the way in which John borrows the language and figures of the OT see Additional Note on Rev. 18; see on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13. An examination of the citations and allusions makes evident that he translated directly from the Hebrew OT, though at times under the influence of the LXX or a later Greek version.

A clear understanding of these citations and allusions in their historical setting in the OT is the first step toward understanding the passages where they occur in the Revelation. Study may then be given to the context in which John uses them, to ascertain their adapted meaning. In particular this applies to the names of persons and places, and to things, incidents, and events. Since many of the symbols of the book of Revelation were already known in extant Jewish apocalyptic literature, this literature is sometimes helpful by way of clarifying these symbols. Those familiar with contemporary Roman history will also observe that John's language is often descriptive of the Roman Empire and of the experiences of the church under its sway. Accordingly, a study of Roman history of the period clarifies some otherwise cryptic passages. Finally, attention should be given to contemporary modes of thought and expression, in the light of the cultural background of the time.

In determining the import of the successive scenes that passed before John in vision, it is well to remember that the Revelation was given to guide, comfort, and strengthen the church, not only in his day, but throughout the Christian Era, to the very close of time (see AA 581, 585). Herein the history of the church was foretold for the benefit of, and vital counsel was addressed to, believers of apostolic times, to Christians of future ages, and to those living in the last days of earth's history, in order that all might have an intelligent understanding of the perils and conflicts before them (see AA 583, 584). For instance, the names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of history. The local church at Ephesus accordingly became a symbol of the entire Christian fellowship in apostolic times, but the message addressed to it was placed on record for the encouragement of believers in every age (see AA 578, 585).

It is reasonable to conclude that the characterization of, and admonition to, the church at Ephesus was particularly appropriate to the needs of that church at the time the message was written. It was similarly appropriate to the needs of the entire Christian church in the apostolic age, and thus, in brief, represents the experience of that period of the history of the church. It was recorded for the inspiration and encouragement of believers in every age, for under similar circumstances the same principles apply. By analogy, the same is true of the messages to the other churches. In view of the fact that the focus of each of the four major lines of prophecy is on the closing scenes of earth's history, the messages of the book of Revelation have particular import for the church today.

That a single prophetic passage may embrace more than one fulfillment is evident (see on Deut. 18:15). Some such prophecies have both an immediate and a more remote fulfillment, and in addition contain principles that are generally applicable at all times. Furthermore, "it should be remembered that the promises and the threatenings of God are alike conditional" (EGW MS 4, 1883).

Thus certain predictions that might have met their complete fulfillment at an earlier stage of earth's history have been deferred because of the failure of the church to measure up to its privileges and opportunities (see Vol. IV, pp. 30-34).

5. Outline.

I. Prologue, 1:1-3.
II. The Letters to the Seven Churches, 1:4 to 3:22.
  A. Salutation, 1:4-8.
  B. Introduction: the vision of Christ, 1:9-20.
  C. To Ephesus, 2:1-7.
  D. To Smyrna, 2:8-11.
  E. To Pergamum (Pergamos), 2:12-17.
  F. To Thyatira, 2:18-29.
  G. To Sardis, 3:1-6.
  H. To Philadelphia, 3:7-13.
  I. To Laodicea, 3:14-22.
III. The Throne of God and the Book With Seven Seals, 4:1 to 8:1.
  A. The heavenly throne, 4:1-11.
  B. The triumph of the Lamb, 5:1-14.
  C. The first six seals, 6:1-17.
    1. The first seal: the white horse, 6:1, 2.
    2. The second seal: the red horse, 6:3, 4.
    3. The third seal: the black horse, 6:5, 6.
    4. The fourth seal: the pale horse, 6:7, 8.
    5. The fifth seal: the plea of the martyrs, 6:9-11.
    6. The sixth seal: the day of God's wrath, 6:12-17.
  D. The sealing of the 144,000, 7:1-8.
  E. The great multitude, 7:9-17.
  F. The seventh seal: the controversy ended, 8:1.
IV. The Judgments of God: The Seven Trumpets, 8:2 to 11:19.
  A. Introduction, 8:2-6.
  B. The first six trumpets, 8:7 to 9:21.
    1. The first trumpet: fire, hail, blood, 8:7.
    2. The second trumpet: the burning mountain, 8:8, 9.
    3. The third trumpet: the falling star, 8:10, 11.
    4. The fourth trumpet: sun, moon, stars smitten, 8:12, 13.
    5. The fifth trumpet: locusts, 9:1-12.
    6. The sixth trumpet: the angels in the Euphrates, 9:13-21.
  C. The angel with the little book, 10:1-11.
  D. Measuring the temple, 11:1, 2.
  E. The two witnesses, 11:3-14.
  F. The seventh trumpet: the triumph of God, 11:15-19.

V. The Final Conflict of the Great Controversy, 12:1 to 20:15.
  A. Satan makes war upon the remnant people, 12:1 to 13:14.
    1. Background of the conflict, 12:1-16.
    2. Satan's declaration of war, 12:17.
    3. The role of the leopard beast, 13:1-10.
    4. The role of the two-horned beast, 13:11-14.
  B. Issues involved in the last conflict, 13:15 to 14:20.
    1. Satan's ultimatum to the people of God: the image and mark of the beast, 13:15-18.
    2. Triumph of the 144,000 over the beast, its image, and mark, 14:1-5.
    3. God's ultimatum to the people of earth: the three angels' messages, 14:6-12.
    4. Defeat for those who reject God's final appeal, 14:13-20.
  C. The seven last plagues: divine judgments upon the wicked, 15:1 to 17:18.
    1. An affirmation of divine justice, 15:1-4.
    2. Preparation for the wrath of God, 15:5 to 16:1.
    3. The seven last plagues, 16:2-21.
    4. The arraignment of Babylon the great, 17:1-18.
  D. The extermination of evil, 18:1 to 20:15.
    1. An affirmation of divine mercy; a final call to leave Babylon, 18:1-4.
    2. The end of organized religious opposition: the desolation of Babylon, 18:5-24.
    3. The coronation of Christ as King of kings, 19:1-10.
    4. Christ's second advent and conquest of this earth, 19:11-21.
    5. The millennium: the extermination of sin and sinners, 20:1-15.

VI. The New Earth and Its Inhabitants, 21:1 to 22:5.
  A. The New Jerusalem, 21:1-27.
  B. The river and tree of life, 22:1, 2.
  C. The eternal dominion of the saints, 22:3-5.

VII. Epilogue: Admonition and Invitation, 22:6-21.
  A. Reception of the book and its message, 22:6-10.
  B. An appeal to be ready for the coming of Christ, 22:11-21.

CHAPTER 1

4 John writeth his revelation to the seven churches of Asia, signified by the seven golden candlesticks. 7 The coming of Christ. 14 His glorious power and majesty.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand.

JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from

the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

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1. **Revelation.** Gr. *apokalupsis,* "an unveiling" (see p. 715). "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" may be thought of as John's own title to the book. This title categorically denies the charge that the Revelation is a sealed book and thus cannot be understood. It contains a message God purposed that His "servants" on earth should "hear" and "keep" (v. 3). This they could not do unless they first understood it.

Of Jesus Christ. In Greek, as in English, this phrase may be understood as declaring the Apocalypse to be either a revelation from Jesus or one that reveals Him. The context seems to imply that the former interpretation is the primary one here, for it is the revelation "which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants." At the same time the truth of the second meaning must not be overlooked, for this book is pre-eminently one that reveals Jesus in His heavenly work after the ascension. In this sense the Revelation is, in fact, complementary to the Gospels. They record Jesus' ministry on earth; the Revelation reveals His work in the plan of redemption since that time. Compare on ch. 19:10. Concerning the names Jesus and Christ see on Matt. 1:1.

Gave unto him. Since the entrance of sin all communication between heaven and earth has been through Christ (see PP 366).

Servants. Gr. *douloi,* "slaves" (see on Rom. 1:1). Early Christians commonly referred to themselves thus.

Shortly come to pass. In one way or another the thought that the various events foretold in the book of Revelation were to take place in the not distant future is specifically stated seven times—"things which must shortly come to pass [or, "be

done"]" (chs. 1:1; 22:6), "the time is at hand" (ch. 1:3), and "Behold [or, "surely"], I come quickly" (chs. 3:11; 22:7, 12, 20). Indirect references to the same idea appear in chs. 6:11; 12:12; 17:10. John's personal response to these declarations of the soon accomplishment of the divine purpose was, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (ch. 22:20). The concept of the imminence of the return of Jesus is thus both explicit and implicit throughout the book.

The second coming of Christ is the great climactic event of the age-long conflict between good and evil that began when Lucifer challenged the character and government of God. Statements in the Revelation and elsewhere concerning the imminence of Christ's return must be understood against the background of this great conflict. God might justly have annihilated Lucifer when, in obdurate impenitence, he persisted in rebellion. But divine wisdom deferred the extermination of evil until the nature and results of sin became fully apparent to the inhabitants of the universe (see PP 41-43). At any one of various critical points in the history of this world, divine justice could have proclaimed, "It is done!" and Christ might have come to inaugurate His righteous reign. Long ago He might have brought to fruition His plans for the redemption of this world. As God offered Israel the opportunity to prepare the way for His eternal kingdom upon the earth, when they settled the Promised Land and again when they returned from their exile in Babylon, so He gave the church of apostolic times the privilege of completing the gospel commission. Another such opportunity came with the great second advent awakening of the 19th century. But in each instance God's chosen people failed to take advantage of the opportunity thus graciously accorded them.

Encouraged by inspired counsel, the Advent Movement, after 1844, expected Christ to come very soon. When, toward the end of the century, Jesus had not appeared, the Advent believers were repeatedly reminded that the Lord might have come "ere this" (see 6T 450; 8T 115, 116; 9T 29; DA 633, 634; GC 458). When challenged as to why time had continued longer than her earlier testimonies seemed to indicate, Ellen G. White replied, "How is it with the testimonies of Christ and His disciples? Were they deceived? . . . The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. . . . It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional" (*Selected Messages,* book 1, p. 67).

Thus it seems clear that although the fact of Christ's second coming is not based on any conditions, the repeated statements of Scripture that the coming was imminent were conditional on the response of the church to the challenge of finishing the work of the gospel in their generation. The Word of God, which centuries ago declared that the day of Christ was "at hand" (Rom. 13:12), has not failed. Jesus would have come very quickly if the church had done its appointed work. The church had no right to expect her Lord when she had not complied with the conditions. See Ev 694-697.

Thus the statements of the angel of Revelation to John concerning the imminence of Christ's return to end the reign of sin are to be understood as an expression of divine will and purpose. God has never purposed to delay the consummation of the plan of salvation, but has ever expressed His will that the return of our Lord be not long delayed.

These statements are not to be understood in terms of the foreknowledge of God that there would be so long a delay, nor yet in the light of the historical perspective of what has actually taken place in the history of the world since that time. To be sure, God foreknew that the coming of Christ would be delayed some two thousand years, but when He sent messages to the church by the apostles He couched those messages in terms of His will and purpose with regard to that event, in order to make His people conscious of the fact that, in the divine providence, no delay was necessary. Consequently, the seven statements of the Revelation concerning the nearness of Christ's coming are to be understood in terms of God's will and purpose, as promises conditionally set forth, and not as utterances based on

divine foreknowledge. In this fact, doubtless, is to be found the harmony between those passages that exhort to readiness for the soon coming of Christ and those time prophecies that reveal how far ahead lay the actual day of the Lord.

Signified. Gr. *sēmainō,* "to indicate [or, "attest"] by a sign," "to announce," "to reveal," "to make known," "to explain."

Angel. Gr. *aggelos,* "messenger." Angels frequently function as bearers of divine revelations (see Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26; etc.). The present angel has been identified as Gabriel (see on Luke 1:19).

John. That is, John the apostle (see pp. 715-720; cf. on Mark 3:17). The Revelation is the only book by John in which he identifies himself by name (see Vol. V, p. 891; cf. 2 John 1; 3 John 1).

2. Bare record. Gr. *martureō,* "to testify," "to witness." The past tense shows that the author here refers to what he is about to write from the viewpoint of his readers, for whom his act of writing will be in the past. The epistles of Paul (see on Gal. 6:11; Phil. 2:25) provide numerous examples of such usages of the past tense, as do the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The use of such a form was considered a courtesy to the reader. John declares himself a witness, bearing testimony of all that God had revealed to him.

Word. Gr. *logos,* "word," "utterance," "message," "oracle" (see on John 1:1).

Of God. That is, from God, or spoken by God. John here refers back to "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him" (v. 1). "The word of God," "the testimony of Jesus," and "all things that he saw" all refer to the same thing —"the Revelation" of v. 1.

Testimony of Jesus. This may refer to the book of Revelation being a message either *from* Jesus or *about* Jesus (see on v. 1). The context favors the former. The book is, of course, both.

Verses 1 and 2 illustrate a typical Biblical parallelism, in which the first and fourth lines and the second and third are parallel:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ"
"which God gave"
"the word of God"
"the testimony of Jesus Christ"

Saw. Words denoting visual communication and perception occur 73 times in the Revelation, and words denoting audio communication and perception, 38 times. The Revelation is a factual, eye- and ear-witness report of what John saw and heard while in vision.

3. Blessed. Gr. *makarios,* "happy" (see on Matt. 5:3). Some suggest that there may be an allusion here to Luke 11:28.

He that readeth. Doubtless a reference primarily to the one appointed by the ancient church to read the sacred scrolls in public. John anticipates the public reading of the epistle he now addresses to "the seven churches which are in Asia" (v. 4), in the presence of the assembled members of each congregation (cf. Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27). This Christian practice reflects the ancient Jewish custom of reading "the law and the prophets" in the synagogue each Sabbath (Acts 13:15, 27; 15:21; etc.; see Vol. V, pp. 57, 58). The implied command that the Revelation be read in the churches of Asia suggests that its messages began to be applicable to the church right in John's day (see on Rev. 1:11).

They that hear. That is, the members of each church. Note that there is but one reader—in each church—while there are many who "hear" what is read. The blessing that attended the reading of the Revelation in the "seven churches" of the Roman province of Asia belongs to all Christians who read the book of Revelation desiring a more perfect understanding of the truths therein recorded.

The words. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reading simply "the word." This would refer to the message of the book as a whole rather than to the individual "words" in which the message was to find expression.

This prophecy. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "the prophecy." Some suggest that John here specifically claims equality for the Revelation with the prophetic books of the OT, which were read in the synagogue each Sabbath. Though the word "prophecy," as used in the Bible, refers to any message from God, whatever its nature (see on Rom. 12:6), the book of Revelation may properly be called a "prophecy" also in the stricter sense of a forecast of future events.

Keep. The form of the verb in Greek implies the habitual keeping, or observance, of the admonitions of this book as a norm of life. See on Matt. 7:21-24.

Are written. Literally, "have been written," in the sense of "stand written."

Time. Gr. *kairos*, "time," in the sense of a particular moment of time, an auspicious season, a time designated in advance for some particular event (see on Mark 1:15). The "time" here referred to as being "at hand" is the time for the fulfillment of "those things which are written," the "things which must shortly come to pass," of Rev. 1:1 (see comment there). It is the imminence of these events that provides motivation for observing closely "the words of this prophecy." Accordingly, the Revelation is of particular moment for those who believe that "the time" of Christ's coming "is at hand." Compare Additional Note on Rom. 13.

At hand. Since we are living in the last moments of time, the prophecies of the Revelation are of particular import to us. "Especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work" (TM 112). "The solemn messages that have been given in their order in the Revelation are to occupy the first place in the minds of God's people" (8T 302).

"The book of Daniel is unsealed in the revelation to John" (TM 115). Whereas the book of Daniel speaks in broad outline of last-day events, the book of Revelation gives vivid details concerning these events, which are now declared to be "at hand."

4. John. See on v. 1. The fact that the writer feels no need of further identifying himself is evidence that he was well known to the church "in Asia." It testifies also to the authenticity of the letter, for any other writer than the one whom the believers "in Asia" would recognize as "John" might be expected to lay claim to authority and position. The simplicity with which the writer refers to himself comports with the self-effacing procedure followed by the writer of the Gospel of John (see Vol. V, p. 891).

To the seven churches. From this point to the close of ch. 3 the Revelation is framed somewhat in the form of an ancient letter, or rather, a series of letters. This epistolary section is introductory to the remainder of the book, which is characterized by a succession of dramatic visions. For comment on the use of the number "seven" in the Revelation, and on the seven churches, see on ch. 1:11.

Asia. That is, the Roman province of Asia, a region some 300 mi. (c. 480 km.) from east to west and 260 mi. (c. 420 km.) from north to south, in the western part of what is now known as Asia Minor, in the present republic of Turkey (see map facing p. 33, Vol. VI). In Hellenistic times this area had developed into the important kingdom of Pergamum, a leading center of Hellenistic culture. Concerning the circumstances under which Pergamum became the Roman province of Asia see Vol. V, p. 35. In NT times Asia remained an important center of Graeco-Roman culture. Paul spent many months there (see Acts 18:19-21; 19:1, 10), and the success of his labors in the area is attested by three of his epistles to Christians living there (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon). His first epistle to Timothy, who was then in charge of the church at Ephesus, and perhaps of the churches throughout the province, testifies to a well-established Christian community there. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, and it is probable that the members of these churches were mostly Gentiles.

After the removal of the parent Christian congregation from Jerusalem, shortly before A.D. 70, Asia seems to have taken on increased significance as a Christian center. This was doubtless due to the presence and leadership of the apostle John. According to tradition he resided at Ephesus and traveled about in the surrounding area, "here to appoint bishops, there to set in order whole Churches, there to ordain such as were marked out by the Spirit" (Clement of Alexandria *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* xlii; *ANF*, vol. 2, p. 603). Such an intimate connection between the apostle and the churches of Asia seems to be reflected here.

Grace . . . peace. See on Rom. 1:7; 2 Cor. 1:2. It has been suggested that this greeting came about from a combination of the ordinary Greek salutation

chairein, "greeting!" (as in James 1:1), and the Hebrew greeting *shalom,* in its Greek equivalent, *eirēnē,* "peace." *Chairein* is probably related to the more religious term here used, *charis,* "grace." The two words "grace" and "peace" appear commonly in the salutations of the early Christian epistles, and together apparently constituted a characteristic form of greeting in the apostolic church (see Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Phil. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 3; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3).

Him which is. Gr. *ho ōn,* "the being [One]," an expression apparently taken from the LXX of Ex. 3:14, where it is used to translate the divine name I AM. Like the Hebrew, this expression implies the eternal, timeless self-existence of God. The Greek reads literally, "from He who is," a phrase no more grammatical in Greek than in English. This, however, is not evidence of John's ignorance of grammar; his refusal to inflect the words representing the Divine Being was probably a subtle means of emphasizing the utter unchangeableness of God. From the context of vs. 4, 5 it is clear that this phrase refers to the Father.

Which was. God has existed from all eternity (Ps. 90:2).

Which is to come. Or, "the coming [One]." The series—"which is," "which was," "which is to come"—indicates that the last clause is a substitute for the future tense of the verb, and is equivalent to saying, "which will be." It has been proposed that the clause also refers to the second coming of Christ. This interpretation, while verbally possible, does not accord with the context, which shows that this was hardly in the mind of the writer.

The reference here to the Father sets forth His eternity and states that the same One who now continually exists has always existed and will always exist. God's personal existence transcends time, but a timeless eternity can be expressed in human words only by finite, temporal terms such as John employs here.

Seven Spirits. Concerning the significance of the number "seven" in the Revelation see on v. 11. Elsewhere in the book these seven Spirits are portrayed as seven lamps of fire (ch. 4:5) and the seven eyes of the Lamb (ch. 5:6). The association here of the "seven Spirits" with the Father and with Christ, as equally the source of the Christian's grace and peace, implies that they represent the Holy Spirit. The designation "seven" is probably a symbolic expression of His perfection, and may also imply the variety of the gifts by which He works through man (see 1 Cor. 12:4-11; cf. Rev. 3:1).

Before his throne. That is, before the throne of "him which is, and which was, and which is to come." The position perhaps implies readiness for instant service. See on ch. 4:2-5.

5. Jesus Christ. See on v. 1. The other members of the Godhead have already been mentioned in v. 4.

Faithful witness. In the Greek this title stands in apposition with "Jesus Christ," which is in the ablative case (according to some, a genitive of source), and the phrase "faithful witness" would normally be in the same case. Nevertheless, like the divine title for the Father (see on v. 4), it stands here unchanged in the nominative case. Some suggest that John thereby implies the deity of Christ and His equality with the Father (see Additional Note on John 1). Christ is the "faithful witness" in that He is the perfect representative of God's character, mind, and will to mankind (see on John 1:1, 14). His sinless life among men and His sacrificial death testify of the Father's holiness and love (see John 14:10; see on ch. 3:16).

First begotten. Gr. *prōtotokos,* "firstborn" (see on Matt. 1:25; Rom. 8:29; cf. on John 1:14). Though Jesus was not the first to rise from the dead in point of time, He may be regarded as first in the sense that all others resurrected before and after Him gained their freedom from the bonds of death only by virtue of His triumph over the grave. His power to lay down His life and to take it again (John 10:18) sets Him apart from all other men ever to come forth from the grave, and characterizes Him as the source of all life (see Rom. 14:9; 1 Cor. 15:12-23; see on John 1:4, 7-9). This title, with the one that follows, reflects the thought of Ps. 89:27.

Prince. Or, "ruler." This world is Christ's legitimate domain. Christ triumphed over sin and won back the lost heritage of Adam, and is the rightful ruler of mankind (Col. 2:15; cf. Col. 1:20; see Rev. 11:15). At the last day all men will recognize Him as such (see Rev. 5:13). But, recognized or not, Christ has overruled the affairs of earth for the completion of His eternal purpose (see on Dan. 4:17). The plan of redemption, made a historical fact by His life, death, and resurrection, has unfolded step by step toward that great day of triumph. See Rev. 19:15, 16.

That loved us. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "that loves us." True, the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ is now a historical fact, but He "loves us" now fully as much as when He made the supreme gift of His Son.

Washed. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "loosed." This difference doubtless arose from the similarity between the Greek words *louō,* "to wash," and *luō,* "to loose." To be "loosed" from sins is to be set free from the penalty and power of sin (see on John 3:16; Rom. 6:16-18, 21, 22).

In his own blood. Or, "by His blood," that is, by Christ's death on the cross. It was a vicarious sacrifice (see on Isa. 53:4-6; cf. DA 25).

6. Kings and priests. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "a kingdom, priests," probably an allusion to Ex. 19:6 (cf. Rev. 5:10). Christ has constituted His church a "kingdom" and its individual members "priests." To be a member of the kingdom is to be a "priest." Compare the "royal priesthood" of 1 Peter 2:9. Those who have accepted salvation in Christ make up a kingdom whose king is Christ. Reference here is to the kingdom of divine grace in the hearts of men (see on Matt. 4:17). A priest may be regarded as one who presents offerings to God (cf. Heb. 5:1; 8:3), and in this sense every Christian has the privilege of presenting "spiritual sacrifices"—prayer, intercession, thanksgiving, glory—to God (see 1 Peter 2:5, 9). Because every Christian is a priest, he may approach God on his own behalf, without the mediation of another human being, and on behalf of others. Christ is our mediator (1 Tim. 2:5), our great "high priest," and through Him it is our privilege to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15, 16).

God and his Father. That is, God, even His Father.

To him be glory. Literally, "to Him the glory," that is, to Christ (see v. 5). The definite article "the" implies *all* glory. For comment on *doxa,* the word translated "glory," see on Rom. 3:23.

Dominion. To ascribe "dominion" to Christ is to acknowledge Him as the rightful ruler of the universe. After the resurrection He received "all power . . . in heaven and in earth" (see on Matt. 28:18). Christ merits the unending praise of mankind in return for His triumph over sin and death (see Col. 2:15). Satan had challenged Christ's right to "glory and dominion," but these are rightfully Christ's. With this doxology, or ascription of praise, John concludes the salutation to his letter (Rev. 1:4-6).

For ever and ever. Gr. *eis aiōnas tōn aiōnōn,* literally, "into the ages of the ages," and thus "forever." For a discussion of the word *aiōn* see on Matt. 13:39. John foresees no time limit to Christ's right to "glory and dominion."

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18.

7. Behold, he cometh. The salutation having been concluded with v. 6, John announces the theme of the Revelation. The second coming of Christ is the goal toward which all else moves forward. Significantly, he uses the present tense, "he cometh," thereby stressing the certainty of the event, perhaps also with a sense of its imminence (see on v. 1).

With clouds. See on Acts 1:9-11.

Pierced. Gr. *ekkenteō,* the same word John uses in his Gospel (ch. 19:37) when quoting from Zech. 12:10. Translators of the LXX apparently misread the Hebrew word *daqaru,* "they . . . pierced," in Zech. 12:10, as *raqadu,* "they danced in triumph," and so rendered it in Greek. The Fourth Gospel alone records the incident of the piercing of the side of Jesus (John 19:31-37). This point of similarity between the two books is indirect evidence that the

Revelation came from the same hand as the Gospel of John. Though writing in Greek, he apparently ignores the LXX in both instances, and gives a correct translation of the Hebrew. The statement of Rev. 1:7 clearly implies that those responsible for the death of Christ will be raised from the dead to witness His coming (see on Dan. 12:2). During the course of His trial Jesus had warned the Jewish leaders of this dread event (Matt. 26:64).

Wail. Literally, "cut themselves," in reference to the ancient custom of gashing or smiting one's own body as a sign of grief. In a figurative sense, as here, the word comes to a focus on the grief rather than on the physical act of striking the body. Here it reflects the remorse of the ungodly (see on Jer. 8:20).

8. I am. Gr. *egō eimi* (see on John 6:20).

Alpha and Omega. The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, loosely comparable with the expression "A to Z." The phrase indicates completeness, comprehensiveness, and is the same in meaning as "the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (ch. 22:13). In this instance the speaker is "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come," identified in ch. 1:4 as God the Father (see comment there). However, in vs. 11-18 the expression "Alpha and Omega" is clearly identified with Christ, who also declares Himself to be "the first and the last." In ch. 22:13 the phrase "Alpha and Omega" refers to Christ, as is evident from v. 16. The Father and the Son share these timeless attributes (see Additional Note on John 1).

The beginning and the ending. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words here and in v. 11, but they stand fully attested in ch. 22:13.

The Lord. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "Lord God."

Which is. See on v. 4.

Almighty. Gr. *pantokratōr,* "ruler of all." The title recurs frequently in Revelation (chs. 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, translated "omnipotent," 15; 21:22). In the LXX of Hosea 12:5 *pantokratōr* translates the Heb. *ṣeba'oth,* "hosts," commonly used with *Yahweh* as an OT designation for God (see Vol. I, p. 173). This title stresses the omnipotence of God. Compare 1 Sam. 1:11; Isa. 1:9; Jer. 2:19; Amos 9:5).

9. I John. See pp. 715-720.

Companion in tribulation. Apparently John was not alone in suffering persecution at this time.

Kingdom. That is, the kingdom of divine grace (see on Matt. 4:17). "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Patience. Literally, "remaining under." The word here implies the exercise of self-control to endure a difficult situation when, by a surrender of faith, release might be obtained from the pressure of persecution. In Christ, Christians have the strength to "remain under" "in Jesus." See on Rom. 2:7; Rev. 14:12.

Of Jesus. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "in Jesus." Patience results from a vital connection with Him.

Was. Or, "came to be," implying that Patmos was not his permanent home, but that circumstances found John there.

Patmos. A small island in the Aegean Sea about 55 mi. (c. 90 km.) southwest of Ephesus. It measures under 10 mi. north and south by about 6 mi. east and west (c. 16 km. by 10 km.), at its widest point. Patmos is rocky and barren. Its unusually broken coast line contains many inlets. Writing in A.D. 77, Pliny (*Natural History* iv. 12. 23) reports that the island was used as a penal colony, which fact explains John's statement about being a "companion in tribulation." The apostle was on Patmos as a Roman prisoner (see pp. 80-85).

Some two centuries later, Victorinus of Petau (died c. A.D. 303) declared of the Revelation: "When John said these things he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the labour of the mines [Latin *metallum*] by Cæsar Domitian" (*Commentary on the Apocalypse,* on ch. 10:11; *ANF,* vol. 7, p. 353). The Latin word *metallum* may refer also to a quarry. Inasmuch as Patmos may have had quarries but gives no evidence of having had mines, the former is probably here intended. Pliny's statement about Patmos being a penal colony is that of an informed contemporary of John, whereas that of Victorinus, though probable, must be classed as a tradition.

For the word. That is, on account of the word. The Greek is against the view that this means John was on Patmos in order to receive and record the visions there accorded him (see on v. 2). In the present passage the phrases "word of God" and "testimony of [concerning] Jesus" refer to his inspired witness to the gospel for more than half a century. This had been the sole motivating purpose of John's life. In the bitter days of persecution under Domitian his fearless testimony became the occasion for banishment to Patmos (see p. 721).

10. In the Spirit. Literally, "in spirit," here meaning "in an ecstatic state." He became oblivious to the things of earth and aware only of the impressions conveyed to him by the Holy Spirit. Natural sense perception gave way completely to spiritual perception.

Lord's day. Gr. *kuriakē hēmera.* Various attempts have been made to explain this expression, which appears only here in Scripture. Some interpreters equate this term with "the day of the Lord" of the OT prophets (see Joel 2:11, 31; Zeph. 1:14; Mal. 4:5; cf. Acts 2:20). It may be granted that, taken by themselves, the words might be so interpreted. Those who thus explain the expression point to the fact that the Revelation focuses attention on the great final day of the Lord and events leading up to it (see on Rev. 1:1). To be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" could possibly be understood as meaning to be carried in vision down the stream of time to witness events connected with the day of the Lord.

There are, however, reasons for rejecting this interpretation. In the first place, when the phrase "day of the Lord" clearly designates the great day of God the Greek is always *hēmera tou kuriou* or *hēmera kuriou* (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10). Second, the context (Rev. 1:9, 10) implies that the term "Lord's day" refers to the time when John saw the vision, rather than the subject of the vision. Thus, John gives his location, "the isle that is called Patmos" (v. 9); his reason for being there, "for the word of God" (v. 9); and his condition in vision, "in the Spirit." These phrases all have to do with the circumstances under which the vision was given, and it is logical to conclude that the fourth does also, giving the specific time of the revelation. Most expositors so conclude.

Although unique in Scripture, the term *kuriakē hēmera* has a long history in post-Biblical Greek. Like its abbreviated form, *kuriakē,* it is a familiar term in the Church Fathers for the first day of the week, and in modern Greek *kuriakē* is the usual term for Sunday. Its Latin equivalent, *dominica dies,* is a common designation for the same day, and has passed into several modern languages, such as Spanish, *domingo,* and French, *dimanche,* both terms for Sunday. For this reason many scholars hold the opinion that *kuriakē hēmera* in the present passage also refers to Sunday, and that John not only received his vision on that day but also recognized it as "the Lord's day," presumably because on that day Christ had risen from the dead.

There are both negative and positive reasons for rejecting this interpretation. First is the recognized principle of historical method, that an allusion is to be interpreted only in terms of evidence that is previous to it in point of time or contemporary with it, and not by historical data from a later period. This principle has an important bearing on the problem of the meaning of the expression "Lord's day" as it appears in the present passage. Although this term occurs frequently in the Church Fathers with the meaning of Sunday, the first conclusive evidence of such use does not appear until the latter part of the 2d century in the Apocryphal *Gospel According to Peter* (9, 12; *ANF,* vol. 9, p. 8), where the day of Christ's resurrection is termed the "Lord's day." Since this document was written at least three quarters of a century after John wrote the Revelation, it cannot be presented as a proof that the phrase "Lord's day" in John's time refers to Sunday. Numerous examples might be cited to show the rapidity with which words can change their meanings. Therefore the meaning of "Lord's day" here is better determined by reference to Scripture rather than to subsequent literature.

On the positive side of the question is the

fact that although the Scripture nowhere identifies Sunday as having any religious connection with the Lord, repeatedly it recognizes that the seventh day, the Sabbath, is the Lord's special day. God is said to have blessed and sanctified the seventh day (see Gen. 2:3); He declared it to be the memorial of His act of creation (see Ex. 20:11); He called it specifically "my holy day" (see Isa. 58:13); and Jesus declared Himself to be "Lord also of the sabbath" (see Mark 2:28) in the sense that as Lord of men, He was also Lord over that which was made for man, the Sabbath. Thus, when the phrase "Lord's day" is interpreted in accordance with evidence prior to and contemporary with John's time, it appears that there is only one day to which it can refer, and that is the seventh-day Sabbath. See 6T 128; AA 581.

Archeological discoveries have thrown added light on the expression *kuriakē hēmera*. Papyri and inscriptions from the imperial period in Roman history found in Egypt and Asia Minor employ the word *kuriakos* (the masculine form of *kuriakē*) to the imperial treasury and the imperial service. This is understandable inasmuch as the Roman emperor was often called in Greek the *kurios*, "lord," and consequently his treasury and service were the "lord's treasury" and the "lord's service." Thus *kuriakos* was a familiar word in Roman official language for things pertaining to the emperor. One such inscription comes from as early as A.D. 68, so it is clear that this usage of *kuriakos* was current in John's time (see Adolf Deissmann, *Light From the Ancient East*, pp. 357-361).

On this same inscription there appears a reference to a day named for the Empress Julia, or Livia, as she is better known.

On other inscriptions both from Egypt and Asia Minor, the term *sebastē*, the Greek equivalent of *Augustus*, frequently appears as the name of a day. Apparently these are references to special days honoring the emperor (see Deissmann, *loc. cit.*). Some have suggested that *kuriakē hēmera*, as used by John, also refers to an imperial day. This seems doubtful, however, for two reasons. First, although there were imperial days, and although the term *kuriakos* was used for other things pertaining to the emperor, no instance of the word *kuriakē* as applied to an imperial day has yet been found. This is not a final proof, of course, for it is an argument from silence. However, the second point that may be raised against the identification of John's *kuriakē hēmera* as an imperial day appears to be virtually conclusive. This is the fact that both the Jews in the 1st century (see Josephus *War* vii. 10. 1 [418, 419]) and the Christians, at least in the 2d (see *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 8), are known to have refused to call Caesar *kurios*, "lord." It becomes extremely difficult to think, therefore, that John would have referred to an imperial day as the "Lord's day," especially at a time when he and his fellow Christians were being bitterly persecuted for refusing to worship the emperor (see pp. 721-723). It seems more likely that John chose the expression *kuriakē hēmera* for the Sabbath as a subtle means of proclaiming the fact that, as the emperor had special days devoted to his honor, so John's Lord, for whose sake he now suffered, also had His day. For a discussion of the origin of Sunday observance and of the designation of Sunday as "the Lord's day" see on Dan. 7:25. See AA 581, 582.

As of a trumpet. Comparison with a trumpet indicates the intensity of the voice.

11. I am Alpha. See on v. 8. In view of vs. 17, 18 it is clear that in the present instance these titles apply specifically to Christ. However, textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the words "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and."

In vs. 4-10 John addresses to the seven churches his own introductory statement of the circumstances under which he received the Revelation. Beginning with v. 11, he gives Christ's own authorization of the Revelation. It is appropriate that He should do so, for this is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 1). The revelation itself begins with v. 11.

What thou seest. Visual communication and perception dominate the Revelation (see on v. 2). John saw visions, panoramic scenes in symbol, which he portrays as fully and accurately as finite human language can. Many of these symbols represent infinite truths that transcend the

words and experience of men. At times the apostle finds himself at a loss for words to describe fully what he sees, as for instance, when he beholds the throne of God (see ch. 4:3, 6). Nevertheless, throughout the Revelation the grandeur of God's way with His universe, the intensity of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, and the glory of the final triumph are portrayed more vividly and magnificently than elsewhere in Scripture.

Book. Gr. *biblion,* "a scroll," the most common type of book in John's day. See Vol. V, p. 113.

The seven churches. The order in which the churches are listed both here and in chs. 2; 3 represents the geographical sequence in which a messenger carrying a letter from Patmos would reach these seven cities in the province of Asia. For a further discussion of the geographical setting of the seven churches see pp. 86-102; map facing p. 33, Vol. VI. For further information on each church named see the individual messages to the churches in chs. 2; 3.

The seven churches are the first in a series of sevens in the Revelation. Thus there are also seven Spirits (v. 4), seven candlesticks (v. 12), seven stars (v. 16), seven lamps of fire (ch. 4:5), a book with seven seals (ch. 5:1), the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb (ch. 5:6), seven angels with seven trumpets (ch. 8:2), seven thunders (ch. 10:4), a dragon with seven heads and seven crowns (ch. 12:3), a beast with seven heads (ch. 13:1), seven angels having seven vials containing the seven last plagues (ch. 15:1, 7), and the beast with seven heads, which are also said to be seven mountains and seven kings (ch. 17:3, 9, 10). This repeated use of the number seven with so many different symbols implies that it, too, is to be understood in a symbolic sense. Throughout Scripture the number seven, when used symbolically, is generally understood to indicate completeness, perfection.

As applied to the seven churches, then, this number may be expected to have a specific purpose. That there were more than seven churches in the province of Asia is clear from the fact that two other churches in that region, those at Colossae and at Hierapolis, are also mentioned in the NT (see Col. 1:2; 4:13). Consequently it is reasonable to conclude that the Lord chose the seven churches here named because they were typical of the condition of the church as a whole—both in apostolic times and throughout the Christian Era (see p. 725; cf. AA 583, 585).

The messages to the seven churches applied to conditions in the church of John's day. Had this not been so, these messages would have mystified and discouraged the Christians in the churches of Asia who were to read them (see on Rev. 1:3). John would have proved to be a false prophet if the messages he addressed to his churches had not revealed the true situation in those congregations and had not been appropriate to their spiritual needs. These messages were sent at a time when the Christians of Asia were suffering great tribulation (see pp. 720-723), and their firm reproof, reassuring comfort, and glorious promises must have been designed to fill those needs (see AA 578-588). Accepting and heeding these messages, the Christian churches of Asia would be prepared spiritually to understand the drama of the great controversy portrayed in the remainder of the Revelation, and to maintain a steadfast hope in the ultimate triumph of Christ and His church.

Although the various messages to the seven churches must have applied in the first instance to the churches of Asia in John's own time, they were also relevant to the future history of the church (see p. 725). A study of history reveals that these messages are, indeed, applicable in a special way to seven periods that cover the entire history of the church.

Inasmuch as the number seven implies completeness, as noted above, it appears reasonable, also, to understand these messages as, in a sense, descriptive of the whole church at any time during its history, for doubtless every individual congregation throughout Christian history could find its characteristics and needs described in one or more of these messages. Accordingly, they may be said to have universal application, in addition to the local application in John's day and the historical application in successive periods. A Christian writer about A.D. 200 wrote that "John writes to the seven churches, yet he speaks

to all" (Latin text in S. P. Tregelles, ed., *Canon Muratorianus,* p. 19). Although, for instance, the message to the Laodicean church is particularly appropriate to the church today, the messages to the other churches also contain words of admonition by which it may profit (see 5T 368, 481, 538, 612; 8T 98, 99).

12. See the voice. That is, see who was speaking.

Candlesticks. Gr. *luchnia,* "lampstands." The candle, in its familiar modern form, was not in general use in ancient times. Lamps were usually shaped in the form of a shallow bowl, into which oil was poured and a wick inserted. Accordingly, the "candlesticks" John saw were, apparently, stands surmounted by such lamps.

In v. 20 these lampstands are declared to represent the seven churches, and thus the whole church (see on v. 11). The fact that they are of gold would seem to imply the preciousness of the church in the sight of God. John sees Christ walking about in their midst (vs. 13-18), thus indicating His continuing presence with His church (see Matt. 28:20; cf. Col. 1:18).

The reference here to seven golden candlesticks is reminiscent of the seven golden candlesticks in the holy place of the earthly sanctuary (see Ex. 25:31-37). Obviously, however, these differ materially from the seven-branched candlestick of OT times, for John saw Christ walking about among them (see Rev. 1:13; 2:1). These "seven . . . candlesticks" are specifically said to represent churches on earth, and are therefore not to be thought of as the heavenly counterpart of the seven-branched candlestick of the ancient earthly sanctuary.

13. The Son of man. Gr. *huios anthrōpou.* The Greek here is without a definite article. It is an exact translation of the Aramaic *kebar 'enash* (see on Dan. 7:13), and seems to have much the same meaning here as *kebar 'enash* in Daniel. What is said in comment on *kebar 'enash* (Dan. 7:13) would therefore apply also to *huios anthrōpou.* It is certain from Rev. 1:11, 18 that the One thus referred to—as in Dan. 7:13—is Christ. While the title "*the* Son of man," with the definite article, is used of Christ more than 80 times in the NT, the expression "Son of man," without the definite article, is used of Him in the Greek NT in only two other instances (Rev. 14:14, which is clearly an allusion to Dan. 7:13; and John 5:27, where Jesus' humanity is emphasized).

Applying the same principle as with *kebar 'enash* (see on Dan. 7:13), we find that here John beholds Christ in vision for the first time. Who is this glorious being? He has the form, not of an angel or of some other celestial being, but of a man. He is human in form, albeit of dazzling brightness.

Although John wrote the Revelation in Greek, his mode of expression is often that of his native Aramaic (the Jewish language of NT times) rather than Greek. This is true of certain of his idiomatic expressions, and it is possible that *huios anthrōpou,* literally, "[a] son of man," is one of these. If so, "a son of man" would mean simply "a human being," "a man" (see on Dan. 7:13). In the same way, "children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36) are simply resurrected persons, and "children of the kingdom" (Matt. 8:12) are people eligible for the kingdom. Similarly, "children of the bridechamber" (Mark 2:19) are wedding guests, "children of this world" (Luke 16:8) are those who live for this world, "children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3) are those eligible for punishment because of their evil deeds, and "sons of Belial" (1 Kings 21:10) are worthless fellows.

When the glorified Christ manifested Himself to John in celestial splendor He still appeared to him in the likeness of a human being. Although Christ was eternally pre-existent as the second person of the Godhead, and ever remains so, His assumption of humanity is for all eternity to come (see Vol. V, pp. 917-919). What a comfort to know that our ascended, glorified Lord is still our brother in humanity, yet at the same time also God! For a further discussion of this passage see *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 241-243.

Down to the foot. A long garment is a symbol of dignity.

Paps. That is, the breast.

14. White like wool. John grasps in vain for words with which to give an accurate description of what he sees in vision. At first sight of the whiteness of the hair of

the One appearing to him in vision the whiteness of wool comes to his mind. But no sooner has he written this than he thinks of an even whiter substance, snow, and he adds it for a yet more accurate description. Perhaps also, the description of Dan. 7:9 comes to his mind.

Flame of fire. That is, a "fiery flame," emphasizing the brightness of His countenance and the intensity of His gaze.

15. Fine brass. Gr. *chalkolibanos,* a substance of uncertain identification. It was probably some metal like gold, burnished and radiant. The "brass" of Bible times was actually bronze (see on Ex. 25:3).

Burned. Rather, "having been burned," that is, fired in a furnace. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) a reading that refers this phrase to the "brass" rather than to the feet themselves. That is, the brass appeared as if fired in a furnace. The feet looked like brass that had been subjected to intense heat.

Many waters. In John's day the roar of the ocean and the crash of thunder were among the loudest and deepest sounds known to man. In their depth and majesty these are still unsurpassed as symbols for the voice of the Creator.

16. Right hand. Here, the hand of God represents His power to sustain.

Seven stars. This symbol represents the "angels," or messengers, sent to the seven churches (see on v. 20).

Went. The form of the verb in the Greek implies continuous action—the power of Christ is constantly at work.

Twoedged sword. Gr. *rhomphaia distomos,* literally, "two-mouthed sword." The *rhomphaia* was a large, heavy, two-handed sword. It is the word used in the LXX for the "sword" God placed at the entrance to Eden (see on Gen. 3:24) and for the sword of Goliath (1 Sam. 17:51).

The expression "two-mouthed sword" is apparently derived from Semitic usage, although it appears in Greek as early as the 5th century B.C. in the plays of Euripides. It is found much earlier than this, however, in the OT, where the equivalent phrase in Hebrew is *pi chereb,* "mouth of the sword" (see Gen. 34:26; 2 Sam. 15:14). Thus, in telling the story of Ehud, the writer of Judges says literally, "And Ehud made for himself a sword, and for it two mouths" (see Judges 3:16). Similarly, Prov. 5:4 speaks of a *chereb pioth,* "a sword of mouths," which the KJV correctly translates as "twoedged sword." This interesting figure of speech may be derived either from the thought of a man's sword as devouring his foes (see 2 Sam. 11:25; Isa. 1:20; Jer. 2:30)—its edge being its mouth—or from the shape of certain ancient swords whose handles were made in the form of an animal's head, with the blade protruding from the mouth.

John repeats the symbol in chs. 2:12, 16; 19:15, 21, where, in the sense that it comes forth from the mouth of Christ, it is an instrument of divine punishment. It appears best to understand it here in the same sense, as symbolic of Christ's authority to judge, and especially of His power to execute judgment. That the sword has two edges, together with the fact that it is said to be sharp, would seem to imply the incisiveness of His decisions and the effectiveness of His acts of judgment.

As the sun. The sun is the most brilliant light commonly known to man.

17. As dead. The first effect upon those accorded a vision of a divine being panoplied with the glory of heaven, was to deprive them of their usual physical strength (see Eze. 1:28; 3:23; Dan. 8:17; 10:7-10; Acts 9:4; cf. Isa. 1:5). Compare the experience of Daniel (see on ch. 10:7-10). The person so honored was completely overcome by a sense of his own weakness and unworthiness. For a discussion of the physical state of a prophet in vision see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics,* pp. 51-61. For instances of John's emotional responses to what he saw in vision see Rev. 5:4; 17:6. For two instances when John fell at the feet of an angel in worship see chs. 19:10; 22:8.

Fear not. Following the loss of natural strength, a prophet was supernaturally strengthened, usually by a touch of the hand (see Eze. 2:1, 2; 3:24; Dan. 8:18; 10:8-12, 19; cf. Isa. 6:6, 7). Often a celestial visitant uttered the command, "Fear not," to allay the fears that naturally well in the human heart when confronted by such a being (see Judges 6:22, 23; 13:20-22; Matt. 28:5; Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10).

The first and the last. See on v. 8. The expression here used is apparently quoted from Isa. 44:6, and is a direct translation of the Hebrew text and not a quotation from the LXX as in v. 8.

18. He that liveth. Gr. *ho zōn,* "the living [One]," apparently from the familiar OT term *'El chai,* "living God" (Joshua 3:10; etc.). The form of the verb here used implies continuous, living, abiding life. This declaration is particularly meaningful in view of the fact that He "was dead." "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived" (DA 530; see 785). "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (see on John 1:4).

Was dead. Literally, "became dead," a reference to the crucifixion. Here is a clear indication that the One who appeared to John in vision was Christ.

I am alive. Gr. *zōn eimi,* "I am living," that is, I have continuing life, life that does not end, life that is self-perpetuating (see Vol. V, pp. 917-919; see on John 5:26). In spite of the death He suffered for the human race, Christ continues to be "the living [One]," for He is God. "The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life" (DA 530). See on Rev. 1:5. The word *eimi,* "I am," implies continuous existence and stands in striking contrast with *egenomēn,* "I was [literally, "became"]" dead.

For evermore. See on v. 6.

Amen. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word.

Keys. Keys are a symbol of power and jurisdiction. Compare on Matt. 16: 19; cf. Luke 11:52.

Hell. Gr. *hadēs,* "the abode of the dead," "the grave" (see on Matt. 11:23). Christ's resurrection is the assurance that the righteous will rise "in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24) to life everlasting (see on John 11:25; Rev. 1:5).

19. Write. A repetition of the command of v. 11.

Hast seen. That is, in the vision thus far (vs. 10-18).

The things which are. Some hold that this phrase describes the present historical situation, particularly things concerning the church. They believe that in contrast with "the things which thou hast seen"—the vision of Christ (vs. 10-18)—"the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter," refer to actual historical events, presented symbolically.

Others hold that the clauses "the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" simply refer to the things John had seen in vision, what he was seeing, and what he was still to see in the future (cf. v. 11).

20. Mystery. Gr. *mustērion,* "a secret," "a mystery," from a word meaning "one who has been initiated" (see on Rom. 11:25). In early Christian usage the term "mystery" did not mean something that could not be understood, as it does today, but something that could be understood only by those who were initiated, that is, those who had the right to know. Thus Christ told His disciples that it was "given" unto them "to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," but not to the multitudes (see on Matt. 13:11). Paul speaks of the resurrection as a "mystery" (1 Cor 15:51), and often so refers to the plan of salvation itself (see on Rom. 16:25, 26).

The Jewish background of this expression appears in a passage in the Dead Sea *Manual of Discipline* (see Vol. V, pp. 91, 92) that speaks of salvation: "The light of my heart penetrates the mystery that is to be" (1QS xi. 3; in Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls,* p. 387). The term "mystery" appears repeatedly in the same document. The expression was also common in pagan mystery religions.

Here the term "mystery" is used of the seven "stars," a symbol thus far not explained. But now this symbol is termed a "mystery," in view of the fact that its interpretation is about to be made known. Thus, in the book of Revelation, a "mystery" is a cryptic symbol about to be explained to those who consent to "keep" (see on v. 3) the things revealed in this book (cf. ch. 17:7, 9), or one which God wills to make known to them. The symbols of the Revelation are also referred to as wonders (see on ch. 12:1) and signs (ch. 15:1).

Seven stars. See on vs. 11, 16. The present verse is a bridge between vs. 12-19 and the messages of chs. 2 and 3. It explains the

symbols of vs. 12, 16 and prepares the way for the messages to the individual churches.

Angels. Gr. *aggeloi,* literally, "messengers," whether celestial or human. *Aggeloi* is applied to human beings in Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24, 27; 9:52; cf. 2 Cor. 12:7. It has been suggested that the "angels" of the seven churches are their respective elders, or overseers, in John's time, and that the Lord was addressing the messages to them for transmission to their respective congregations. However, except for possibly the "angels" of the seven churches, the word *aggeloi* never refers to human beings in some 75 instances where John uses it in the Revelation. Whether it does so here is not clear from the context. However, it seems unlikely that God would send messages to literal angels through John, and the identification of these "angels" with the leaders of the churches is therefore to be preferred (cf. GW 13, 14; AA 586).

Seven candlesticks. See on v. 12.

Seven churches. See on vs. 4, 11.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 583; CW 175; DA 99; Ed 191; GC 341; 6T 128
1-3 7T 158; 8T 301
3 AA 583; COL 133; CW 175; DA 234; Ed 191; Ev 196; GC 341; PK 548; TM 113, 116; 5T 15; 6T 128, 404
5 COL 162; 6T 311, 367
5, 6 GC 416, 646
6 CS 129; 5T 475
7 DA 832; EW 53, 179, 292; GC 301, 625, 637; TM 232; 8T 116
9 AA 570, 575, 588; FE 109, 423; GC xiii, 78; GW 18; PP 129; SL 49, 71; 4T 525; 7T 288
9, 10 MM 37; 6T 128
10 SL 74
10-13 AA 581
11 AA 585
13 MH 419; 5T 752; 8T 265
13-15 GC 624
14 LS 65
14, 15 EW 16, 286
14-17 AA 582
14-18 SL 78
15 EW 15, 34; LS 65
16 GW 13 (more under ch. 2:1)
17 GC 471; SL 79; 5T 467
17, 18 CT 17; Ed 83; TM 95
18 DA 320, 483, 530, 669; PK 240; 2T 271; 7T 71
18-20 AA 585

CHAPTER 2

What is commanded to be written to the angels, that is, the ministers of the churches of 1 *Ephesus,* 8 *Smyrna,* 12 *Pergamos,* 18 *Thyatira: and what is commended, or found wanting in them.*

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may

be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is:* and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it.*

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a propheteſs, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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1. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

Ephesus. Some define the name Ephesus as meaning "desirable." In John's day Ephesus was the leading city of the Roman province of Asia, and later was its capital (see p. 88; map p. 622; see on chs. 1:4; 2:12). It was situated at the western terminus of a great highway that crossed Asia Minor from Syria, and this, together with its location as an important seaport on the Aegean, made it a focal point for trade. Christianity appears to have been preached there first about A.D. 52, by Paul, when he stopped for a short time while homeward bound to Jerusalem and Antioch from his Second Missionary Journey. His friends Aquila and Priscilla settled there at that time, and, together with an Alexandrian Jew named Apollos —whose concept of Christianity seems to have been pre-Pentecostal—fostered the work of evangelization until Paul's return, probably a year or two later (see Acts 18:19 to 19:7). This time the apostle remained at Ephesus for about three years (see Vol. VI, p. 30), longer than at any other place on his recorded missionary journeys. This would seem to indicate that his work there was especially fruitful. His

biographer, Luke, declares that "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). It is probable, therefore, that during this time at least some of the other churches in Asia were established (see Col. 4:13, 15, 16). After his first Roman imprisonment Paul appears to have visited Ephesus again, probably about A.D. 64, leaving Timothy in charge (see 1 Tim. 1:3).

Nothing further is definitely known of the history of the church at Ephesus until its name appears probably about three decades later in the Revelation. However, tradition indicates that John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, became the leader of this church, presumably after the breakup of the Christian headquarters at Jerusalem about A.D. 68, during the Jewish-Roman War (see p. 716). Thus, at the time the Revelation was written, Ephesus must have been one of the leading centers of Christianity. Consequently it was fitting that Christ's first message by John should have been addressed to this church. Its central location with respect to the Christian world as a whole makes all the more understandable the fact that its spiritual condition could well be characteristic of the whole church during the apostolic period, the era of Christian history reaching approximately to the end of the 1st century (c. A.D. 31-100; see Additional Note at end of chapter). It may well be called the Age of Apostolic Purity, an attribute highly desirable in God's sight.

Holdeth. Gr. *krateō,* "to hold fast," a more vigorous expression than is used in ch. 1:16.

Seven stars. See on ch. 1:16, 20. In a special way the leaders of the church on earth are to be under the protection and control of Christ. In their appointed task they are ever sustained by divine power and grace. It is to be noted that the characteristic way in which Christ introduces Himself to each of the seven churches is drawn from the composite vision John saw in ch. 1:11-18.

Walketh. A more vigorous description of Christ's relationship to His church than in ch. 1:13, where John simply refers to Christ as being "in the midst of the seven candlesticks." As the individual churches of apostolic times enjoyed the watchcare, attention, and ministry of Christ, so has the Christian church as a whole throughout the successive periods of its history. Thus is fulfilled His promise to the disciples to be with them "alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

Candlesticks. See on ch. 1:12.

2. I know. To each of the seven churches Christ declares, "I know thy works." His admonition is that of One who is fully acquainted with problems of each church and who is therefore able to recommend an appropriate and effective solution.

Thy. The singular is used because Christ is here addressing the "angel" (v. 1) who represents either each member of the church individually or the church as a single corporate unit. Christ deals with men both on a group basis—as a church —and also in terms of their direct, personal relationship to Him.

Works. Gr. *erga,* "deeds," "actions," "activities," more particularly, deeds as exhibiting moral character. The whole life and conduct of the church is known to Jesus Christ.

Labour. Gr. *kopos,* the lassitude, or weariness, that results from strenuous exertion, reflected in the word "toil." Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for omitting the word "thy" before "labour." This links more closely the thought of "labour" with that of the patience that accompanies it. It is as if Christ said, "I know what you have done, and I also know the toil and perseverance that were necessary to the doing of it."

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē,* "perseverance," "[active, steadfast] endurance," literally, "remaining under."

Canst not bear. Too often, now as in former times, the church is prone to "bear," or endure, evil teachings and practices in its midst, supposedly in the name of peace. Ministers of Christ may find it easier to remain silent concerning the pet sins of their congregations than to take a bold stand for truth (cf. Isa. 30:10; 2 Tim. 4:3). The church at Ephesus was to be commended for making a clear distinction between truth and error, whether in doctrine or in the life, and for taking a firm stand against error.

Them which are evil. That is, the false apostles immediately to be discussed in more detail. Gross doctrinal error is reflected, sooner or later, in gross misconduct. What a man does is inevitably the result of what he thinks and believes (see Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34; 1 John 3:3).

Tried. Gr. *peirazō,* "to test," "to try." The church at Ephesus had diligently investigated the claims and teachings of these false apostles. Ignatius, writing early in the 2d century, speaks of the diligence of the Ephesian Christians in shunning heresy (*To the Ephesians* ix. 1).

In one of his epistles John cautioned believers with respect to the coming of "antichrist" and advised them to "try the spirits whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1-3). The warning given by Paul to the leaders at Ephesus many years before, that "grievous wolves" would enter in among them "speaking perverse things" (Acts 20:29, 30), had been fulfilled. He had counseled the Thessalonians to "prove all things" and to "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). Peter had written at length concerning "false prophets" and "false teachers" (see 2 Peter 2). Compare 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 4:14, 15. Though at first it might not be easy to recognize the subtle errors of their teachings, the teachers themselves could be known "by their fruits" (see Matt. 7:15-20).

Thus it is today, for the genuine "fruit of the Spirit" (see Gal. 5:22, 23) does not grow in the lives of those who teach and practice error. The sincere Christian who is sensitive to spiritual things is promised that he can, if he will, detect the unchristian spirit and motives that actuate every teacher of error (see on 1 John 4:1; Rev. 3:18).

Apostles. Among the more serious heresies that threatened the church toward the close of the 1st century were Docetism and an early form of Gnosticism. For a discussion of these and other heresies that beset the church of apostolic times see Vol. V, pp. 912, 913; Vol. VI, pp. 52-59. More specifically, an early tradition indicates that a Gnostic named Cerinthus visited Ephesus and fomented trouble for John and his congregation (see Irenaeus *Against Heresies* iii. 3. 4). What was true of Ephesus during this period with respect to struggles with false prophets seems also to have been true of the church in general.

3. Hast borne. The Ephesian church had refused to "bear them which are evil" (see on v. 2), but it did endure patiently the unavoidable affliction caused by the false teachers and the persecution that befell it at the hands of fanatical Jews and Gentiles.

Patience. See on v. 2.

My name's sake. See on Acts 3:16. The followers of Christ were known by His name; they were called Christians. It was their allegiance to this name, their loyalty to Him whom it signified as their Lord, that subjected them to persecution by the Roman authorities (see p. 720), and led to suffering at the hands of those who were bent upon subverting their faith.

Hast laboured. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words. The original of v. 3 probably read, "And thou hast had patience and hast borne for my name's sake, and hast not fainted."

Fainted. Gr. *kopiaō,* "to become weary," "to become tired." Compare the use of *kopiaō* in Isa. 40:31, LXX; John 4:6.

4. Thy first love. This "love" probably included wholehearted love for God and for truth, and love for one another as brethren and for their fellow men in general (see on Matt. 5:43, 44; 22:34-40). Perhaps the doctrinal controversies stirred up by the false teachers had given rise to a factious spirit. Also, in spite of diligent efforts on the part of many to stay the tide of false teaching, a number who remained in the church were no doubt affected in greater or less degree by it. To the extent that error had found a lodging place in the church, to that extent was thwarted the activity of the Holy Spirit as a messenger of truth (John 16:13), whose task it is to convert the principles of truth into a living force for the transformation of character (see John 16:8-11; Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 4:30; etc.). Furthermore, as the testimony of those who had personally associated with Jesus ended, as one by one they died, and the vision of the imminence of Christ's return (see on Rev. 1:1) began to fade, the flame of faith and devotion burned ever lower. For comment on other

aspects of this departure from the pristine purity of faith and practice see Vol. IV, pp. 834, 835.

5. Remove thy candlestick. See on ch. 1:12. The church would forfeit its status as an accredited representative of Christ. The church had "fallen," but divine mercy patiently provided an opportunity to "repent" (cf. 2 Peter 3:9).

Except thou repent. In the Prologue of his epistle to the Ephesians, Ignatius reports that the church did heed the call to "remember," "repent," and "do the first works" (see also Ignatius *op. cit.* i. 1; xi. 2).

6. Nicolaitanes. One of the heretical sects that plagued the churches at Ephesus and at Pergamum (see v. 15), and perhaps elsewhere. Irenaeus identifies the Nicolaitans as a Gnostic sect: "John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith [the deity of Christ], and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that 'knowledge' falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word" (*op. cit.* iii. 11. 1; *ANF,* vol. 1, p. 426). There is also historical evidence of a Gnostic sect called Nicolaitans a century or so later. Some Church Fathers who report concerning this sect (Irenaeus *op. cit.* i. 26. 3; Hippolytus *Refutation of All Heresies* vii. 24) identify its founder as Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (see Acts 6:5). Whether the tradition concerning Nicolas the deacon is correct, we do not know, but the sect may be the same as the one mentioned by John. In the 2d century, at least, adherents of this sect appear to have taught that deeds of the flesh do not affect the purity of the soul, and consequently have no bearing on salvation.

7. He that hath an ear. That is, to heed the counsel given (see on ch. 1:3; cf. on Isa. 6:9, 10; Matt. 11:15). The same formula accompanies the promise to each of the seven churches.

Hear. The Greek of this passage implies that those who hear will do so with understanding (cf. on Acts 9:4). Hearing God's word is meaningless unless the life thenceforth is conformed to the pattern of what has been heard (see on Matt. 19:21-27).

The churches. The promise here addressed particularly to the church at Ephesus belongs in a special sense to all "the churches" of apostolic times, as represented by the church at Ephesus. Though particularly appropriate to them, it applies also to believers in all ages (see on ch. 1:11).

Overcometh. The form of the verb in Greek implies that the person "continues to overcome," or "keeps on winning." The thought of overcoming is a recurring theme in the Revelation. The promises of the Revelation have been especially precious to God's persecuted children in all ages. However, the context (vs. 2-6) implies that the overcoming here referred to is, in a special sense, victory over the false apostles and teachers who had been tempting believers to eat of the tree of human knowledge. How appropriate that their reward for overcoming should be access to the tree of life!

Tree of life. See on Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:2.

In the midst. As in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9). The location stresses the importance of the tree in God's plan for a perfect world.

Paradise. See on Luke 23:43. The Garden of Eden was "paradise" on earth. When Eden is restored to this world (see PP 62; GC 646, 648), earth will once more become a "paradise."

For the application of the message to the church at Ephesus to a certain period in history see Additional Note at end of chapter. For the application of the message to the literal church see on Rev. 1:11.

8. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

Smyrna. This name was long thought to be derived from *muron,* the name of an aromatic gum derived from the Arabian tree *Balsamodendron myrrha.* This gum was used for embalming the dead, and medicinally as an unguent, or salve, and was burned as incense. See on Matt. 2:11. More recently, scholars tend to favor a derivation from the name of an Anatolian goddess, Samorna, who was worshiped in the city (see p. 93). Concerning the ancient city of Smyrna see p. 91; map

p. 622. There is no record as to when or under whose ministry the church in Smyrna was established. This church is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

Historically, the Smyrna period of the church may be thought of as beginning about the close of the 1st century (c. A.D. 100) and continuing until about A.D. 313, when Constantine espoused the cause of the church (see Additional Note at end of chapter; see on v. 10). Some suggest A.D. 323 or 325 as the date of his supposed conversion to Christianity. Actually, the prophecies of chs. 2 and 3 are not, strictly speaking, time prophecies, and dates are suggested simply to facilitate an approximate correlation of prophecy with history.

The first and the last. See on ch. 1:8, 17.

Was dead. See on chs. 1:18; 2:1. To a church facing persecution and death for its faith, emphasis on life in Christ would be especially meaningful.

9. Thy. See on v. 2.

Works. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between retaining and omitting this word. See on v. 2.

Tribulation. Or, "distress," "trouble," "affliction." Intermittent persecution at the hands of various Roman emperors characterized the experience of the church during this period. Under Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), and Marcus Aurelius (161-180), persecution was sporadic and localized. The first general, systematic persecution of Christians was conducted by Decius (249-251) and Valerian (253-259). Political oppression reached a bloody climax under Diocletian (284-305) and his immediate successors (305-313). Historically, the period represented by the Smyrna church may well be called the Age of Martyrdom. The centuries since have been fragrant (see on v. 8) with the love and devotion of the thousands of unnamed martyrs of this period who were "faithful unto death."

Poverty. Gr. *ptōcheia,* "abject poverty" (cf. on Mark 12:42). Doubtless the church at Smyrna was not so large or so prosperous as the neighboring congregation at Ephesus. The Christians at Ephesus had left their "first love," but no such rebuke is sent to those at Smyrna. Instead, Christ reminds them that spiritually they are "rich" (see on James 2:5).

Blasphemy. Gr. *blasphēmia,* "evil speaking," whether of God or man. In the present context the translation "slander" may be preferable.

Jews. Probably "Jews" in a figurative, not a literal, sense (in the sense that Christians now are sometimes described as Israel see Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7; Gal. 3:28, 29; 1 Peter 2:9). As here used, the term no doubt refers to those who claimed to serve God, but actually served Satan.

The figure has its basis in history. The book of Acts reveals that many of the troubles of the early church grew out of slanderous accusations hurled at them by Jews (see Acts 13:45; 14:2, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:5, 6, 12; 21:27). Apparently this situation was true at Smyrna. In the 2d century Jews are said to have brought about the martyrdom of Polycarp, a bishop of Smyrna. During this time Tertullian speaks of the synagogues as "fountains of persecution" (*Scorpiace* 10; *ANF,* vol. 3, p. 643).

Are not. They were hypocrites.

Synagogue of Satan. Compare the opprobrious epithet, "generation [brood] of vipers" (Matt. 3:7). As a center of Jewish communal life the synagogue (see Vol. V, pp. 56-58) was doubtless the place where many an evil plot was formed against Christians. The name Satan means "accuser," or "adversary" (see on Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10). These Jewish centers became, literally, "synagogues of the accuser."

10. Fear none. See on James 1:2; cf. John 16:33.

Shalt suffer. Or, "art about to suffer." Apparently, the Smyrna church had been an important target of Jewish slander, but the members had not yet felt the full brunt of persecution. However, the Christians there doubtless knew of the persecution that already raged elsewhere, and must have anticipated future trouble for themselves. This is implied by the form of the verb here translated "fear," which indicates that they were already fearful. Christ consoles them with the assurance that, despite the prospect of persecution, they need not be afraid. See on Matt. 5:10-12.

Tried. Or, "tested." Satan would subject them to persecution in order to prevail

upon them to relinquish their faith. God would permit the persecution as a means of strengthening and proving the genuineness of their faith. Though Satan may rage against the church, God's hand accomplishes His purpose. See on James 1:2; Rev. 2:9.

The Roman emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117) laid down the first official Roman policy toward Christianity. In the famous ninety-seventh letter, written to Pliny the Younger, his governor in Bithynia and Pontus in Asia Minor, Trajan outlined a procedure for dealing with Christians, who were, at that time, an illegal religious society. He ordered that Roman officials were not to hunt Christians out, but that if persons were brought before them for other offenses and proved to be Christians, they were to be executed unless they recanted. This regulation, though by no means uniformly enforced, remained the law until Constantine issued his edict of toleration in A.D. 313.

Thus, for two centuries Christians were constantly subject to the possibility of sudden arrest and death for their faith. Their well-being depended in large measure upon the favor of their pagan and Jewish neighbors, who might either leave them in peace or complain against them before the authorities. This might be termed permissive persecution. The emperor did not take the initiative in persecuting Christians, but permitted his own representatives and the local authorities to take such measures against Christians as they might see fit. This policy left the Christians to the mercy of the various local administrations under which they lived. Especially in times of famine, earthquake, storm, and other catastrophes, Christians found themselves the objects of attack, their pagan neighbors supposing that by refusing to worship the gods the Christians had brought divine wrath upon the whole country.

At times, however, the Roman government carried on aggressive persecution against the church (see on v. 9). Thinking Romans observed that Christianity was constantly growing in extent and in influence throughout the empire, and that it was fundamentally incompatible with the Roman way of life. They realized that, given time, it would destroy the Roman way of life. Accordingly, it was often the more capable emperors who persecuted the church, whereas those who took their responsibilities less seriously were usually content not to molest Christians.

The first general, systematic persecution of the church was undertaken by the emperor Decius, whose imperial edict of the year 250 decreed the universal suppression of Christianity by means of torture, death, and the confiscation of property. The occasion for this decree was the millennial celebration of the founding of Rome, some three years earlier, when the decadent state of the empire was rendered more apparent by comparison with the glories of the past. Christianity became the scapegoat, and it was decided to obliterate the church in order, presumably, to save the empire. This policy lapsed with the death of Decius in A.D. 251, but was revived by Valerian a short time later. With his death the policy again lapsed, and not until the reign of Diocletian did the church face another major crisis (see below on "ten days").

Ten days. This expression has been understood in two ways. On the basis of the year-day principle of reckoning prophetic time periods (see on Dan. 7:25), it has been interpreted as a period of ten literal years and applied to the period of the most severe imperial persecution (A.D. 303-313), begun by Diocletian and continued by his associate and successor Galerius. This was an attempt to wipe out Christianity by burning the Scriptures, destroying church buildings, and imprisoning the leaders. These rulers believed that the church had grown to such dimensions of strength and popularity in the empire that unless Christianity should be promptly stamped out the traditional Roman way of life would cease to exist and the empire itself would disintegrate. Consequently they inaugurated a policy designed to exterminate the church. Diocletian's first decree against Christians was issued in the year 303, banning the practice of Christianity throughout the empire.

Persecution began in the army and spread throughout the empire. The Roman authorities concentrated their terrors on the Christian clergy, in the belief that if

the shepherds were removed, the flock would scatter. The horrors of this persecution are vividly described by the church historian Theodoret (*Ecclesiastical History* i. 6), who describes the gathering of the bishops of the church to the Council of Nicaea some years after the end of the persecution (A.D. 325). Some came with out eyes, some without arms, which had been pulled from their sockets, others with their bodies horribly maimed in different ways. Many, of course, did not survive this time of trouble. In 313, ten years after the beginning of these persecutions, Constantine and his colleague Licinius issued an edict that granted Christians (and all others) liberty to practice their religion.

Other interpreters think it is not altogether certain that the "ten days" were intended to represent prophetic time. They reason thus: The "things which thou shalt suffer," "the devil," "prison," and "death" are obviously literal, and it would seem most natural to expect the "ten days" to be literal also. In this case the number "ten" would be considered a round number, as is so often the case in Scripture (see Eccl. 7:19; Isa. 5:10; Dan. 1:20; Amos 6:9; Haggai 2:16; Zech. 8:23; Matt. 25:1, 28; Luke 15:8; etc.; cf. Mishnah *Aboth* 5. 1-9). As a round number, "ten days" would represent a brief period of persecution such as the literal church at Smyrna no doubt suffered in apostolic times. It would be entirely consistent with sound principles of prophetic interpretation (see on Deut. 18: 15) for the "ten days" to have a literal application to the immediate historical situation at Smyrna and a figurative application to the period of history represented by the Smyrna church (see on Rev. 1:11; 2:1, 8; see p. 725; Additional Note at end of chapter).

Be thou faithful. The Greek verb form implies, "continue to be faithful." Smyrna proved to be a faithful church.

Unto death. The Greek implies, "up to and including death."

Crown. Gr. *stephanos*, "a chaplet," or "garland, of victory," not a diadem of rulership. This word was used for the wreaths given to victors in Greek games. Here, it is a symbol of the reward given to the victor in the struggle with Satan.

Of life. The phrase "crown of life" is probably best translated in the sense, the "crown that is life"—the "crown" *is* "life." This crown is evidence of victory over the devil and the "tribulation" he has caused. Compare 2 Tim. 4:8.

11. He that hath an ear. See on v. 7.

He that overcometh. See on v. 7. Here, stress should probably be placed on overcoming in spite of the "tribulation" mentioned in v. 10.

Second death. As contrasted with the first death, which ends human life temporarily now, and from which there is a resurrection, both for "the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15). The second death is the final extinction of sin and sinners, and from it there can be no resurrection (see on Rev. 20:14; cf. ch. 21:8).

12. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

Pergamos. Or, Pergamum. This city had been the capital of the Roman province of Asia for two centuries after its last king, Attalus III, bequeathed it, together with the kingdom of Pergamum, to Rome in 133 B.C. (see p. 95). Since the early 3d century B.C. the city of Pergamum had been a chief center of cultural and intellectual life of the Hellenistic world. Although by John's time Ephesus was beginning to supersede it as the leading city of Asia, Pergamum continued to retain much of its former importance. The two cities long contended for this honor. For further information concerning the ancient city of Pergamum see p. 93; map p. 622.

The meaning of the name Pergamos is uncertain, but "citadel," or "acropolis," seems to be one of its derived meanings. The characteristic experience of the church during the Pergamos period was one of exaltation. From the status of a proscribed and persecuted sect it rose to a position of unchallenged popularity and power (see on v. 13).

Sword with two edges. Like the descriptive titles that introduce the messages to the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna, this is drawn from the description of the glorified Christ in ch. 1:16 (see comment there and on ch. 2:1).

13. Thy works. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the words "thy works, and." Compare on v. 2.

Satan's seat. Pergamum had distinguished itself in 29 B.C. by becoming the site of the first cult of a living Roman emperor. A temple was built and dedicated to the joint worship of the goddess Roma (a personification of the spirit of the empire) and the emperor Augustus. At the very time John wrote these words Christians were suffering persecution for refusing to worship the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96), who insisted on being worshiped as "lord and god." Pergamum was also the religious capital of Asia Minor. It was a center of Hellenistic (Greco-Mesopotamian) thought and emperor worship, and had many pagan temples. Its designation as the place "where Satan's seat is" was thus appropriate indeed (see p. 95).

The Pergamos period of church history may be thought of as beginning about the time of Constantine's espousal of the Christian cause, in A.D. 313, or of his supposed conversion—perhaps in 323 or 325—and ending in 538 (see Additional Note at end of chapter). It was during this time that the papacy won religious, and to some extent political, leadership of Western Europe (see Additional Note on Dan. 7), and that Satan established his "seat" within the church. The papacy was a skillful blend of paganism with Christianity. This period may be termed the Age of Popularity.

Name. See on v. 3.

My faith. That is, faith in Me. Compare the experience of the heroes of faith whose names are enshrined in Heb. 11.

Antipas. A familiar Greek name, compounded of the Greek words *anti,* "in place of," and *pas,* an abbreviated form of *patēr,* "father" (cf. on Luke 3:1; 24:18; see Josephus *Antiquities* xiv. 1. 3 [10]). It reflected a father's hope that the son so named would eventually take his place in the world. Some commentators hold that a Christian by this name at Pergamum had recently been martyred for his faith, presumably for refusing to worship the emperor. If so, the experience and example of this faithful martyr may be considered as typical of that of untold thousands who suffered for their faith in later ages. Although it is possible that the name may have a figurative application to the Pergamos period of church history, Inspiration provides no apparent clue with respect to such an application.

Martyr. Gr. *martus,* "witness." A "martyr" is one whose death testifies to his faith. The Greek here rendered "faithful martyr" is identical with that used of Christ in ch. 1:5 and translated "faithful witness."

14. Thee. For the force of the singular see on v. 2.

Balaam. See Num. 22-24. The analogy with Balaam suggests that there were some at Pergamum whose purpose was to divide and ruin the church by encouraging practices that were forbidden to Christians (see below on "things sacrificed"; cf. on Acts 15:29). Balaam was concerned about advancing his own interests, not those of God's people.

Stumblingblock. Gr. *skandalon,* the trigger that springs a trap. Thus to "cast a stumblingblock" before someone is to trip him up. See on Matt. 5:29.

Things sacrificed. The two practices here mentioned had been expressly prohibited by the council at Jerusalem (see on Acts 15:29; Rom. 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:1). Balaam influenced Israel to commit "whoredom with the daughters of Moab," to sacrifice to Moabite gods, and to "eat," presumably of the meat sacrificed to these gods (Num. 25:1, 2; 31:16).

These two sins led to a mixture of paganism with true religion. Applied to Christian history, this portrayal is peculiarly appropriate to the situation in the church in the period following the legalization of Christianity by Constantine in A.D. 313 and his nominal conversion some 10 or 12 years later. He pursued a policy of blending paganism and Christianity at as many points as possible, in a studied attempt to unite the diverse elements within the empire and thus strengthen it. The favorable, even dominant, position he accorded the church made it a prey to the temptations that always accompany prosperity and popularity. Under Constantine and his successors, almost all of whom continued his favorable policy, the church rapidly became a politico-ecclesiastical institution and lost much of its former spirituality.

15. Nicolaitanes. See on v. 6.

16. Repent. This sharp warning reflects the grave spiritual peril that confronted the Pergamum church.

Sword of my mouth. See on ch. 1:16; cf. ch. 2:12. The sword typifies the punishment that would result from a failure to "repent."

17. Hath an ear. See on v. 7.

Him that overcometh. See on v. 7.

Hidden manna. See Ex. 16:14-36. Some think the allusion here may be to the manna Aaron placed in a pot and preserved in the ark (Ex. 16:33; Heb. 9:4). An ancient Jewish teaching declares that when the Messiah would come, "the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years" (2 Baruch 29:8; R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 498). In view of John 6:31-34 it seems that John here intends manna to be symbolic of spiritual life in Christ now, and eternal life in the hereafter (see on John 6:32, 33).

White stone. Various ancient customs have been suggested as providing a basis for this allusion to the gift of a white stone, but none of these is altogether satisfactory. One of the more common ancient customs was that of the use of a white and a black stone by jurors to determine acquittal or conviction. All that may be said with reasonable certainty is that John doubtless refers to some ceremony involving the bestowal of a special gift or honor.

New name. In the Bible a person's name often stands for his character, and a new name would indicate a new character. The new is not patterned after the old, but replaces it and is different from it. Here the Christian is promised a "new name," that is, a new and different character, patterned after that of God (cf. Isa. 62:2; 65:15; Rev. 3:12).

No man knoweth. The experience of spiritual rebirth, of the transformation of character, can be understood only by personal experience. Attempts to explain this experience to a man who himself has not been born again can never convey a true or complete picture of it (cf. John 3:5-8).

18. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

Thyatira. The origin and meaning of this name are uncertain. Some have suggested that Thyatira means "sweet savor of labor," perhaps on the basis of the "works" of the church set forth in v. 19. Although less notable than the other six cities, ancient Thyatira was nevertheless distinguished by the number and variety of trades and crafts that flourished there. Apparently, prominent among these was that of the dyeing of cloth (see Acts 16:14). The Christians of Thyatira doubtless found employment largely in the local crafts. For further information concerning the ancient city of Thyatira see p. 96; map p. 622.

As applied to Christian history, the message to Thyatira is particularly appropriate to the experience of the true church in the Dark Ages and the later Middle Ages (see Additional Note on ch. 2).

Trends that began in earlier periods became dominant during the Dark Ages. The Scriptures not being available to the ordinary Christian, tradition was exalted in their place. Works came to be considered a means of attaining salvation. An earthly and human priesthood obscured the true and divine priesthood of Jesus Christ. See Additional Note on Dan. 7. It was a time of great difficulty for those who resisted the great apostasy, and the Thyatira period of church history may well be called the Age of Adversity. Because of persecution, the flame of truth flickered and nearly went out. The spiritual message of the Reformation was essentially a restoration of the great truths of the gospel. It proclaimed that men are saved only by faith in Christ, that their only standard of faith and practice is Scripture, and that every man may appear on his own behalf before the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, without a human intercessor.

Son of God. See on Luke 1:35; John 1:14. This title, like those that introduce the messages to the other churches, is drawn from the description of the glorified Christ in Rev. 1:13 (see on ch. 2:1). Here the definite article is used, thus specifically identifying the Author of the message as the second person of the Godhead (cf. on ch. 1:13).

Eyes . . . feet. See on ch. 1:14, 15.

19. Thy. For the force of the singular see on v. 2.

Works. See on v. 2.

Charity. Gr. *agapē,* "love" (see on Matt. 5:43, 44). Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the sequence "love, and faith, and service, and patience." These are an enumeration of the "works" of the church at Thyatira, love and faith providing the inner basis for the outward expression of service and patience.

Service. Gr. *diakonia,* "service," or "ministry" (see on Rom. 12:7).

Faith. Gr. *pistis* (see on Rom. 3:3).

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē* (see on ch. 1:9).

The last. That is, the last works more than the first works, as the Greek indicates. The message to Thyatira is the only one of the seven that contains a recognition of improvement. In spite of difficulties at Thyatira, the church there experienced spiritual growth. Contrast the opposite experience at Ephesus (vs. 4, 5).

20. A few things. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this phrase. However, some ancient manuscripts read "much" or "many things." The simple reading, "I have [it] against thee" (cf. v. 4), is to be preferred.

Sufferest. Gr. *aphiēmi,* "to permit," "to allow to operate." The church was at fault not only because many openly submitted to apostasy but also because no earnest effort was being made to check the course of evil.

Jezebel. For the account of the historical Jezebel see 1 Kings 16:31; 18:13; 19:1, 2; 21:5-16, 23-25; 2 Kings 9:30-37. It would appear that, as Jezebel sponsored the worship of Baal in Israel (1 Kings 21:25), so in John's day some false prophetess was attempting to lead astray the church at Thyatira. The message indicates that here, even more than at Pergamum (Rev. 2:14), apostasy was openly and defiantly rampant. As applied to the Thyatira period of Christian history, the figure of Jezebel represents the power that produced the great apostasy of the medieval centuries (see Additional Note on Dan. 7; see on Rev. 2:18; cf. Rev. 17).

Commit fornication . . . eat things sacrificed. See on Rev. 2:14; cf. 2 Kings 9:22. This doubtless had, first, a local application to the church at Thyatira. Applied to the Thyatira period of church history, this would represent an admixture of paganism with Christianity (see on Eze. 16:15; Rev. 17:1). This process was accelerated greatly under Constantine and his successors. Medieval Christianity absorbed, to a great extent, pagan forms and practices.

21. Space. The offer of forgiveness was extended to the unrepentant prophetess for some considerable time.

Repented not. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "is not willing to repent," meaning that she refuses to do so. Here was no case of unenlightened, nor even of willful ignorance, but of insistent and defiant rebellion.

22. Cast her into a bed. The manner of punishment to be meted out to the false prophetess will be appropriate to her crime. This expression seems to be of Semitic origin, and is used with respect to falling ill (see Ex. 21:18; Judith 8:3, LXX; Matt. 9:2, literally, "a paralytic cast upon a bed"). Compare the English expression "to take to one's bed." See on Rev. 17:16, 17; 18.

Them that commit. These persons are not identified. Compare on ch. 17:1, 2.

Except they repent. The door of mercy had not yet fully shut. God never shuts Himself off from sinners; it is they who shut themselves off from Him.

Their deeds. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "her deeds." From the standpoint of God speaking to His church, the sins of Jezebel and her lovers are essentially her sins, for it is she who as a prophetess, aspires to lead the church.

23. Children. The fornication of this Jezebel was habitual and of long standing, for she had children. Figuratively, this should probably be understood in the sense that she had won committed adherents. Judgment was to descend not only upon the mother but also upon the offspring, who were contaminated by her evil character. Compare the destruction of the children of Ahab (2 Kings 10:7).

Death. John may have in mind the LXX of Eze. 33:27, where the significant passage reads "And those in the caves I will kill with death." Instead of "death" the Hebrew reads "pestilence," or "plague." Possibly this is the meaning of "death" in John's passage.

Reins. That is, the kidneys, which anciently were thought to be the seat of the will and the affections (cf. on Ps. 7:9).

Hearts. That is, minds, meaning the intellect. Christ penetrates both the thoughts and the emotions. Christ's judgment is just because He sees and takes into consideration the secrets of the heart. See Ps. 7:9; Jer. 11:20; see on 1 Sam. 16:7.

24. The rest. That is, the loyal believers in Thyatira. Historically, this refers to small groups throughout the Middle Ages that sought to remain loyal to apostolic Christianity. Such movements were found both within and without the formal framework of the Catholic Church. Particularly important were such groups as the Waldenses on the continent of Europe and the followers of Wyclif in England. Neither of these groups had the measure of evangelical truth that was proclaimed later in the Protestant Reformation, but the message "unto the rest in Thyatira" was appropriate to them. Upon them God put no further burden than to be faithful to the light that was theirs.

This doctrine. That is, the teachings of Jezebel (see on v. 20).

Depths. Literally, "deeps," meaning "deep things." Christ takes the very words the apostates proudly apply to their own teachings ("as they speak"), and devastatingly terms them "the deep things of Satan." The Gnostics claimed to be the only ones who knew "the deep things" (see Vol. VI, pp. 54-58).

None other burden. Faithfulness to the light that was theirs would be sufficient.

25. Till I come. The "blessed hope" (see Titus 2:13) of the soon coming of Christ has ever been the stay of Christians in affliction. Christ does not necessarily imply that He would return within the lifetime of the members of the literal Thyatira church, nor even within the Thyatira period of church history. However, see on ch. 1:1.

26. He that overcometh. See on v. 7.

My works. That is, works that reflect the character of Christ. These are in striking contrast with the "deeds" of those who ally themselves with Jezebel (see on v. 22).

Power over the nations. Compare on ch. 20:4.

27. Rule. Gr. *poimainō*, literally, "to shepherd," and thus "to rule" (see on Matt. 2:6). The passage is quoted from Ps. 2:9. For the time, circumstances, and nature of Christ's breaking the nations with a "rod of iron" see on Rev. 19:15. That the Jews considered Ps. 2:9 a Messianic prediction is evident from the pseudepigraphical Psalms of Solomon 17:26 (Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 649): "He [Messiah, Son of David] shall thrust out sinners from (the) inheritance, He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's vessel. With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their substance." Inasmuch as the redeemed will live and reign *with* Christ they are here represented as sharing Christ's work (see on Rev. 12:5; 20:4).

Rod. The word used here represents the Heb. *shebet* of Ps. 2:9, which may mean a shepherd's rod (Ps. 23:4), or a scepter (Ps. 45:6), or a rod of punishment (Ps. 125:3). The context of Rev. 2:27 suggests that the "rod" is here both a symbol of rulership and an instrument of punishment.

Vessels of a potter. See Jer. 19:1, 10, 11.

Broken. The rule here spoken of results in a destruction of the wicked. For the nature of this rule see on ch. 20:4.

To shivers. Or, "to pieces."

As I received. See Matt. 11:27; 28:18; John 3:35; 5:22, 27; Acts 17:31; Vol. V, p. 919.

28. Morning star. That is, Christ Himself (see Rev. 22:16; cf. 2 Peter 1:19).

29. Hath an ear. See on v. 7.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 2

The application of the various messages to the seven churches to seven consecutive periods of church history (see on ch. 2:1) naturally suggests the utility of a series of transition dates to facilitate the coordination of the several messages with their respective historical periods. In attempting to assign such dates, however, it is well to remember that: (1) The prophecy of the seven churches is not a time prophecy in the usual sense of the term, for

no specific chronological data accompany it. It is concerned primarily with successive experiences of the church, and differs considerably from such prophecies as those concerning the 1260 days of Dan. 7:25, the 2300 days of ch. 8:14, and the 70 weeks of ch. 9:25. (2) Major eras of history can hardly be marked off by exact dates. So used, dates are at best convenient landmarks of a rather general sort, not exact boundary markers. Actual transition from one period to another is a gradual process. Nevertheless it is well to select approximate dates as an aid to correlating the messages with the corresponding events of history. Some would suggest different dates from those given below and use different phrases to describe the various periods. However, these variations in dates and names do not materially affect the over-all message found in the letters to the seven churches.

1. *Ephesus.* There is general agreement that the period thus represented spans the apostolic age, and may, accordingly, be dated approximately from A.D. 31, the year of our Lord's ascension (see Vol. V, pp. 257-260), to A.D. 100.

2. *Smyrna.* For A.D. 100 as marking the beginning of this period see the foregoing on "Ephesus." The messages to the second and third churches identify the transition from Smyrna to Pergamum as one from persecution to popularity. The reign of Constantine the Great, 306-337, the first so-called Christian emperor of Rome, marks such a transition. Prior to his famous Edict of Milan in 313, Christianity was an illegal religion and experienced repeated periods of severe persecution by the state (see Vol. VI, pp. 47, 61; Vol. VII, pp. 18, 19). That edict decreed equal rights for all religions throughout the empire and restored confiscated Christian property. In the same year Constantine exempted the Christian clergy from civil and military service, and their property from taxation. Either this date, 313, or that of his supposed conversion to Christianity, commonly given as 323 or 325, might be taken as an appropriate year to mark the transition from the Smyrna period to that of Pergamum.

3. *Pergamos.* For the transition to the Pergamos period see the foregoing on "Smyrna." Inspiration has characterized the Pergamos period as a time of compromise, apostasy, and popularity, the time during which the Church of Rome was consolidating its power and authority. Accordingly, the close of the Pergamos period should find imperial Rome out of the way and the papacy fully formed and ready to embark on its career as ruler of Western Christendom (see Additional Note on Dan. 7).

Any one of various events might serve as an acceptable boundary marker for the close of this period. The deposition of the last Roman emperor in 476 marks it as one such date. The conversion, in 496, of the Frankish king Clovis, the first Germanic ruler to embrace Roman Christianity and to ally himself with the interests of the church in the conquest of other Germanic peoples, is another. In 538 Justinian's decree of 533, according the pope plenary ecclesiastical power in East and West, began to become effective.

Historians generally take the pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) as marking the transition from ancient to medieval times, and his reign as pope might be considered another such boundary marker. Gregory is considered the first of the medieval prelates. He boldly assumed, in many ways, the role of emperor in the West, and his administration laid the foundation for later claims to papal absolutism.

The year 756 marks the beginning of papal territorial rule and the accession of France to the role of so-called "eldest son of the papacy" (see Vol. IV, p. 837). In that year Pepin of France subdued the Lombards of northern Italy, who had been threatening the pope, and ceded their territory to him. This grant, commonly called the Donation of Pepin, marks the beginning of the Papal States, which the pope governed as an absolute monarch for more than 1,000 years.

However, the importance of 538 as the starting point of the 1,260 years (see on Dan. 7:25) suggests it as a more appropriate terminal date for the Pergamos period than any of the others. See pp. 18-22.

4. *Thyatira.* For 538 as a beginning date for the Thyatira period see above on "Pergamos." The Thyatira period is characterized as the era of papal supremacy. The

importance of the 1,260-year period in Bible prophecy (see on Dan. 7:25; Rev. 12:6) suggests that 1798 might well be selected as the terminal date for Thyatira. But in view of the importance of the Reformation in breaking papal supremacy, the date 1517 would also be an appropriate terminal date (see Vol. IV, p. 837; Vol. VII, p. 50). Some might hold that the loss of the Papal States in 1870 and the consequent self-imposed status of the pope as "prisoner of the Vatican" would, similarly, make that year eligible for consideration. However, the year 1870 seems to be somewhat too late to comport with either the 1,260 years of prophecy or with the remaining periods of church history as delineated in Rev. 2 and 3.

5. *Sardis.* Characteristically, this is the church of Reformation times, and as such may be thought of as beginning in 1517, or possibly 1798 (see the foregoing on "Thyatira"). Those who propose 1798 as the terminal date for the Thyatira church period and the opening of the Sardis period suggest 1833 as an appropriate year marking the close of the latter. For reasons set forth below on "Philadelphia," others suggest 1755 as an appropriate terminal date.

6. *Philadelphia.* Inspiration has presented this as the church of the great second advent awakening. Various beginning dates have been suggested as appropriate for this period. Some propose 1833, the year of the great climactic sign in nature foretold by our Lord (see on Matt. 24:33). This point of time was closely connected with the early proclamation of the advent message by William Miller. Others suggest 1798, the beginning of the "time of the end" of Dan. 11:35 (see comment there), which would also be acceptable. Still others favor the date 1755, which is commonly accepted as marking the first of the specific signs of the end under the sixth seal (see on Rev. 6:12), considering that this choice comports well with the character of the Philadelphia church as the church of the advent awakening. There is general agreement among Seventh-day Adventist expositors that the year 1844 should be considered as marking the close of the Philadelphia period and the opening of the Laodicean period (see on Dan. 8:14).

7. *Laodicea.* For the year 1844 as marking the beginning of this period see the foregoing on "Philadelphia." Being the last of the seven, the Laodicean period continues till the end of time.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 586; 5T 435; 6T 413, 418; 8T 23
1, 2 5T 435
1-5 6T 422; 8T 98
2, 3 AA 578; 5T 538; WM 155
4 MM 37; 2T 293; 8T 26; WM 79
4, 5 AA 587; DA 280; LS 320; PP 165; TM 168, 275, 352, 461; 6T 368, 421; 8T 299
5 TM 450; 2T 296; 4T 286, 403; 5T 191, 612; 6T 426; 8T 80, 248
7 AA 589; Ed 302; EW 21, 77; LS 91; MH 449; PP 62; 6T 76; 8T 289
9 Ev 603; TM 16; 6T 475
10 AA 588; Ev 353; EW 288; GC 41; PK 84; 4T 300; 5T 71
17 GC 646; MH 516; ML 156; MYP 95; PP 297
26, 28 MH 516

CHAPTER 3

2 *The angel of the church of Sardis is reproved, 3 exhorted to repent, and threatened if he do not repent.* 8 *The angel of the church of Philadelphia* 10 *is approved for his diligence and patience.* 15 *The angel of Laodicea rebuked, for being neither hot nor cold,* 19 *and admonished to be more zealous.* 20 *Christ standeth at the door and knocketh.*

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I

have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shall not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

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1. **Angel.** See on ch. 1:20.

Sardis. The first important city on the highway south of Thyatira. Like Thyatira, Sardis enjoyed a favorable commercial location. Strabo, the ancient geographer, speaks of it as "a great city" (*Geography* xiii. 4. 5; Loeb ed., vol. 6, p. 171), although in John's day it did not rival either Ephesus or Pergamum in importance. For further information about Sardis see pp. 97-99. The meaning of the name is uncertain; however, some suggest "song of joy," or "that which remains," or "something new."

Seven Spirits. See on ch. 1:4.

Seven stars. This figure, like those that introduce the messages to each of the other churches, is drawn from the description of the glorified Christ found in ch. 1 (see on vs. 16, 20).

Thy works. See on ch. 2:2.

Name. Here, "reputation." Hypocrisy characterized this church, which was not what it pretended to be. Professedly, the

Reformation churches had discovered what it means to live by faith in Jesus Christ, but for the most part they eventually lapsed into a state resembling, in certain ways, that of the organization from which they had withdrawn (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5). Their name—Protestant—implied opposition to the abuses, errors, and formalism of the Roman Catholic Church, and the name Reformation implied that none of these faults were to be found within the Protestant fold. See pp. 41-65.

Art dead. This bitter comment begins a message that consists mostly of reproof. The sin of hypocrisy called forth Jesus' most scathing denunciations against the religious leaders of His day (see Matt. 23: 13-33). Now, to the hypocritical church of Sardis, the glorified Christ sends His most unqualified rebuke. Rather than being "quickened," or made alive in Christ (see Eph. 2:5; Col. 2:13; Gal. 2:20), as this church claimed to be, in reality it was "dead" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:5). As applied to the Sardis period of the church, the message may be considered in terms of the church toward the close of the Reformation period and may be dated 1517 to 1755; however, see Additional Note on Rev. 2.

Some decades after the beginning of the Reformation the new churches experienced a period of violent doctrinal controversy. Eventually, differences of opinion were settled by the adoption of definitive creeds that tended to discourage the search for additional truth. By a similar process the Roman Catholic Church, in the early centuries of its history, had crystallized much of its theology. Protected by the power and prestige of the state, and ensconced within the shelter of rigid creedal confessions, the national churches of the Protestant world generally came to content themselves with the form of godliness without its power. Another important factor that contributed to apathy toward spiritual things was the rise of rationalism in the 17th and 18th centuries. Under the impact of scientific discovery, many scholars came to believe that natural law was sufficient to account for the workings of the universe. Often they concluded that God's chief function in relation to this world is only that of a first cause, and that since His initial act of creation, the world has functioned more or less independently of Him. Thinking men who found the avenues of independent theological thought closed to them by the rigid formulas of Protestant orthodoxy turned, in some instances, to the new philosophical rationalism. Although rationalism produced much high idealism and commendable thinking in such fields as political science and humanitarianism, its presuppositions when applied to religion went far to encourage the spiritual coldness that characterized much of Protestantism in the centuries following the Reformation.

2. Be watchful. Concerning watchfulness as a Christian duty see on Matt. 24:42; cf. Matt. 25:13.

Things which remain. Even in degenerate Protestantism there were certain things worth laboring to preserve. Much, but not all, had been lost. The spiritual life of Protestantism was dying, but the system was not yet dead. "Survival" may be thought of as the keynote of the Sardis period of church history.

Thy works perfect. The ardor of Protestantism during its early years gave promise of a pressing forward toward perfection in understanding revealed truth and in applying it to the life. But as the years went by, zeal and piety waned, and the church wearied of the effort to reach the goal it had set out to attain.

3. Remember therefore. Compare ch. 2:5.

Hast received. The form of the Greek verb implies not only that the church at Sardis had received the truth but that she still had it—not all had been lost. That there still was hope is further indicated by the injunction to "hold fast," which in the Greek means to "continue to hold fast." Some Christians at Sardis had not backslidden, a fact stated more clearly in v. 4.

Repent. Gr. *metanoeō* (see on Matt. 3:2).

Thief. Compare Matt. 24:43, where the reference is to the second coming of Christ. Here, the warning may include not only the second advent itself but a more immediate divine visitation (cf. Rev. 2:5). Either coming would be unexpected to those who failed to repent and to watch. Compare GC 490.

4. Names. That is, persons (see on Acts 1:15).

Defiled their garments. A figure for moral defilement, into which most of the church at Sardis had fallen. See on Matt. 22:11; cf. Rev. 16:15; cf. on Isa. 63:6.

In white. In contrast with those who have fallen morally, so defiling their "garments," those who have been true wear "white," or clean and unstained, garments, a symbol of their purity. This is indicated both by the succeeding remark, "for they are worthy," and by the use of the same symbol in ch. 7:13, 14. The latter passage makes clear that such righteousness is not their own, but the result of washing their robes white in the blood of the Lamb. They have received the righteousness of Christ.

White garments are also pictured as worn by the inhabitants of heaven (see Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 19:14), and thus, for the saints, figurative of their "spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:40-44; cf. vs. 51-54).

5. He that overcometh. See on ch. 2:7.

Clothed. That is, with immortality in the life to come.

White raiment. See on v. 4.

Blot out. See on Acts 3:19. The figurative phrase "not blot out" assures the repentant sinner that his sins have been forgiven, and warns the unrepentant that his name will be removed from the book of life. His very identity as a person will cease to exist; he will no longer have a place among created beings. Compare GC 490.

Book of life. See on Phil. 4:3; cf. Rev. 13:8; 20:15.

Confess his name. That is, acknowledge him as a loyal, devoted follower. Christ is the advocate and intercessor, the great high priest of all who claim His righteousness (see 1 John 2:1, 2; cf. Matt. 10:32, 33; Heb. 8:1-6).

Before his angels. The "broader and deeper purpose" of the plan of redemption is "to vindicate the character of God before the universe" (PP 68; cf. DA 19). When Christ in His role as intercessor and high priest presents His ransomed people before the throne of God, He thereby provides the angelic hosts with a convincing testimony that the ways of God are just and true. They see the righteousness of God vindicated, alike in His "strange act" (Isa. 28: 21) of committing the unrepentant to destruction and in His pardon of sinners who accept His saving grace by faith. Without the high priestly intercession of Christ, such otherwise mysterious acts of God might appear to the intelligences of the universe as arbitrary and unjustified.

6. Hath an ear. See on ch. 2:7.

7. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

Philadelphia. A word meaning "brotherly love." This city was founded before 138 B.C. and was named for Attalus II Philadelphus of Pergamum in honor of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, who had preceded him on the throne. After a damaging earthquake in A.D. 17 it was rebuilt by the Roman emperor Tiberius, but remained comparatively small. It was situated some 30 mi. (c. 48 km.) east-southeast of Sardis.

When the historical application is made, the message to Philadelphia may be thought of as appropriate to the various movements within Protestantism during the latter years of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th whose objective it was to make religion a vital, personal affair (see on v. 2; see Additional Note on Chapter 2). In a special way the great evangelical and advent movements in Europe and the United States restored the spirit of brotherly love and stressed practical godliness in contrast with the forms of religion. Revived faith in the saving grace of Christ and in the nearness of His return resulted in a deeper spirit of Christian fellowship than the church had experienced since the early days of the Reformation. For further comment on the background of this period see pp. 67-70.

He that is holy. This title is equivalent to "the Holy One," used of God in the OT (Isa. 40:25; Hab. 3:3). In the NT a similar ascription is applied repeatedly to Christ, implying His deity (see Luke 1:35; Acts 4:27, 30; cf. on John 6:69).

True. Gr. *alēthinos,* "genuine," "real," in contrast with false gods.

Key of David. This verse applies Isaiah's prophecy concerning Eliakim, to Christ (Isa. 22:20-22; see 2 Kings 18:18). Eliakim was appointed to have supervision "over the household" of David, as signified by the fact that he was to be given "the key of the house of David." Christ's possession of the "key" represents His jurisdiction

over the church and over the divine purpose to be achieved through it (see Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22). Compare Rev. 5:5; 22:16; see on Matt. 1:1.

He that openeth. That is, with "the key of David." Christ has full authority to open and to shut, to carry the plan of redemption forward to success.

8. Thy. For the force of the singular see on ch. 2:2.

Works. See on ch. 2:2.

An open door. In the preceding verse Christ is said to have the "key of David." Verse 8 may imply that with that "key" He now opens before the Philadelphia church a "door" of unlimited opportunity for personal victory in the struggle with sin, and for bearing witness to the saving truth of the gospel. For similar uses of a "door" as a symbol of opportunity see Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3.

Seventh-day Adventists hold that the close of the Philadelphia period (1844) marks the beginning of the investigative judgment described in Dan. 7:10; Rev. 14:6, 7 (see comment there). Christ is our great high priest (Heb. 4:14, 15; 8:1), ministering in the sanctuary above, "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2, 6; cf. Ex. 25:8, 9). Now, the ritual of the earthly sanctuary consisted essentially of two parts, the daily service of ministration for sin, in the holy place, and the yearly service, on the Day of Atonement, which was considered a day of judgment, in the most holy place (see Heb. 9:1, 6, 7; see on Dan. 8:11, 14). In view of the fact that the earthly sanctuary served as an "example and shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5) it is proper to conclude that the daily and yearly services of the earthly sanctuary have their counterpart in the ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. To speak in terms of the symbolism of the earthly sanctuary, which was "a copy of the true one" (Heb. 9:24, RSV): On the antitypical day of atonement, beginning in 1844, our great High Priest may be thought of as leaving the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and entering the most holy place. Accordingly, the "shut door" would be that of the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary and the "open door" that of the most holy place, where Christ has been engaged in the work of the great antitypical day of atonement since that time (see GC 430, 431, 435; EW 42). In other words, the "shut door" indicates the closing of the first phase of Christ's heavenly ministry, and the "open door," the beginning of the second phase. For a discussion of the "shut door" in early Adventist teaching see L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers,* vol. 4, pp. 829-842; also "Open and Shut Door," in *SDA Encyclopedia,* pp. 1034-1037. For a summary of the sanctuary doctrine see Additional Note on Heb. 10.

No man can shut. Christ will carry forward the work of redemption until it is complete. Man can do nothing to hinder either His ministry in the courts of heaven or His jurisdiction and control over the affairs of earth (see on Dan. 4:17).

A little strength. Or, simply, "little strength." It is not clear whether Christ is here reproving the Philadelphia church for having so *little* strength or commending them for having *some* strength. Except for a "few" in Sardis, that church was all but "dead," and it may be that the "little strength" of Philadelphia represents a more encouraging situation than that in Sardis. The fact that the "little strength" is so closely connected with the commendation for heeding Christ's Word and not denying His name tends to confirm this conclusion. Also, the "open door" may be thought of as an invitation to enter into an experience of even greater strength. The church at ancient Philadelphia was apparently neither large nor influential, but it was pure and faithful. The Philadelphia period of church history, with its increased attention to God's Word, particularly the prophecies of Daniel and of the Revelation, and to personal godliness, represented a much more encouraging picture than the preceding period.

My word. God's word expresses His will. God has revealed His will through nature, also through His prophets and apostles, by the direct witness of the Holy Spirit to the human heart, through the experiences of life, through the course of human history, and pre-eminently through Christ.

Name. See on ch. 2:3.

9. Make them. Literally, "give them."

Grammatically, the statement of v. 9 may be understood to mean either that God would "make," or "cause," members of "the synagogue of Satan" to "come and worship" at the feet of the Philadelphia Christians, unrepentantly, or that God would "give" to the Philadelphia Christians some of the Jews of Philadelphia as converts to Christianity. The context is not decisive.

Of the synagogue. Or, "some of the synagogue" (see on ch. 2:9).

Say they are Jews. See on ch. 2:9.

Come and worship. The sequence of the thought—"come," "worship," "know"—seems to imply more than that the Christians of ancient Philadelphia would ultimately triumph publicly over their Jewish opponents. For Christians, like pagan conquerors, to rejoice at the prospect of their accusers finally lying prostrate before their feet hardly seems to reflect the spirit of true Christianity. Rather, these words may refer to the conversion of some of the Jews of Philadelphia (cf. 1 Cor. 14:24, 25) who would learn of God's love by personal experience. Such a growth in membership may result from the "open door" of Rev. 3:8 and the loyalty of the church to Christ's "word." Such loyalty has often brought conviction even to the hearts of persecutors themselves.

Applied to the Philadelphia period of church history, this expression may be considered as applicable to those who do not keep pace with advancing truth and who oppose Christians who do. Thus understood, reference may be to the time when those who have rejected truth publicly confess their error (see GC 655).

The words "come and worship before thy feet" are from the LXX of Isa. 60:14 (cf. ch. 49:23). As strangers were to have come to literal Israel of old to learn of God (see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30), so non-Christians were to come to the light of the gospel and find salvation (see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

Rev. 3:9 has also been applied to those who persist in their opposition to truth, particularly to the time when circumstances will compel them, though unrepentant, to acknowledge that those who have been loyal to truth are indeed God's people. There is nothing to preclude the possibility that the statement of this verse may include both the repentant and unrepentant opponents of truth, with the one group making the acknowledgment in sincerity and the other only because circumstances compel them to do so.

I have loved. These words are probably taken from Isa. 43:4.

10. Word of my patience. Some interpret this phrase to mean, "my word of patience," that is, my injunction to be patient; others, as the teaching concerning the patience of Christ (cf. 2 Thess. 3:5). The two ideas are combined in the thought, "Christ encourages us to be patient as He was patient under trial."

From. Gr. *ek*, "out of," indicating that the overcomers will successfully endure the period of tribulation, not that they will be untouched by it (see on Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21, 22, 29-31).

Hour of temptation. Here not a specific length of time, whether literal or prophetic, but a "season," or "time." "Hour" is here used in the same sense as in ch. 3:3. In harmony with the repeated references in the Revelation to the imminence of Christ's return (see on ch. 1:1), the "hour of temptation" doubtless refers to a great time of testing preceding the second advent.

Them that dwell. This and similar expressions (chs. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8, 14; 17:2, 8) are used consistently throughout the Revelation to refer to the unrighteous, upon whom the divine judgments will be poured out.

11. Crown. See on ch. 2:10.

12. A pillar in the temple. A metaphorical "pillar" would, of course, be part of a metaphorical "temple." In the NT the word translated "temple" (*naos*) generally refers to the inner sanctuary containing the holy and most holy places, not to the whole complex of buildings that constituted the ancient Temple. Accordingly, this promise would mean that the overcomer will hold a permanent, important place in the very presence of God. For similar metaphorical usage of the word "pillar" see Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15.

Go no more out. That is, be permanent. In harmony with the figure, to "go . . . out" would be to leave the presence of God, deliberately, as Lucifer did (PP 37). Such a

promise as this could be made only to those who overcome, permanently. In this life the possibility of going "out" remains, but in the future life no one will choose to go out.

Name of my God. See on Acts 3:16; Rev. 2:3; cf. Rev. 2:17; 14:1; 22:4. This continues the figure of speech introduced by the pillar, and is therefore also to be taken figuratively. Inasmuch as a "name" implies personality and character, the promise here is that those who overcome will receive the permanent impress of God's character; the image of their Creator will be fully restored in them. This figure of speech may also be understood to imply that the victorious saints will be completely God's own, as attested by His name, or sign of ownership, thus affixed upon them.

Name of the city. The pillar not only has the divine name inscribed upon it, but also bears the name of the New Jerusalem. This may be taken to signify that the victorious Christian is a citizen of the New Jerusalem and has a right to reside there (ch. 22:14).

New Jerusalem. Not "new" in the sense of being a replica of the literal city by the same name, but in supernal contrast with its earthly counterpart. Ancient Jerusalem was to have become the metropolis of this earth and to have stood forever (see Vol. IV, pp. 29, 30), but because of its failure to carry out its assigned task that role will be accorded the New Jerusalem. The term New Jerusalem is limited to the Revelation, but the thought is anticipated in Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22. For the meaning of the name Jerusalem see on Joshua 10:1.

Cometh down. See on ch. 21:2.

My new name. The third name written on the symbolic pillar is that of Christ Himself. The overcomer's reception of the divine character, represented by the name (see on Acts 3:16), is mediated by Christ. It is only by virtue of the fact that God became man in Jesus Christ that man may once more be restored to the image of God. This is accomplished by the gift of the life and character of Christ to the believer (see Gal. 2:20; DA 388). To receive Christ's name is also to receive confirmation of His ownership (see on 2 Cor. 1:22).

13. Hath an ear. See on ch. 2:7.

14. Angel. See on ch. 1:20.

The Laodiceans. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "in Laodicea." This name has been defined as meaning "judging the people," or "a people adjudged." The latter appears preferable here. The beeline distance from Philadelphia to the city of Laodicea is some 50 mi. (c. 80 km.) (see map facing p. 33, Vol. VI). The latter was founded by the Seleucid king Antiochus II Theos (261-246 B.C.), and named in honor of his wife, Laodice. Situated in the valley of the Lycus River, Laodicea was a prosperous commercial center in John's day, specializing in the production of woolen goods. It lay within a few miles of the cities of Colossae and Hierapolis, and at an early date there were Christians in each of these cities (see Col. 4:13). By the time the Revelation was written, the church at Laodicea had probably been in existence some 40 years. Paul took a distinct interest in this congregation and directed the Colossians to exchange epistles with the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16; see Vol. V, p. 183). For a discussion of the ancient city of Laodicea see p. 100.

Amen. The coupling of this title with "the faithful and true witness" identifies it as a title of Christ (see ch. 1:5), who is the author of the epistles to the seven churches. For comment on the meaning of "amen" see on Deut. 7:9; Matt. 5:18. The application of this term to Christ may be compared with Isa. 65:16, where, in Hebrew, the Lord is called *'Elohe 'amen,* "the God of amen." In the present passage this title may be understood as a declaration that Christ is truth (see John 14:6). Accordingly, His message to the Laodicean church is to be accepted without question.

Faithful and true witness. See on ch. 1:5.

Beginning. Gr. *archē,* a word that has both a passive and an active sense. Taken passively, it refers to that which is acted upon at the beginning. So interpreted here, it would mean that Christ was the first creature created. But this obviously could not be the correct translation, for Christ is not a created being. Taken actively, *archē* refers to that which initiates an action, a first cause, a prime mover. So understood here, it declares Christ to be the Creator. Such is plainly the meaning of the present passage, for Christ is portrayed repeatedly

in this same role elsewhere in the NT (see Vol. V, p. 917; see on John 1:3; Heb. 1:2). The strikingly similar statement of Col. 1: 15, 16 had been read by the Laodicean church many years before (cf. Col. 4:16).

15. Thy. For the force of the singular see on ch. 2:2.

Works. See on ch. 2:2.

Neither cold nor hot. It has been suggested that this figurative expression must have been particularly meaningful to the Christians at Laodicea. One of the chief landmarks of that vicinity was a waterfall over which a stream from the hot springs at Hierapolis flowed, leaving mineral deposits. Laodicea's water source was not these hot springs or a cold one, but a water tower filled by an aqueduct that shows deposits from similar mineral water, probably warm. Lukewarm water was thus a familiar phenomenon to the Laodiceans, and fittingly characterized their spiritual condition.

The tepid spiritual condition of the Laodicean church was more dangerous than if the church had been cold. Lukewarm Christianity preserves enough of the form, and even of the content of the gospel, to dull the perceptive powers of the spirit and renders men oblivious to the earnest effort necessary to the attainment of the high ideal of a victorious life in Christ. The typical Laodicean Christian is content with things as they are and proud of the little progress he has made. It is almost impossible to convince him of his great need and of how far he is from the goal of perfection.

Since the messages to the seven churches reflect the entire course of the history of the Christian church (see on chs. 1:11; 2: 1), the seventh message must represent the experience of the church during the closing period of earth's history. The name Laodicea implies the final step in the Christian process of history, that of perfecting "a people adjudged" (see on ch. 3:14) righteous. Further, it implies that the preparation of such a people and the divine process of adjudging them righteous will be achieved by the close of the period (see on Dan. 8:13, 14; Rev. 3:8; 14:6, 7). Appropriately, then, the Laodicean message may be thought of as applying in a special sense to the church from 1844 to the close of time (see Additional Note at end of chapter), and the period of time thus represented may be characterized as the Age of Judgment.

The Laodicean message is applicable to all who profess to be Christians (see 6T 77). For more than a century Seventh-day Adventists have recognized that the message to the Laodiceans also has a special application to themselves (see James White, RH Oct. 16, 1856; cf. 1T 141-144). A recognition of this application stands as a constant rebuke to self-satisfaction and an encouragement to live wholeheartedly according to the pattern of a perfect life in Christ Jesus (see on ch. 3:18).

I would. A lukewarm spiritual state results in decreased alertness, a slow response, and indecisive action. If the Laodicean church were cold, the Spirit of God might the more readily convince it of its dangerous condition.

The following statement throws light on why a "cold" condition is preferable to a "lukewarm" one. "It would be more pleasing to the Lord if lukewarm professors of religion had never named His name. They are a continual weight to those who would be faithful followers of Jesus. They are a stumbling block to unbelievers" (1T 188).

16. Neither cold nor hot. See on v. 15; cf. 1T 188; 2T 175, 176.

Spue thee out. The figure of tepid water is pressed to its logical conclusion. Such water is disappointing and nauseating, and the one who drinks it almost involuntarily expels it. See 6T 408.

17. I am rich. This may be understood both literally and spiritually. Laodicea was a prosperous town, and doubtless some of the Christians there were well to do. Apparently this church had suffered no serious persecution. Pride in its prosperity led naturally to spiritual complacency. Of itself wealth is not wrong. However, the possession of wealth subjects its possessor to temptations to pride and self-complacency, and against these his only protection is spiritual humility.

Christians who are poor in earthly possessions feel themselves rich and increased with spiritual goods, yet are like the ancient philosopher who proudly proclaimed his "humility" by wearing a torn

and threadbare robe. The pride they take in their assumed spirituality shines forth through the holes in their garments. The possession of important truths held only on the level of intellectual acceptance but not allowed to permeate the soul, leads to spiritual pride and religious bigotry. Even the church of God, strong in the structure of its organization and rich with jewels of truth, can easily become a doctrinal bigot and immorally proud of its riches of truth. "The sin that is most nearly hopeless and incurable is pride of opinion, self-conceit. This stands in the way of all growth" (7T 199, 200). Humility of mind is fully as important in God's sight as humility of heart.

Increased with goods. Literally, "have become rich," "have prospered" (RSV). Not only does the Laodicean church claim to be rich, but she also makes the fatal mistake of considering that these riches are the result of her own labors (cf. Hosea 12:8).

Need of nothing. The climax of the Laodiceans' boast is that their situation could not be improved. Such self-satisfaction is fatal, for the Spirit of God never enters where a need for His presence is not felt, yet without that presence newness of life is impossible.

Knowest not. He who knows not, and knows not that he knows not, is well-nigh hopeless. The ignorance of their true condition that characterizes Laodicean Christians stands in sharp contrast with Christ's certain knowledge of the true condition of His churches, as reflected by His repeated assurance to each, "I know thy works" (chs. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15).

Thou art. The subject is emphatic in the Greek. The force of the sentence is, "knowest not that it is thou who art the wretched one . . ."

Wretched . . . naked. The true picture, here presented, is exactly the opposite of the boast made by the Laodicean church. Instead of being rich to the point of needing nothing, this church is, in reality, so much a pauper that she even lacks clothing.

18. Buy of me. Without this much effort the Laodicean "church" cannot attain the standard Christ would have her reach. The things He offers her are not without their price, yet salvation is ever free. She must give up her old way of life to be truly rich, to be healed, and to be clothed. Even she who is penniless may buy (see Isa. 55:1).

Gold. This represents spiritual riches, offered as Christ's remedy for the Laodiceans' spiritual poverty. This figurative "gold" may be interpreted as referring to "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6; James 2:5; cf. COL 158), and the works that result from faith (see 1 Tim. 6:18).

Tried in the fire. Literally, "fired out of fire," that is, gold that has come forth from the fire with its dross burned away. Doubtless the reference here is to faith that has been tried and purified by the fires of affliction (see on James 1:2-5; cf. Job 23:10).

White raiment. Offered in contrast with the Laodiceans' nakedness, which stood out so hideously in the face of their own boast that they had need of nothing (v. 17). The white raiment may be understood as the righteousness of Christ (Gal. 3:27; see on Matt. 22:11; Rev. 3:4; cf. 4T 88). This figure must have had special significance for the Christians of Laodicea, for their city was famous for its black woolen cloth.

Shame of thy nakedness. See Ex. 20:26; Lam. 1:8; Eze. 16:36; 23:29; Nahum 3:5.

Eyesalve. Gr. *kollurion,* "a little roll." Ancient eyesalve came to be known by the shape of the package in which it was wrapped. Near Laodicea was a temple to the Phrygian god, Men Karou. A famous school of medicine grew up in connection with this temple, and here an eye powder might be secured. This fact may form the background of the figure here used.

The figurative eyesalve here offered the Laodiceans is heaven's antidote for their spiritual blindness. Its purpose is to open their eyes to their own true condition. This is the work of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:8-11). Only through His convicting work on the heart can spiritual blindness be removed. This eyesalve may also be thought of as representing that spiritual grace which enables the Christian to distinguish between truth and error, and between right and wrong. See 4T 88.

Mayest see. That is, see sin as God sees it and realize their own real condition—as a prerequisite to repentance.

19. I love. Gr. *phileō,* "to love [as a

friend, with all the warmth of personal affection]." Compare Christ's love as expressed toward the Philadelphia church by the word *agapaō* (v. 9). For the difference between these words see on Matt. 5: 43, 44; John 11:3; 21:15. This reassurance of Christ's favor shows that the Laodiceans are not without hope (see Additional Note at end of chapter). In fact, they are the special objects of His attention. His love for them is expressed by chastisement, through which He hopes to bring them to repentance (see Prov. 3:12).

I rebuke. The aim of all true remedial discipline is to bring conviction to the erring one and to encourage to a new course of action.

Chasten. Gr. *paideuō,* "to train children," "to punish," particularly as a parent punishes a child for the purpose of reforming and training him. Chastening comes to the Christian when Christ's rebuke is disregarded. Neither His rebuke nor His chastening is an expression of anger—as when a man loses his temper—but of vigorous love whose purpose is to bring sinners to repentance.

It would appear that the church at Laodicea had not as yet endured persecution, as her sister churches had, for there is no indication of suffering already endured. But Christ warns the church that it cannot continue in its halfhearted way without encountering remedial discipline. A little more than half a century after John's time it seems that the ancient Laodicean church did suffer persecution (see Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* iv. 26; v. 24).

Be zealous. Gr. *zēloō,* from the same root as the word *zestos,* "hot," which the Laodicean church had failed to be (v. 15). The Laodiceans are called upon to experience the warmth and enthusiasm that comes with true repentance, consecration, and devotion to Christ.

Repent. Gr. *metanoeō* (see on Matt. 3:2). The verb is in the singular, stressing the personal, individual nature of this admonition. Repentance, like salvation, can never be accomplished en masse. The spiritual experience of a relative or a friend can be of saving value to himself alone. This new attitude of sorrow for the past and zeal for the future is Christ's purpose for the Laodicean church. See Additional Note at end of chapter.

20. I stand. The form of the Greek verb implies that Christ has taken His stand at the door and remains there. He never tires of offering His blessed presence to all who will receive Him.

The door. Not the door of proffered opportunity in v. 8, nor the door of salvation (cf. Matt. 25:10; Luke 13:25). These doors God shuts and opens. The door here referred to is under the control of man, and each person may open or shut it at will. Christ awaits each man's decision. This is the door to a man's soul. By His love, through His word, and through His providences, Christ knocks at the door of the emotions; by His wisdom, at the door of the mind; by His lordship, at the door of the conscience; and by His promises, at the door of man's hopes.

This passage may also be thought of as referring to Christ standing at the door of human life, and indeed, of human history, ready to enter in and bless His waiting people with His presence (see Matt. 24:33; Luke 12:36; James 5:9).

Sup. Gr. *deipneō,* "to eat a meal," particularly the chief, or evening, meal (see on Luke 14:12). This word may be thought of as favoring the application of this verse to the great marriage feast of Rev. 19:9. The Jews commonly compared the bliss of the future life to a feast (see on Luke 14:15, 16).

With him. Few acts are more indicative of fellowship and communion than partaking of food together. In these words Christ promises to share our experiences and invites us to share His (see Gal. 2:20; Heb. 2:14-17).

21. Him that overcometh. See on ch. 2:7.

Grant to sit. See Matt. 19:28; Luke 22: 30; cf. 1 Cor. 6:2; see on Matt. 25:31.

In my throne. The overcomer will share in the glory and power of Christ, even as Christ shares in the glory and power of His Father.

I also overcame. See on John 16:33. Only on the basis of Christ's victory can man hope to overcome.

With my Father. See Mark 16:19; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2.

22. Hath an ear. See on ch. 2:7.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 3

The severe and uncompromising tone of the Laodicean message has led some to conclude that there is no hope for Christians of that "church" except by transferring their membership to the Philadelphia "church." Such a conclusion, however, does not accord either with the context or with sound principles of interpretation. See on ch. 1:11, and note the following:

1. This proposal assumes that the Philadelphia "church" exists simultaneously with the Laodicean "church." But if there is reason to assume that Philadelphia is synchronous with Laodicea, there is equal reason to assume the same for any or all the others. Similarly, if it is considered possible to migrate spiritually from Laodicea to Philadelphia, there is no valid reason why it should not be equally possible—and desirable—to migrate from Laodicea to Ephesus, for example, or from Sardis to Smyrna. Furthermore, if two or more periods are to be considered as existing simultaneously, the consecutive pattern is broken, the individual messages cease to have any specific chronological relationship to history, and there remains no valid basis for assuming that the Laodicean message has any more particular import for our time than for any other.

The message to any one of the seven "churches" is specifically applicable to the Christian church at a particular time in history only on the basis that the seven "churches" represent seven consecutive periods of time spanning the Christian Era, and that each message has a specific application to but one period of time. Only thus can Christians of any period be considered as belonging to a particular "church," and only thus can the Laodicean message be applied in a special way to the "church" in our time. Accordingly, when the seven "churches" are considered chronologically, as applicable to specific periods of history, Christians of one period cannot migrate spiritually to another.

2. The proposal that Laodiceans must leave their "church" and become Philadelphians in order to be saved is based on the idea that each "church" represents a particular spiritual state, or condition. Indeed, each of the seven does have its own problems, and the counsel, warning, and promise addressed to each are appropriate to it. It is equally true that some of the "churches" reflect a more desirable spiritual state, or condition, than do others.

Now, it is appropriate for the earnest Christian in any period of history to aspire to reflect the desirable characteristics of, and to be eligible for, the various promises made to all the "churches." Similarly, he should seek to avoid their undesirable characteristics and heed the threats and warnings addressed to them. But when considered from this point of view, the messages are timeless in nature and the earnest reader applies them to his own experience on the basis of how they meet his personal needs, not on the basis of the time in which he lives. He has no need of figuratively transferring his membership from one to another.

3. Generally speaking, words of commendation are addressed to each of the "churches" except Sardis and Laodicea, words of rebuke to each except Smyrna and Philadelphia, and words of promise to all seven. Thus the "churches" had both desirable and undesirable members. But in no instance does Christ counsel the loyal members of a supposedly disloyal "church" to transfer their spiritual membership to another whose spiritual condition appears preferable. If such were His intent, we would rightly expect a positive call to come out of Sardis or Laodicea, for instance, similar to the call to come out of Babylon (ch. 18:4). But Inspiration has recorded no such call with respect to Laodicea or any of the other "churches." In each instance the remedy for the prevailing evil has been, simply but emphatically, to "*repent.*" Loyal Christians in the Ephesus "church," which had "fallen" and "left" its "first love," were *not* counseled to migrate to Smyrna (see ch. 2:4, 5). Those of the Pergamum period, which harbored the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans (vs. 14, 15), were *not* advised to transfer their membership to Ephesus or Smyrna. The "church" at Sardis was all but dead (ch. 3:2), but its faithful members were *not* told to move to Philadelphia. Similarly, loyal Christians of

the Laodicean period are *not* instructed to become Philadelphians—at least not by Christ, the *true* Witness to the Laodiceans. But they *are* told, as Laodiceans, to "repent" and to find in Christ the remedy for all their defects of character (vs. 18-20).

The idea that the Christian can better his chances of salvation through the escape mechanism of spiritual migration and by effecting a form of righteousness superior, presumably, to that of other Christians, is clearly not in harmony with the teachings of our Lord (cf. Luke 18:9-14). In the parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43) the owner of the field ordered that both wheat and tares were to "grow together until the harvest" (v. 30). The tares were not to be uprooted by human hands, nor was the wheat to be transplanted to another field. Only when the angel reapers shall gather the wheat into the Owner's barn and burn the tares is there to be a general separation of the righteous from the wicked (see vs. 30, 39-42).

Members of the ancient church at Laodicea would not have improved their spiritual condition by moving to the city of Philadelphia. God's purpose for the Laodicean "church" does not include a plan for spiritual migration to some other of the apocalyptic "churches," but rather for a thoroughgoing transformation of heart and life (see on Rev. 3:18-20). Any other proposed solution to the ills of Laodicea is certain only to make a man a hypocrite.

4. It is true that no other "church" is administered so sharp a rebuke as the "church" of Laodicea, but it is also true that no other is offered more tender evidence of Christ's love, closer fellowship with Him, or a more glorious reward (see vs. 19-21). The Laodicean message is not one of unconditional rejection, any more than those addressed to the other "churches." If the spiritual poverty of the Laodiceans were beyond redress, they would not be offered "gold" by the True Witness. If their spiritual eyesight were beyond remedy, He would not offer them the heavenly "eyesalve." If their spiritual "nakedness" were beyond hope, He would not offer them His own "white raiment" (see on vs. 17, 18).

Obviously there are overcomers in Laodicea (v. 21) as in each of the preceding periods of church history, and it is to these overcomers *in* Laodicea that the promise is given to sit with Christ in His throne.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 GC 309; TM 155; 2T 176; 5T 73
1-3 TM 352; 5T 610; 6T 77; 8T 98
1-6 8T 302
2 AA 588; CM 46; TM 357; 2T 649; 8T 136
3 DA 635; GC 310, 371, 490
4 AA 524; AH 537; CH 362, 424; Ed 249; GC 484; 5T 368, 472, 481; 9T 115
4, 5 5T 692
5 AA 589; GC 483; MB 9; Te 187, 283, 292; 5T 333
7, 8 DA 113; EW 42, 86; GC 430, 435
7-12 8T 303
7-13 EW 30
8 AA 588; COL 117; CT 17; Ed 282; TM 107; 6T 467; 9T 182
9 EW 34, 273; 1T 59; 2T 42; 3T 355
10 GC 560, 619; 5T 297; 6T 404
10, 11 AA 588
11 ML 322; 5T 266, 501
12 DA 549; MH 516; 1T 59
14, 15 AH 438; 1T 190, 195, 480, 485; 2T 125
14-16 2T 175
14-17 3T 252
14-20 EW 107, 270
14-21 TM 23; 1T 186-195; 3T 252-293
14-22 8T 304
15 CG 152, 547; LS 322; TM 464; 3T 256, 259; 4T 51; 5T 485, 627
15, 16 MB 37; TM 130; 1T 126, 162; 4T 87; 9T 140
15-17 1T 182
15-18 CW 99
15-19 3T 42; 4T 227; 6T 77
16 6T 408
16, 17 5T 484
17 CW 33, 36; DA 300; EW 118; GC 388; GW 310; MB 7; 1T 407, 591; 2T 141, 489; 3T 201, 210, 255, 451; 5T 101, 484, 682; 6T 82
17, 18 COL 117, 158; DA 280; 1T 331; 4T 88; 5T 214, 265; 8T 104, 250
18 COL 311; CT 42; EW 108; ML 311; TM 149; 1T 166, 485; 2T 36; 3T 254, 536; 4T 89, 559; 5T 105, 233; 6T 426
18, 19 1T 142; 6T 368
18-21 RC 52; 3T 257
19 MB 11; 1T 141, 153, 569; 3T 256, 258, 259; 5T 683
19, 20 8T 105
20 AA 587; AH 350; COL 235; DA 161, 489; MB 18, 151; MH 516; 1T 143, 188; 2T 216, 224; 3T 543; 5T 484; 6T 262
20, 21 3T 260
21 AA 543, 589; COL 117; DA 549; GC 416; GW 39; MB 17; MYP 116; SL 94; Te 82, 190, 282; 1T 144, 303, 680; 3T 325, 336, 380, 480; 4T 39, 215, 346; 5T 511; 6T 298

CHAPTER 4

2 *John seeth the throne of God in heaven.*
4 *The four and twenty elders.* 6 *The four beasts full of eyes before and behind.* 10 *The elders lay down their crowns, and worship him that sat on the throne.*

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him;* and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

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1. After this. That is, after John had seen the vision of chs. 1:10 to 3:22. The words "after this" do not imply any chronological relationship between the closing events of the preceding vision and the one about to be related.

I looked. Or, "I saw," an expression John uses repeatedly to introduce new scenes or important new symbols (see on ch. 1:2).

A door. Here the door, apparently, into the throne room of the universe (see v. 2; cf. on v. 5).

Opened. Or, "standing open."

In heaven. Not, "into heaven," as if John were on the outside looking in. Inasmuch as, looking within, he beheld the throne of God, this must have been a door opening upon the throne room of the universe. This throne room has been identified as the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.

From a consideration of the state of the church on earth (chs. 1-3) John's attention is now directed to a symbolic vision of the throne of God in heaven. That the description of God's throne and the scene about it in chs. 4 and 5 is to be understood symbolically, rather than literally, is clear, for instance, from ch. 5:6, where Christ is described as "a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes," yet alive and able to come and take the book from the hand of God. Inasmuch as this is obviously a highly symbolic figure, it follows that the whole prophetic incident is to be interpreted in the same way. In symbol the prophet can soar above the mundane and material objects of human life and reach the higher levels of the mind and heart with impressions of heaven that

defy expression in literal language (see on Eze. 1:10).

The first voice. The meaning of the original is more clearly expressed thus: "Behold, . . . the first voice which I had heard as a trumpet speaking with me, was saying . . ." This voice is doubtless that of ch. 1:10, which introduced the first vision and now introduces the second.

Come up hither. An invitation to John to enter into vision, directing his senses away from his earthly surroundings and focusing them on heavenly things.

Hereafter. That is, not necessarily after the fulfillment of the previous vision, but from the standpoint of John's own time. Consequently, this statement parallels that of ch. 1:1 (see comment there).

2. In the spirit. Gr. *en pneumati* (see on ch. 1:10). John goes into vision a second time. How long a period of time elapsed between the first vision and this cannot be known.

Was set. Rather, "was sitting." The throne is already in position.

One sat. John's reverent reticence about the Ruler of the universe, in avoiding terms that might seem anthropomorphic, is apparent from the fact that he describes Him simply by the participle *kathēmenos,* "sitting," without stating what or who was sitting. He implies only that a presence was upon the throne. Such a reference to the Father stands in striking contrast with the detailed description of the Son (ch. 1:13-16); but the Son is human as well as divine, and can therefore be described appropriately in human terms. See v. 3; cf. chs. 6:16; 7:10.

3. He that sat. Here again only the participle is used (see on v. 2).

Jasper. Gr. *iaspis,* not precisely the modern jasper, but a stone described by the ancient naturalist, Pliny, as translucent (*Natural History* xxxvii). John has recourse repeatedly to precious stones for describing brilliant colors, for sunlight shining on such stones produced some of the most brilliant colors known to man in his day. In the present instance, the *iaspis* probably describes a bright, flashing light, more notable for its brilliance than its color.

Sardine stone. The carnelian or some other stone of a reddish color. Pliny (*ibid.*) notes that this stone was to be found at Sardis, and accordingly took the name of that city. Here it describes a brilliant red light.

Rainbow. Compare Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God (Eze. 1:26-28).

Like unto an emerald. That is, of a green color. The brilliance of the light flashing forth from the presence on the throne is tempered by the soft green light of an encircling rainbow. This rainbow represents the combination of justice and mercy that characterizes God (see Ed 115; cf. COL 148).

4. Seats. Gr. *thronoi,* "thrones." The 24 elders are seen seated upon 24 thrones surrounding the throne of God.

Four and twenty elders. This scene is reminiscent of the LXX of Isa. 24:23, "The Lord shall reign . . . and before the elders He shall be glorified." The fact that the elders here portrayed are clothed in white garments, which may be symbolic of righteousness (see on Rev. 3:4), and have on their heads "crowns" (*stephanoi,* emblems of victory; see on ch. 2:10), has led some to suggest that they represent redeemed men.

One interpretation understands the description of the heavenly throne in chs. 4 and 5 to be fixed at a time before the events symbolized by the seven seals begin to take place. On this basis, if the 24 elders are human beings, it follows that they must be men already in heaven in John's day. Adventists have often identified them with the saints who arose from their graves at the time of Christ's resurrection (Matt. 27:52, 53; cf. Eph. 4:8), since that is a group known to have already been resurrected. The main resurrection is still future (1 Thess. 4:16). It is certain, therefore, that the presence of human beings in heaven cannot be taken as evidence that the resurrection of all the redeemed must precede the events portrayed in the seals.

Another interpretation compares the 24 elders with the 24 courses of the Levitical priesthood. As the priests ministered before God in the earthly sanctuary, so John sees 24 elders ministering in the heavenly sanctuary.

Another suggestion is that the 24 elders symbolize Israel in its fullest sense (see on Rev. 7:4)—two elders from each tribe, one symbolizing literal Israel, God's people before the cross; and the other, spiritual Israel, the Christian church, God's people since the cross. Thus they may be likened to the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles. This view would emphasize the symbolic character of these figures, instead of making them out to be literal saints now in heaven (see on v. 1).

Some interpreters see the 24 elders as angels, not as human beings. They point out that the elders are portrayed as ministering the prayers of the saints (ch. 5:8), a work, they say, that would hardly be committed to humans.

White raiment. See on ch. 3:18.

Crowns. See the foregoing on "four and twenty elders."

Gold. Here, perhaps, simply a token of preciousness.

5. Lightnings and thunderings and voices. A favorite expression with John (see chs. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18), probably portraying power and majesty (see Job 37:4, 5; Ps. 29:3, 4; Eze. 1:13).

Seven lamps of fire. Or, "seven fiery lamps." See on ch. 5:6. Although these bear a superficial resemblance to the seven golden "candlesticks" of ch. 1:12, these are called "lamps" (*lampades*) rather than "candlesticks," or "lampstands" (*luchnia;* see on ch. 1:12). Furthermore, they are clearly said to represent the seven Spirits of God, whereas those in ch. 1 represent the seven churches (see v. 20). On the basis of this symbolism some have identified the "door" (ch. 4:1) as one opening into the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary.

Seven Spirits. See on ch. 1:4.

6. Sea of glass. This description has much in common with Ezekiel's vision of the throne of God, which rested upon a "firmament" (Eze. 1:26). In ancient times glass was much more valuable than it is today. Here, it represents the clear, crystalline appearance of the surface on which the throne stood.

Crystal. Gr. *krustallos,* a word meaning either "crystal," a colorless, transparent mineral, or "ice." What John sees is a vast shimmering expanse, gloriously reflecting the red and green radiance about the throne. Compare the vision of Ezekiel (ch. 1:22).

Midst of the throne. Perhaps, like Ezekiel's cherubim (Eze. 1:22, 26), these beasts were seen under the throne as well as around it. The symbolism here is in harmony with ancient Semitic thought. Thus a sarcophagus from Byblus, from the end of the 2d millennium B.C., portrays a Phoenician king seated on a throne supported by an animal cherub (see W. F. Albright, "What Were the Cherubim?" *The Biblical Archaeologist* 1:1 [Feb., 1938], pp. 1-3). See Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Isa. 37:16.

Beasts. Gr. *zōa,* "living beings." The word *zōa* does not indicate to what order of creatures these four belong. However, they closely resemble those of Ezekiel's vision (see on Eze. 1:5-26), which Ezekiel calls cherubim (ch. 10:20-22).

Full of eyes. See Eze. 1:18; 10:12. This may be understood as a symbol of the intelligence and ceaseless vigilance of heavenly beings.

Inasmuch as the symbol of eyes is plainly drawn from Ezekiel, it is possible to understand it here also in terms of Hebrew thought. Nine times in the OT the Hebrew word *'ayin,* "eye," is used in the sense of "color," or "brilliance" (Prov. 23:31; Eze. 1:4, 7, 16, 22, 27; 8:2; 10:9; Dan. 10:6). This suggests that in describing the four beasts as "full of eyes," John may mean that their appearance was one of shining brilliance.

7. Lion. Here each of the four beings appears with one of the four faces that were characteristic of each of the cherubim in Ezekiel's vision (see Eze. 1:10; 10:14). For a discussion of the meaning of these symbols see on Eze. 1:10.

8. Six wings. The cherubim of Ezekiel's vision each had four wings (Eze. 1:6; 10:21), whereas the seraphim of Isaiah had six (Isa. 6:2). Wings may be understood as indicating the speed with which God's heavenly creatures execute their errands (cf. Heb. 1:14).

Full of eyes. See on v. 6.

Rest not. Men customarily work by day and rest by night, but "he that keepeth

Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. 121:4). The divine power upholding the universe never relaxes.

Day and night. Night brings an intermission to most human activities, but it has no effect on the ceaseless stream of praise to God that issues forth from the beings of heaven.

Holy, holy, holy. This is also the cry of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision (see on Isa. 6:3). There is no valid reason for taking this triple ascription of praise as implying the Trinity, for it is directed to the presence on the throne, the Father. The second and third persons of the Godhead are here represented by other symbols (see Rev. 4:5; 5:6).

Lord God Almighty. See on ch. 1:8.

Was, and is, and is to come. See on ch. 1:4.

9. Those beasts. See on v. 6. The praise uttered here is antiphonal. It is initiated by heavenly creatures, those nearest to God.

Thanks. Heavenly beings as well as men owe God thanks, for He has given them life. They exist by His pleasure. In the ultimate sense God owes His creatures nothing; they owe everything to Him.

Him that sat. See on v. 2.

Who liveth for ever. Compare the OT expression "the living God" (Joshua 3:10; Ps. 42:2; 84:2). God is the source of all life, and the fact that He "liveth for ever" is the basis of His unceasing sustenance of nature (see on John 1:4; Rev. 4:8).

10. Four and twenty elders. See on v. 4.

Him that sat. See on v. 2.

Liveth for ever. See on v. 9.

Cast their crowns. See on v. 4.

11. Worthy. God is "worthy" to receive praise from His creatures, because He has given them life and all else they possess. He has made them what they are.

O Lord. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "our Lord and God." Those who hold the view that the 24 elders are human beings point out that the use of the title *kurios,* "Lord," by the elders and not by the four beasts may be significant, for *kurios* is the Greek counterpart of the Heb. *Yahweh,* the divine name by which God revealed Himself to His people (see Ex. 6:2, 3). Such a title, they assert, is particularly fitting for the praises of men. See Vol. I, pp. 171, 172.

For thy pleasure. Or, "by thy will." It pleased God to bring the universe into existence and to give life to its creatures. He saw that it was good to do so. There was nothing desirable from His point of view in being alone in an empty universe. It pleased Him that the universe should be peopled with intelligent beings, capable of appreciating and reflecting His infinite love and perfect character. This was His purpose in creating them.

Are and were created. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading, "they were, and they were created." By the expression "they were" John doubtless refers to the existence of the universe after God had brought it into being. God created and now sustains all things (see on Col. 1:17).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2, 3 PP 107
3 DA 493; Ed 115; PK 370; TM 157; 6T 340; 8T 23
5 GC 414; PP 356; SR 377
8 CT 402; EW 116, 288; GC 645; SR 412
10 EW 191, 289, 295; ML 352; 8T 254
11 GC 437; PK 70

CHAPTER 5

1 *The book sealed with seven seals:* 9 *which only the Lamb that was slain is worthy to open.* 12 *Therefore the elders praise him,* 9 *and confess that he redeemed them with his blood.*

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

1. I saw. See on ch. 4:1. The setting of this chapter is the same as that of ch. 4. However, where ch. 4 largely describes a scene centering on God's throne, ch. 5 focuses upon the Lamb and the sealed scroll.

"The fifth chapter of Revelation needs to be closely studied. It is of great importance to those who shall act a part in the work of God for these last days" (9T 267; see on vs. 7, 13).

Him that sat. See on ch. 4:2.

Book. Gr. *biblion,* "scroll," "book." In NT times the most common type of book was the papyrus roll, and it is doubtless such a "book" that John sees here. The codex, or book of leaves fastened together at one edge, is not known to have been used by bookmakers until the 2d century A.D. See Vol. V, p. 113.

Within and on the backside. Some commentators have suggested that this passage should be punctuated with a comma after the word "within" rather than after the word "backside." The meaning would then be that the "book" was written on the inside, and sealed on the backside, or outside.

Punctuated as in the KJV, the passage would indicate that the roll was written on both sides. This interpretation appears to have merit for two reasons. First, the Greek expression *esōthen kai opisthen,* "within and on the backside," seems to be a unit made up of two similar-sounding adverbs, which would imply that they are to be understood together. Second, ancient papyrus scrolls, because of the nature of the material, seldom exceeded 30 ft. in length. Normally they were written on the inside only, but because of this limitation in size, occasionally the backside of the papyrus also was used if the matter to be recorded exceeded the available space on the inside. The present passage seems to indicate such a situation, and would imply that there is scarcely space to contain the record presented in this "book."

Seven seals. The number seven being a symbol of perfection (see on ch. 1:11), this statement would imply that the "book" was perfectly sealed. In fact, no one but the Lamb could open it (see ch. 5:3, 5).

According to COL 294, the decision of

the Jewish rulers to reject Christ "was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne." Apparently, then, that sealed book includes more than a record of events during the period of the Christian church, though the prophecies of the Revelation are specifically concerned with the latter. See on ch. 6:1.

2. Who is worthy? The ability to open the book is not a question of strength or dignity or position, but of victory and moral worth (see on v. 5; cf. ch. 4:11).

3. No man. Gr. *oudeis,* "not one," including not only men but all beings throughout the universe.

In heaven. These words introduce a literary device employed to describe all of God's universe.

To look thereon. That is, to read it and thus to reveal its contents.

4. I wept much. These words reflect John's intense emotional reaction to the drama now passing before his eyes. What he saw and heard was very real to him.

No man. Gr. *oudeis,* see on v. 3.

Worthy. See on v. 2.

And to read. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words.

5. Elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Weep not. Or, "stop weeping." The Greek suggests that John was already in tears.

Lion of the tribe of Juda. This title is probably based on Gen. 49:9. Christ was born of the tribe of Judah (see on Matt. 1:2). The figure of a lion signifies strength (Rev. 9:8, 17; 10:3; 13:2, 5), and Christ has won the victory (see below on "hath prevailed") in the great controversy with evil. This is what gives Him the right to open the book (see on ch. 5:7).

It may be noted, further, that in the role of "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" Christ appears as the One who "prevailed," the triumphant One, the One who champions the cause of His people. In v. 6 He appears as "a Lamb as it had been slain," the One who had redeemed them.

Root of David. This title is drawn from Isa. 11:1, 10, which speaks, literally, of the "shoot out of the stock [LXX, "root"] of Jesse" and the "root of Jesse," David's father. In Rom. 15:12 Paul applies the latter figure to Christ, implying that Christ is a second David. David was Israel's greatest king and military hero. The Davidic concept of the Messiah was essentially that of a conqueror who would restore the kingdom to Israel (Matt. 21:9; cf. Acts 1:6). Although Christ did not restore a literal kingdom to the Jews, His victory in the great controversy with Satan does restore the kingdom in an infinitely greater and more important sense. Therefore, from the point of view of the present passage, this title is most fitting.

Hath prevailed. Gr. *nikaō,* "to conquer," "to be victorious." This points directly to Christ's victory in the great controversy with Satan, which is the basis of His right to open the book. Inasmuch as no one else in the entire universe could do this (v. 3), His victory is unique. An angel could not have taken Christ's place, for the basic issue in the great controversy is the integrity of the character of God, which is expressed in His law. Neither angel nor man could have accomplished this vindication, for they themselves are subject to the law (see PP 66). Only Christ, who is God, and of whose character the law is an expression, could achieve such a vindication of the divine character. This fact is central to the thought of ch. 5 (see on vs. 9-13).

6. In the midst. This may be interpreted as meaning that the Lamb was standing between the living creatures and the throne, among the elders. But such an arrangement is difficult to visualize when compared with ch. 4:4, 6. It is also possible to understand that the Lamb appeared in the midst of all. This is probably the better explanation, as He now becomes the focal point of the vision (cf. Acts 7:56).

Four beasts. See on ch. 4:6.

Elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Lamb. Gr. *arnion,* a word used 29 times in the Revelation, and only once elsewhere in the NT (John 21:15). The thought is the same, however, as that conveyed by the word *amnos,* "lamb," in John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19, and the LXX of Isa. 53:7.

John has just heard Christ called a lion and a conqueror, but as he looks he sees a lamb! Such a dramatic contrast may suggest that Christ's victory is not one of physical force but of moral excellence, for

above all things else He is declared to be "worthy" (see on Rev. 5:2). It is the vicarious sacrifice of His sinless life, symbolized by that of a spotless lamb, rather than any demonstration of force, that has gained for Him the victory in the great controversy with evil.

The NT characterization of Christ as "the Lamb" appears only in the writings of John, although both Philip and Peter apply to Him the OT symbol of a lamb (Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19).

As it had been slain. John probably sees the Lamb with His death wound still bleeding, as a lamb slain for sacrifice in the sanctuary service. The word "as" indicates that this is a symbol. John is not saying that a slaughtered lamb really stands before the throne of God in heaven. Rather, he is describing what he sees in symbolic vision. Since this is apparently true of the Lamb, it follows that other features of this vision, the seven lamps (ch. 4:5), the four living creatures (ch. 4:6), and the book (ch. 5:1) are also symbolic (see on Eze. 1:10; Rev. 4:1). The form of the verb translated "had been slain" implies that the act of slaughter had taken place in the past, and that its results remained. Thus, though Christ's death is historically in the past, its results for mankind are ever fresh and availing. For the significance of the figure of Jesus as the Lamb of God see on John 1:29.

Seven horns. Seven is a number signifying perfection. Horns may be understood as symbols of strength and glory (see on Lam. 2:3). Thus the seven horns of the Lamb would indicate that He is perfect in strength.

Seven eyes. A symbol of perfect wisdom and intelligence. These eyes are identified as the seven Spirits of God, an expression used for the Holy Spirit (see on ch. 1:4). In ch. 4:5 a different symbol, "seven lamps," is used.

Sent forth. See Zech. 1:10; 6:5; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Gal. 4:6.

7. He came and took. Literally, "he came and he has taken." This is the focal point of chs. 4 and 5—that Christ, by taking the book from the hand of God, does what no other being in the universe can do (see on ch. 5:5). This action is symbolic of His victory over evil, and when He does this the great antiphonal hymn of all creation resounds throughout the universe (see on vs. 9-13).

John's words, "he came and he has taken," are the words of a man whose pen can scarcely keep pace with the dramatic scenes passing before his eyes. In breathless wonder and excitement he declares that Christ "has taken" the book. See on v. 13.

The book. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words. However, that it is the book that the Lamb takes is clear from v. 8.

Him that sat. See on ch. 4:2.

8. When he had taken. This is the point at which the heavenly host responds (see on v. 7).

Four beasts. See on ch. 4:6.

Elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Harps. Gr. *kitharai,* "lyres," instruments often used to accompany singing (see Vol. III, pp. 34-36), not harps. However, textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading *kithara,* "a lyre"; that is, each elder held a lyre in his hand. Mention here of these instruments is natural, in connection with the hymn that is about to be sung (vs. 9, 10).

Vials. Gr. *phialai,* "bowls," or "saucers," the dishes in which offerings were commonly presented. According to Josephus, *phialai* of incense were placed on the showbread in the sanctuary (*Antiquities* iii. 6. 6 [143]). That the prayers of the saints are contained in golden receptacles may indicate the preciousness with which heaven regards them.

Odours. That is, incense.

Prayers of saints. Their possession of "harps" and of incense dishes representing the prayers of saints suggests that the elders represent Christ's triumphant church on earth, lifting its voice in song and prayer. See on vs. 9, 10; see PP 353.

9. They. That is, the 24 elders and perhaps also the 4 beasts (see below on "us").

A new song. The song was new in the sense that it was entirely different from any sung before. This expression is common in the OT (see Ps. 33:3; 40:3; Isa. 42:10). Here it is particularly fitting, for it represents the song growing out of a unique experience—salvation through the

victory of Jesus Christ (see on Rev. 5:5). It is the "new song" of those who have a "new name" (chs. 2:17; 3:12), who inhabit the "new Jerusalem" (ch. 21:2), when all things are made "new" (ch. 21:5).

Worthy. See on v. 2. The heavenly chorus leads out in the recognition that God has been vindicated from the accusations of Satan, through the victory of His Son. Some see in the 24 elders representatives of the saints, who themselves were once captives of evil. The saints appear before the onlooking universe as witnesses to the righteousness and the grace of God. See on Rev. 5:5; cf. Eph. 3:10.

Thou wast slain. The death of Christ, with its resulting salvation for man—which in turn vindicates the character of God—is the basis for the worthiness of Christ (see on v. 2).

Us. In spite of the fact that textual evidence attests retaining this word, translators and commentators generally omit it on the basis of other textual evidence in v. 10 (see comment there).

By thy blood. See on Rom. 3:25; 5:9.

10. Us. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "them," with reference to the redeemed of v. 9. The reading "us" was probably taken by the KJV translators from the Latin Vulgate. It is thus evident that in v. 10 the ones speaking do not specifically include themselves as "kings and priests." It is not impossible, however, that they may be speaking of themselves in the third person, but this is not the natural conclusion to which the reading of the ancient manuscripts points. According to the preferred reading vs. 9, 10 may be translated as follows: "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open its seals, because thou wast slain and didst purchase to God by thy blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and didst make them to our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign upon the earth" (see below under "kings" and "we shall reign"). The kingdom is doubtless the spiritual kingdom of grace (see on Matt. 4:17; 5:3; Rev. 1:6).

Kings. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "a kingdom" (see on ch. 1:6).

Priests. See on ch. 1:6.

We shall reign. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "they shall reign" (see above under "us").

On the earth. The time of the reign on earth is not here specified, but in chs. 20; 21 is shown to be in the postmillennial period.

11. Many angels. In response to the testimony of the 4 beasts and the 24 elders, the hosts of heaven join in acclaiming the worthiness of the Lamb. Thus God is vindicated before the angels, who, since the first accusations of Satan in heaven, have not fully understood His action in banishing Satan and saving men (see DA 761, 764).

The beasts. See on ch. 4:6. These living creatures take part in the acclamation of praise to God (ch. 5:12), which expresses appreciation for the death of Christ.

Ten thousand. This is evidently not meant to be a literal number, but rather implies numberless hosts. It is probably drawn from Dan. 7:10, and may be compared with a passage in the pseudepigraphical book of Enoch (see Vol. V, p. 87), ch. 14:22: "ten thousand times ten thousand (stood) before Him" (R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 197). See Heb. 12:22.

12. Worthy. See on vs. 2, 9.

Lamb. See on v. 6.

Power. Gr. *dunamis,* here, the power of God in action. The doxology of the heavenly hosts is sevenfold. Inasmuch as seven signifies perfection, and is used repeatedly in this vision as well as throughout the Revelation (see on ch. 1:11), it may be that the sevenfold praise of ch. 5:12 implies that the praise of heaven is complete and perfect.

Riches. Compare on Phil. 4:19.

Wisdom. Gr. *sophia* (cf. on James 1:5).

Strength. Gr. *ischus,* which here probably refers to divine energy as potential.

13. Every creature. That is, every created being. The chorus swells, and in response to the cries of praise from the hosts of heaven, all creation joins in adoration of the Father and the Son. Christ is victor, and the character of God is vindicated before the whole universe (see on v. 11).

To what point in the great controversy do the symbolic scenes portrayed in chs. 4 and 5 refer? According to DA 834 the

song was sung by the angels when Christ was installed at the right hand of God after His ascension. Also, according to AA 601, 602; GC 671, this song will be sung by the saints at the establishment of the new earth and by the redeemed and angels in eternity (8T 44; cf. PP 541; GC 545, 678). This varied setting suggests that the vision of chs. 4 and 5 is not to be thought of as representing any one specific occurrence in heaven, but as a timeless, highly symbolic portrayal of the victory of Christ and the resulting vindication of God. When so understood, this vision may be seen as representing the attitude of heaven toward the Son and His work since the cross, an attitude that rises to a crescendo as the great controversy comes to its victorious climax. For the nature of symbolic visions see on Eze. 1:10.

In heaven, and on the earth. From the standpoint of ancient cosmology, heaven, earth, under the earth, and sea constitute the entire universe. All creation will finally recognize the righteousness of God (see GC 670, 671).

Blessing. The four ascriptions of v. 13 are parallel to four in the sevenfold doxology of v. 12.

Power. Gr. *kratos,* "power [to rule]," "dominion," parallel to "strength" in v. 12 but differing from it in that *kratos* represents divine power in action. It is such power that earthly creatures witness (see on v. 12).

Him that sitteth. See on ch. 4:2.

The Lamb. See on v. 6. The fact that the Lamb is adored here on the same basis as the Father implies their equality (see Phil. 2:9-11).

14. Amen. See on Matt. 5:18. Both the antiphonal praises and the following "Amen" portrayed here were characteristic of early Christian worship. Pliny, writing less than two decades after John, records that in their worship services the Christians "sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god" (*Letters* x. 96; Loeb ed., vol. 2, p. 403). Describing the celebration of the Lord's Supper, Justin Martyr, writing in the 2d century, says that after the leader of the congregation had offered prayers and thanksgivings, "the people assent, saying Amen" (*First Apology* 67; *ANF,* vol. 1, p. 186).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-5 COL 294
1-14 9T 267
5 DA 243; PP 236; TM 115
5, 6 AA 589
6 TM 124
9 GC 652
10 EW 290
11 CH 32; GC 479, 511, 641, 678; MB 108; ML 88, 307; PP 36; SR 433
11-14 6T 59
12 AH 541; DA 131, 834; GC 647, 648, 671; MH 507; ML 348; SL 91
12, 13 AA 601; MH 506; 8T 44
13 CT 246; DA 835; GC 545, 678; PP 541; SR 433; 2T 215; 6T 368

CHAPTER 6

1 *The opening of the seals in order, and what followed thereupon, containing a prophecy to the end of the world.*

AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one

another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

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1. **I saw.** See on ch. 4:1. The vision continues with the same setting presented in chs. 4 and 5, but a new phase of action now begins. The seals of the book (ch. 5:1-5) are being opened.

The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

Opened one of the seals. The following statement throws light on the significance of the seals: "Their [the Jewish leaders] decision [to crucify Christ] was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (COL 294). This statement shows that, among other things, the book records the actions of the Jews at the trial of Christ, and that in the great final judgment (see on ch. 20:11-15) these enemies of Christ will be confronted with the record of their evil deeds. It seems reasonable to conclude that the book contains a record also of other significant events in the great controversy through the ages. It appears that John was given a preview of certain of these events. In symbolic form the history of the great controversy was presented before him until it reaches its great climax in the vindication of God's character at the time of the final judgment (ch. 20:11-15; see on ch. 5:13). The fact that Christ "prevailed to open the book" (ch. 5:5) means that He is conqueror in the controversy and Lord of history. Compare GC 666-672.

Like the messages to the seven churches, the scenes revealed when the seals are opened may be regarded as having both a specific and a general application (see on ch. 1:11). The scenes may be viewed as particularly significant of successive phases in the history of the church on earth.

Beasts. See on ch. 4:6.

Come and see. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) as to whether the words "and see" should be included. If they are retained, the command is addressed to

John; if not, it is addressed probably to the horse and his rider (v. 2), who, upon being addressed, come forth upon the scene of action. The same division of evidence appears in vs. 3, 5, 7.

2. A white horse. The symbols of the four horses in the first four seals (vs. 2-8) have often been compared with the four horses in Zechariah's vision (Zech. 6:2, 3). There are some similarities in the symbolism employed, but there are also dissimilarities. The order in which the horses are named is different. In Revelation the horses bear riders; in Zechariah they draw chariots. The application of the symbols is also quite dissimilar (see on Zech. 6).

Commentators have held two main views with regard to the interpretation of the first horse and its rider. One group understands this symbol as representing the church in the apostolic age (c. A.D. 31-100), when its purity of faith (suggested by the color white) and its zeal led it forth to make the greatest spiritual conquests in Christian history. Probably no century since the first of the Christian Era has seen such brilliant expansion of the kingdom of God. The bow in the rider's hand would symbolize conquest, and the crown (*stephanos;* see on Rev. 2:10), victory. So swiftly was the gospel carried that when writing to the Colossians about the year A.D. 62 Paul declared that the good news had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23; cf. AA 48, 578).

Another group of commentators believes that the horses and riders do not represent the church as such but that they represent various adverse conditions under which the church has lived and through which, by God's grace, it has survived. In Biblical symbolism the horse is connected with war (see Joel 2:1, 4, 5), and the equipment of the horseman on the white horse indicates that the rider is a warrior. Both the crown of the rider and the whiteness of the horse may be understood as implying victory. Thus the first horseman is taken to represent a time when the people of God lived in a world characterized by military conquest and dominion, when Rome, going forth "conquering, and to conquer," maintained the leading world power.

Seventh-day Adventists have generally held that the first horse represents the church in the apostolic age.

A bow. A sign of warfare.

Crown. Gr. *stephanos* (see on ch. 2:10).

Conquering, and to conquer. Literally, "conquering, and that he might conquer." This implies continued victory.

3. Second beast. See on ch. 4:6. In turn, each of the living creatures announces one of the four horsemen.

Come and see. See on v. 1.

4. Red. The symbolism of the second horseman well portrays conditions under which the church found itself from about A.D. 100-313 (cf. on ch. 2:10). The violent persecutions it suffered at the hands of the Roman Caesars are well characterized by a horseman who carries a "great sword" and has power "to take peace from the earth." If white represents purity of faith (see on ch. 6:2), then red may be regarded as a corruption of faith through the introduction of various heresies (see Vols. IV, p. 835; VI, pp. 43-46, 51-58, 64-67).

According to another view the color of this horse is suggestive of blood. As the first horseman may be taken as symbolizing the glory of military conquest (see on v. 2), so the second may be regarded as portraying other aspects of warfare—loss of peace and abundance of slaughter. Such would be the inevitable result of the conquest portrayed by the first horseman, if he is understood to symbolize the conquest and dominion of Rome.

Seventh-day Adventists have generally held the first view.

Sword. Gr. *machaira,* a large knife or short sword used for fighting. Compare the use of the word in Matt. 10:34; John 18:10; etc.

5. Third beast. See on chs. 4:6; 6:3.

Come and see. See on v. 1.

A black horse. If the white horse implied victory, or its color purity (see on v. 2), so the black horse may be thought of as indicating defeat or its color further corruption of faith.

A pair of balances. Gr. *zugos,* "a yoke," here used for the crossbar of a balance. This symbol may be thought of as characterizing the spiritual condition within the church after the legalization of Chris-

tianity in the 4th century, when church and state were united. Following this union much of the concern of the church was with secular matters, and in many instances a dearth of spirituality ensued. For a history of this period see pp. 18-25.

These balances may also be interpreted as a symbol of undue concern for the material necessities of life. No longer does warfare result in victory, as with the first horseman (see on v. 2), or represent largely bloodshed, as with the second (see on v. 4), but now an even more dreaded result has followed—famine.

6. A measure. Gr. *choinix,* a measure approximately equivalent to a quart (see Vol. V, p. 50). This amount of grain represented a day's ration of food for a workingman.

A penny. Gr. *dēnarios,* a coin worth some 11 cents in terms of modern monetary values (see Vol. V, p. 49). The Roman "penny" represented a day's wages for an ordinary laborer (see Matt. 20:2). Hence a day's ration of wheat for a day's labor represented barely sufficient food for the laborer and his family. Much less would be actual starvation. According to grain prices quoted by Cicero (*Against Verres* iii. 81) for Sicily, the prices mentioned by John were about 8 to 16 times the normal prices. However, in spite of famine, survival is possible. So God has ever preserved His children in times of need.

As applied to the period of Christian history following the legalization of Christianity, about A.D. 313-538 (cf. p. 753), the words of the unidentified speaker may be interpreted as indicating a general preoccupation with material things.

Barley. This grain was cheaper than wheat, as is indicated here by the relative prices (see 2 Kings 7:18). Barley was a common food of the poor, and was used as feed for animals (see on John 6:9).

Hurt not. The voice that announces the high cost of wheat and barley also commands that oil and wine are not to be uselessly destroyed.

The oil and the wine. These were the two common liquids used as food in the ancient world. Some have interpreted them as symbols of faith and love, which were to be preserved in the face of the materialism that dominated the church after its legalization in the 4th century.

7. Fourth seal. Compare on chs. 5:1; 6:1.

Fourth beast. See on chs. 4:6; 6:3.

Come and see. See on v. 1.

8. Pale. The color of fear and death. With the pale horse the times of distress reach a fearful climax (see on vs. 2, 4, 5).

Hell. Gr. *hadēs,* "the abode of the dead" (see on Matt. 11:23). Death and hell are here personified and represented, the one as a rider on the horse, and the other as following along.

Fourth part of the earth. Probably signifying a wide area of the earth.

Sword. Gr. *rhomphaia* (see on ch. 1:16). The series—sword, hunger, death (or pestilence; see below on "death"), and beasts —may be thought of as portraying the progressive deterioration of civilization that follows warfare. The ravages of the sword, killing men and destroying crops, produce hunger; hunger, resulting in the breakdown of health, brings pestilence; and when pestilence has taken its toll, human society is so weakened that it cannot protect itself against the inroads of wild beasts.

When applied to a particular period of Christian history, the fourth horseman seems to portray a situation especially characteristic of the period from about 538 to 1517, the beginning of the Reformation (cf. pp. 753, 754; see on ch. 2:18).

Death. The phrase "to kill . . . with death" seems hardly to make good sense. This difficulty probably is resolved best by understanding the word translated "death," *thanatos,* here, as meaning "pestilence." The LXX repeatedly translates the Hebrew word *deber,* "pestilence," by *thanatos* (see Lev. 26:25; Jer. 21:6; Eze. 5:12). John, to whom Semitic thought was more natural than Greek, apparently follows the LXX usage here rather than a strictly Greek definition of the word.

9. The altar. The altar presented in the prophetic picture was probably reminiscent of the bronze altar of the Hebrew sanctuary, and the martyrs may be thought of as sacrifices presented to God. As the blood of the victims was poured out at the base of that altar (see Lev. 4:7), and "the life [LXX, *psuchē,* "soul"] of the flesh is in the blood" (ch. 17:11), so the souls

of those who have given themselves in martyrdom may be thought of as being beneath the altar. Later Jewish tradition set forth the idea that Israel's dead were buried, as it were, under the altar, and those buried under the altar were interred, as it were, under the throne of glory (see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament,* vol. 3, p. 803).

Some hold that the altar should be identified with the one mentioned in Rev. 8:3.

Souls. Gr. *psuchai,* for a discussion of which see on Matt. 10:28. It should be remembered that John was viewing pictorial representations, and that the rules governing the interpretation of such prophecies must be kept in mind when the meaning of the various symbols is sought (see on Eze. 1:10). John saw an altar at the base of which lay the "souls" of martyrs. Rules of interpretation do not require us to locate a specific altar in a certain location at a particular moment of history. As with the details of a parable, not all features of a prophetic symbolization necessarily have interpretative value. It appears that the symbolization of the fifth seal was presented to encourage those who faced martyrdom and death, with the assurance that despite the seeming triumph of the enemy, vindication would ultimately come. Such an encouragement would be particularly heartening for those living in the time of the terrible persecutions of the later Middle Ages, but more especially during the time of the Reformation and after (c. 1517-1755; see pp. 41-67; see on v. 12). To them, it must have seemed that the long period of oppression would never end. The message of the fifth seal was a reassurance that the cause of God would ultimately triumph. The same encouragement will come to those passing through the last great conflict (see 5T 451).

Any attempt to interpret these "souls" as the disembodied spirits of departed martyrs does violence to the rules of interpretation of symbolic prophecies. John was not given a view of heaven as it actually appears. There are no white, red, black, or pale horses there with warlike riders. Jesus does not appear there in the form of a lamb with a bleeding knife wound. The four beasts do not represent actual winged creatures of the animal characteristics noted (see Vol. III, pp. 1111). Likewise, there are no "souls" lying at the base of an altar in heaven. The whole scene was a pictorial and symbolic representation designed to teach the spiritual lesson above noted.

Them that were slain. The focus of the revelation now changes from a description of the widespread conditions of destruction and death under which God's people suffer, to a consideration of the condition of the saints themselves.

Word of God. See on ch. 1:2, 9.

Testimony. See on ch. 1:2, 9.

10. They cried. That is, in the pictorial representation (see on v. 9). The "souls" are heard speaking.

Lord. Gr. *despotēs* (see on Luke 2:29). The correlative of *despotēs* is *doulos,* "slave" (see 1 Peter 2:18). By giving their lives the martyrs have shown themselves true "slaves of God" (see Titus 1:1; cf. on Rev. 6:11), and thus He is their Master. The reference here is probably to the Father.

Holy and true. See on ch. 3:7, where these words are applied to Christ.

Avenge. The martyrs do not seek vengeance for themselves; they seek, instead, the vindication of God's name (see Rom. 12:19; see on Rev. 5:13).

Them that dwell. See on ch. 3:10.

11. Robes. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "a robe" (*stolē*). This is a different word from that translated "raiment" in chs. 3:5; 4:4. The *stolē* was a long robe worn as a mark of distinction (see on Mark 12:38). In vision John observes the "souls" being clothed, each one in a white robe. The representation seems to be designed to show that in spite of their ignominious deaths, and of the fact that their martyrdoms have not yet been avenged by God, the martyrs are already recognized by God as conquerors.

In John's day such an assurance was particularly comforting to Christians who had seen their fellow believers destroyed in the persecution of Nero (A.D. 64), and who now faced martyrdom themselves in the persecution of Domitian (see Vol. VI, p. 87). In every age since that time the promises of God to His martyred saints

have cheered those who themselves were about to give their lives for His name's sake.

Rest. The command is given to those who in prophetic vision were agitated over the seeming long delay. In actual fact the martyrs have been at rest ever since they laid down their lives, and will continue to be at rest until the resurrection (cf. on ch. 14:13). Their "fellowservants" would carry on the struggle until they too were victorious in martyrdom.

For a little season. The time was not to be indefinitely delayed (see on ch. 1:1; cf. ch. 12:12). The great controversy with evil must be fought out to a glorious climax. Sin must be allowed to demonstrate its ugly character so fully that never again will there be a question as to God's righteousness and justice (see on ch. 5:13).

Fellowservants. Gr. *sundouloi,* "fellow slaves" (cf. on v. 10).

Should be fulfilled. That is, the number should be completed (see RSV). This does not mean that Providence has decreed that a specific number should be martyred. It was necessary that a certain time elapse so that the true nature of Satan's program of action might be fully demonstrated, and God thereby shown to be just and glorious.

12. A great earthquake. The events of the sixth seal reveal the disjointing of the physical universe. The prophet Joel had already used the figure of an earthquake to describe the upheaval of nature in the day of the Lord (Joel 2:10; cf. Isa. 13:9-11; Amos 8:9).

Inasmuch as the earthquake is followed by the darkening of the sun, and the latter event may be dated in A.D. 1780 (see below on "sun became black"), this earthquake has been identified with the Lisbon quake on Nov. 1, 1755, one of the most extensive and severe seismological disturbances ever recorded. The shock of the quake was felt not only in North Africa but also as far away as the West Indies. Identification with the great Lisbon earthquake suggests 1755 as an appropriate beginning date (cf. p. 754).

Sun became black. The darkening of the sun is frequently mentioned in OT prophecy in connection with the catastrophes that precede the day of the Lord (see on Isa. 13:10). Jesus took particular note of this phenomenon in His prophecy of the end of the world, and noted it as one of the signs by which His followers might know that His coming was near (see on Matt. 24:29, 33; see GC 334).

A spectacular, literal fulfillment of the scene described here was experienced in eastern New York and southern New England on May 19, 1780. A careful study of newspaper reports of that time reveals that an unusual darkness appeared in eastern New York and southwestern New England about ten o'clock that morning, and during the day made its way eastward across southern and central New England, and to some distance at sea. Each locality reported that the darkness lasted several hours. This phenomenon occurred at the time predicted—"in those days, after that tribulation" (Mark 13:24; see on Matt. 24:29). It was observed in an area where a remarkable revival of interest in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation was about to take place, and was recognized by students of these prophecies as fulfilling the present passage (see GC 304-308).

Moon became as blood. See on Matt. 24:29.

13. Stars of heaven fell. See on Matt. 24:29; cf. Isa. 34:4. See GC 333.

Untimely figs. Gr. *olunthoi,* defined by some as early figs that fall off before they come to maturity. Some fig trees of inferior variety cast off all or nearly all of their fruit when it has reached the size of a cherry. Others define *olunthoi* as late or summer figs. See Isa. 34:4.

14. Scroll. Gr. *biblion* (see on ch. 5:1). The picture here is of the sky being rolled up like a roll of parchment. In ancient cosmology the sky was considered to be a solid vault above the earth. The prophet now sees the sky rolled back, that the earth may stand unshielded before God. Isaiah (ch. 34:4) presents the same picture. This event is doubtless the same as that described by Jesus when He said, "The powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (see on Matt. 24:29). This event is yet future and is closely connected with the actual appearance of the Son of man in the heavens.

Every mountain and island. In ch. 16:20

these fearful convulsions are presented as events taking place under the seventh plague.

15. Kings. See chs. 16:14; 17:12. The list that follows runs the whole gamut of social and political life as it existed in the Roman world of John's day. Though the actual coming of Christ is not mentioned here, the context makes clear that Christ is about to appear.

Great men. Gr. *megistanes,* "chief men," "nobles," perhaps corresponding to the Latin *magistrati,* civil officials of the Roman government, such as Pliny (see Vol. VI, pp. 61-63, 88), who often sent Christian martyrs to their deaths.

Rich men. See on James 5:1-6.

Chief captains. Gr. *chiliarchoi,* "chiefs of a thousand." In the NT this word is used for the Roman military tribune (see John 18:12; Acts 21:31-33), and so here it probably represents high military officers.

Mighty men. Compare 1 Cor. 1:26.

Bondman. Or, "slave."

Free man. Compare chs. 13:16; 19:18.

16. Fall on us. See Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:30. To face God now is more fearful than to face death itself.

Wrath. Gr. *orgē* (see on Rom. 1:18).

17. Great day. See Joel 2:11, 31; see on Isa. 13:6.

Who shall be able to stand? Compare Nahum 1:6; Mal. 3:2; Luke 21:36. With this searching question the present scene comes to a close. Each of the six seals that have been opened shows a different phase of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, and each helps to demonstrate before the onlooking universe the righteousness of God (see on Rev. 5:13). Now there is a pause in the opening of the seals, for a question must be answered. Thus far in the portrayal of the terrible events that precede the second advent, no indication has been given that anyone survives them. Hence the dramatic question, "Who shall be able to stand?" Chapter 7 breaks the sequence of the seals in order to present an answer.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 8T 41
6 5T 614
10 5T 451
11 COL 180
12 GC 304
12-17 GC 334; 9T 267
13 GC 333
14 EW 41, 290
14-17 PP 340
15 EW 292
15-17 EW 287; GC 642; SC 18; 2T 41
16 EW 76; LS 91; MB 26; 1T 74; 5T 656
16, 17 DA 740; 2T 42
17 EW 16; GC 641, 642; TM 444; 1T 15, 60; 6T 405

CHAPTER 7

3 An angel sealeth the servants of God in their foreheads. 4 The number of them that were sealed: of the tribes of Israel a certain number. 9 Of all other nations an innumerable multitude, which stand before the throne, clad in white robes, and palms in their hands. 14 Their robes were washed in the blood of the Lamb.

AND after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve

thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nepthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

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1. **After.** See on ch. 4:1. For the relation between ch. 7 and ch. 6 see on ch. 6:17.

I saw. See on ch. 4:1.

Four angels. These angels represent divine agencies in the world holding back the forces of evil until the work of God on human hearts is complete and the people of God are sealed in their foreheads (see on ch. 6:17).

Four corners. Compare Isa. 11:12; Eze. 7:2. This signifies that the whole earth is threatened.

Four winds. Frequently in Scripture the "four winds" represent the four directions of the compass (see Dan. 8:8; Mark 13:27). Here the four winds are plainly destructive forces (see v. 3). Probably the closest parallel is to be found in Dan. 7:2, where they appear to be the forces of strife out of which great nations arise.

It has been suggested that inasmuch as Rev. 7 appears to be an answer to the final question of ch. 6 (see on ch. 6:17), this holding of the four winds is a temporary withholding of the terrors depicted in ch. 6, until those who are to stand firm in the tempest have made preparation for it.

Viewed in the light of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, these destructive forces represent the efforts of Satan to spread ruin and destruction everywhere. In symbolic vision John saw four angels; actually, many angels are employed in the task of holding in check the designs of the enemy. These angels belt "the world. . . . They are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished. . . . They are given the work of keeping back the raging power of him who has come down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 5:11). When the work of sealing is completed, then God will say to the angels, " 'No longer combat Satan in his efforts to destroy. Let him work out his malignity upon the children of disobedience; for the cup of their iniquity is full" (EGW RH Sept. 17, 1901; cf. 6T 408).

When the four angels finally let go and cease holding in check the malicious designs of Satan and "the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old" (GC 614).

On the earth. The three items here mentioned—earth, sea, and tree—emphasize the universal nature of the threatened destruction.

2. Another angel. That is, in addition to the four holding the winds (see on v. 1).

From the east. Literally, "from the rising of the sun." In ancient times east was the cardinal point of the compass. Directions were reckoned from the point of view of a person facing east (see on Ex. 3:1). It was from this direction that Ezekiel saw the glory of God entering the temple (ch. 43:2-5). The sign of the Son of man will appear in the east (Matt. 24:30; cf. GC 640, 641). The direction from which the angel comes may therefore denote that he comes from, and is dispatched by, God.

Some prefer the literal rendering, "from the rising of the sun," and believe that the stress is not on locality but on manner, that is, the approach of the angel is like that of the sun rising in its splendor. See on ch. 16:12.

Seal. From remote antiquity seals were used in the Near East much as signatures are today. Thus they attested the authorship of a document, indicated the ownership of the object upon which the seal was impressed, or secured objects such as chests, boxes, tombs, against being opened or molested. One inscription indicates that the seal is that "of Shema' Servant of Jeroboam" (David Diringer, *The Biblical Archaeologist,* XII [1949], p. 84). Another reads, "Belonging to 'Asayau son of Yauqîm (Yôqîm)" (W. F. Albright, *Journal of Biblical Literature,* LI [1932], p. 81).

The concept of God's placing a mark upon His people goes back to Ezekiel's vision of the man with the writer's inkhorn who was commanded to "set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in" Jerusalem. By virtue of the mark they were to be saved from destruction. (Eze. 9:2-6.) The concept of sealing is also applied in other circumstances. Paul referred the figure to the experience of receiving the Holy Spirit in connection with conversion and baptism (see 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). Jesus spoke of Himself as being sealed by the Father, doubtless with reference to the Father's attestation of Him through the Holy Spirit at His baptism (see on John 6:27).

The symbolism of sealing finds an interesting parallel in Jewish eschatological thinking. One of the Psalms of Solomon (a pseudepigraphical work from about the middle of the 1st century B.C.) declares of the righteous that "the flame of fire and the wrath against the unrighteous shall not touch him, when it goeth forth from the face of the Lord against sinners, to destroy all the substance of sinners, for the mark of God is upon the righteous that they may be saved. Famine and sword and pestilence (shall be) far from the righteous" (15:6-8; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 646). The Jews thus conceived of the mark on the righteous as keeping them from the perils of the time of the coming of the Messiah.

Similarly the present passage points to a sealing of God's people that prepares them to stand through the fearful times of stress that will precede the second advent (see on Rev. 7:1). As in ancient times a seal on an object testified to its ownership, so the seal of God upon His people proclaims that He has recognized them as His own (see 2 Tim. 2:19; cf. TM 446).

The seal to be affixed upon God's faithful servants is "the pure mark of truth," the "mark" of His "approval" (3T 267). It attests "likeness to Christ in character" (EGW Supplementary Material on v. 2). "The seal of God, the token or sign of His authority, is found in the fourth commandment" (EGW ST Nov. 1, 1899; cf. GC 640). For a more detailed discussion of the seal see on Eze. 9:4.

Living God. See on ch. 1:18.

3. Till we have sealed. See on v. 2.

The servants. Gr. *douloi,* "slaves." Those who are sealed are God's slaves, and the seal upon them is His attestation that they are indeed His own.

Foreheads. In vision John probably saw an actual mark affixed. The mark stands for character qualification (see on Eze. 9:4; cf. 2 Tim. 2:19).

4. I heard. The information came to John orally. Whether at this time he saw the company of the sealed, the prophecy does not state.

An hundred and forty and four thousand. Regarding this number two views have been held: (1) that it is literal; (2) that it is symbolic. Some of those who hold that the number is literal point out that the numbering may be by a system such as that employed in the numbering of the 5,000 who were miraculously fed, where only the men and not the women and children were counted (see Matt. 14: 21). Those who hold that the number is symbolic point out that the vision is clearly symbolic, and that inasmuch as the other symbols are not to be literally interpreted neither need this one be. Twelve is considered by many Bible students a significant number in the Bible, doubtless because there were 12 tribes in Israel (see Ex. 24:4; 28:21; Lev. 24:5; Num. 13; 17:2; Joshua 4:9; 1 Kings 4:7; 18:31; Matt. 10: 1; Rev. 12:1; 21:12, 14, 16, 21; 22:2). The twelvefold repetition of the number 12,000 (Rev. 7:5-8) may suggest that the principal aim of this passage is not to disclose the precise number of the sealed but to show the distribution of the sealed among the tribes of spiritual Israel.

The 144,000 are here presented as those who are "able to stand" through the terrible events portrayed in ch. 6:17 (see comment there). They have the "seal of the living God" (ch. 7:2) and are protected in the time of universal destruction, as were those who possessed the mark in Ezekiel's vision (Eze. 9:6). They are approved of Heaven, for John later sees them with the Lamb on Mt. Zion (Rev. 14:1). They are declared to be without guile and without fault (Rev. 14:5). John hears them singing a song that "no man could learn" (Rev. 14:3). They are designated as "firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" (Rev. 14:4).

There are differences of opinion as to precisely who from the last generation of the saints will constitute the 144,000. Lack of more definite information such as would be needed to arrive at dogmatic conclusions on certain points has led many to give emphasis, not to *who* the 144,000 are, but *what* they are—that is, the kind of character God expects them to possess—and to the importance of preparing to belong to that guileless throng. The following counsel may be apropos: "It is not His [God's] will that they shall get into controversy over questions which will not help them spiritually, such as, Who is to compose the hundred and forty-four thousand. This those who are the elect of God will in a short time know without question" (EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 14:1-4; cf. PK 189).

All the tribes. Twelve tribes are listed here (vs. 5-8), but they are not entirely identical with the enumerations found in the OT (see Num. 1:5-15; Deut. 27:12, 13; cf. Gen. 35:22-26; 49:3-28; 1 Chron. 2:1, 2). The OT lists commonly begin with Reuben, whereas the present enumeration begins with Judah, perhaps because Christ came of the tribe of Judah (see Rev. 5: 5). In the OT, Levi is sometimes not included as a tribe, though, of course, he is listed as a son of Jacob. This was doubtless because Levi received no inheritance among the tribes (see on Joshua 13:14). Here the tribe of Levi is counted, but not that of Dan. To reckon Levi and yet retain the number 12 it was necessary to omit one of the tribes, inasmuch as Joseph was reckoned as two tribes, namely Ephraim (probably called "Joseph" in Rev. 7:8) and Manasseh. Perhaps Dan was excluded because of that tribe's reputation for idolatry (Judges 18:30, 31).

The order in which the tribes are listed here is different from any OT list. Some have pointed out that if vs. 7 and 8 are placed between vs. 5 and 6, the tribes follow in the order of Leah's sons, Rachel's sons, Leah's handmaid's sons, and Rachel's handmaid's sons—except for Dan, in whose place appears Manasseh. However, no particular point is gained by the rearrangement.

The names of some of the tribes are not spelled the same as in the OT. This is because the NT names are transliterated from the Greek, whereas the OT names are transliterated from the Hebrew. Greek transliterations of Hebrew names are often inexact because the Greek alphabet lacks certain sounds common in Hebrew.

Israel. Those who insist that the 144,000 are literal Jews contend that the application to Christians as spiritual Israel cannot be reconciled with the division into 12 spe-

cific tribes. However, if "children of Israel" must be taken literally, what reason is there for not taking vs. 5-8 and ch. 14:1-5 literally as well? Aside from the fact that the Jews have long lost their tribal distinctions, the fantastically remote likelihood of an actual identical number being redeemed from each tribe—but not a single soul from Dan—and the requirement that they all be celibates (ch. 14:4) would put too great a strain on one's credulity. If, however, the 144,000 are not literal Jews but figurative Israelites, spiritual Israel, the Christian church, then the tribal divisions and other details are also figurative, and the difficulties vanish.

These Israelites thus sealed are then to be understood as belonging to spiritual Israel, the Christian church (see Rom. 2:28, 29; 9:6, 7; Gal. 3:28, 29; 6:16; cf. Gal. 4:28; 1 Peter 1:1; see on Phil. 3:3). Spiritual Israel, in Bible figure, is represented as also being divided into 12 tribes, for the 12 gates of the New Jerusalem have engraved upon them the names of the 12 tribes of Israel (see Rev. 21:12).

9. After this. See on ch. 4:1.

A great multitude. From early Christian times commentators have been in disagreement regarding the relationship of this multitude to the 144,000. Three principal views have been held.

One view holds that the 144,000 and the "great multitude" of the present verse both describe the same group, but under different conditions, and that vs. 9-17 reveal the true identity of the 144,000. According to this view, vs. 1-8 portray the sealing of the 144,000 to prepare them to stand through the terrors that attend the coming of the Messiah, whereas vs. 9-17 show them afterward rejoicing about the throne of God in peace and triumph. Those who hold this view believe that the apparent differences between the description of the "great multitude" and that of the 144,000 are not differences, but explanations: thus the fact that the "great multitude" cannot be numbered, they take as implying that the number 144,000 is symbolic rather than literal. The fact that the multitude is from all nations, and not from Israel alone, as the 144,000 are presented as originating from, they understand as meaning that the Israel from which the 144,000 come is not literal Israel, but spiritual, embracing all nations of Gentiles.

A second view emphasizes the differences between the 144,000 and the "great multitude." One is numbered, the other cannot be. One represents a special group, "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb" who "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (ch. 14:4), the other, the remaining triumphant saints of all ages.

A third view represents the "great multitude" as the entire company of the redeemed, including the 144,000.

Seventh-day Adventists have generally favored the second view.

The throne. See on ch. 4:2.

The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

White robes. See on ch. 6:11; cf. ch. 7:13.

Palms. These were symbols of rejoicing and victory (see 1 Macc. 13:51; 2 Macc. 10:7; John 12:13).

10. Salvation to our God. This is a recognition by the numberless multitude that God and the Lamb have redeemed them. The sense of the original is conveyed well by the RSV: " 'Salvation belongs to our God.' " The ascription to both God and the Lamb is significant evidence of their equality (see on ch. 5:13).

Which sitteth. See on ch. 4:2.

11. Elders. See on ch. 4:4. Although various scenes have intervened since the scene in ch. 4, the general setting is much the same.

Four beasts. See on ch. 4:6.

Fell. See ch. 5:8.

12. Amen. See on ch. 5:14.

Blessing. This is a sevenfold doxology as in ch. 5:12 (see comment there and on v. 13). Here again, as in ch. 5:8-14, is a vision of the vindication of God and Christ. Upon the testimony of the saved, the hosts of heaven are again reminded that God is wise and righteous. They worship Him with blessing, glory, thanksgiving, and honor.

13. One of the elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Answered. The elder puts into words the question that was doubtless already in John's mind.

What are these? Rather, "Who are these?" The question may be raised as to which group, the 144,000 (v. 4) or the "great multitude" (v. 9), the elder here

has in view. Two views regarding this are held: (1) That reference is to the 144,000. Those who hold this view advance the argument that John already knew the identity of the "great multitude," for he had stated that it was from "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Therefore they urge that in order for the question raised by the elder to be intelligible, he must have reference to the 144,000. (2) That reference is to the "great multitude." Those who hold this view point out that beginning with v. 9 an entirely new scene of the vision opens, and that reference back to a previous scene would hardly be expected unless specific indication of it were made. They contend, further, that the "great multitude" has not been identified any more clearly than the 144,000. Finally, they call attention to the fact that the elder speaks specifically of those who "are arrayed in white robes"; in the context it is the "great multitude" that is described as "clothed with white robes" (v. 9). This view may be held either on the assumption that the "great multitude" comprehends all the redeemed, including the 144,000, or the redeemed exclusive of that group. See AA 602; GC 649; MH 507.

14. Great tribulation. Literally, "the great tribulation." Those who hold that vs. 13-17 apply to the 144,000 (see on v. 13) understand the tribulation to be the time of trouble preceding the second advent of Christ mentioned in Dan. 12:1. Those who hold that vs. 13-17 refer to the great multitude apply the "great tribulation" more generally to the various periods of tribulation the saints have experienced down through the centuries, or, more specifically, to the tribulation portrayed by the symbols of Rev. 6 (cf. Matt. 24:21). Compare on Rev. 3:10.

Washed their robes. The reason for the purity of the robes is given. The saints are triumphant, not on their own account, but because of the victory won by Christ on Calvary (cf. on ch. 6:11). The close connection between righteousness and victory —both symbolized by white garments (cf. on ch. 3:4; cf. ch. 1:5)—is demonstrated here. The battle is against sin; righteousness is the victory; Christ's righteousness has won the victory; and upon accepting His righteousness sinners become both righteous and victorious.

15. Therefore. The righteous, victorious state of this blessed company makes it possible for those who comprise the group to stand continually in the presence of God. If their robes were not white, they could not abide His presence.

Before the throne. See on ch. 4:2. This group is constantly in the presence of God. Theirs is the joy of always being with Him who has saved them.

Serve him. The keenest delight of the saved is to do the will of God.

Day and night. See on ch. 4:8.

Temple. Gr. *naos,* a word emphasizing the temple as the dwelling place of God (see on ch. 3:12).

Shall dwell. Gr. *skēnoō* (see on John 1:14). The clause may be translated, "He will pitch his tent [or, "tabernacle"] over them." Casting his words into the future tense, the elder looks forward to the endless ages of eternity, throughout which the saved may be confident that God will indeed dwell in their midst. Never shall they be deprived of His presence, His sustenance, and His favor. To be without the presence of God is utter loss; to have Him dwell among us is salvation evermore.

16. Hunger no more. This verse seems to allude to Isa. 49:10, where abundance was promised the returning exiles. The promise will find ultimate fulfillment in the experience of spiritual Israel.

17. The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

Midst of the throne. In ch. 5:6 the Lamb is portrayed as the closest of all to the throne of God.

Shall feed. Gr. *poimainō,* "to shepherd" (cf. on ch. 2:27). Although it is usually the lamb that is shepherded, here the Lamb is revealed as the true shepherd (cf. John 10:11). The thought of the present passage is probably drawn from Isa. 40:11.

Living fountains of waters. For this figure see Jer. 2:13; John 4:14; Rev. 22:1.

Wipe away all tears. This is a figure of speech signifying that in the future world there will be no cause for tears. Some have interpreted this figure rather literally, as though for a time there will be occasion for tears because of the absence of

loved ones. This cannot be proved. Dogmatic conclusions on this subject should be based on more than a figurative expression.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 EW 36; LS 117; 5T 152, 573; 6T 426; 7T 220
1-3 Ev 704; EW 38, 58; LS 118; TM 444, 510; 5T 717; 6T 14, 61, 408
2 GC 613, 640
2, 3 EW 48, 67, 71; ML 308; PK 591; 5T 475
3 5T 214, 216
4 1T 59; 3T 266
9 SR 421; 6T 20
9, 10 AA 602; GC 665; MH 507; ML 348; 4T 125; 8T 44; 9T 267
9-12 PK 720
10 CT 532; GC 650; SR 422; 5T 385; 6T 368
12 GC 651
14 EW 17; GC 428, 677; LS 67, 271; ML 321, 346, 348; 1T 61, 78, 155; 2T 60; 3T 45, 183; 4T 72, 324, 387, 429; 5T 215, 632; 9T 285, 286
14, 15 MB 31
14-17 AA 602; Ed 303; GC 649; MH 507; 4T 125; 8T 44; 9T 268
15 DA 302
15-17 DA 332
17 CH 244; DA 632; ML 342; SR 431; TM 124; 5T 301

CHAPTER 8

1 At the opening of the seventh seal, 2 seven angels had seven trumpets given them. 6 Four of them sound their trumpets, and great plagues follow. 3 Another angel putteth incense to the prayers of the saints on the golden altar.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

1. Seventh seal. Chapter 6 portrays the opening of the first six of the seven seals. Chapter 7 is parenthetical in that it interrupts the opening of the seals to show that God has a true people who will be able to stand through the terrors that have been portrayed (see on ch. 6:17). Now the vision returns to the opening of the seals.

Silence in heaven. In contrast with the spectacular events that follow the opening of the other seals, an awesome silence follows the opening of the seventh. This silence has been explained in at least two ways. Some hold that this silence in heaven, following upon the terrible events that take place on earth immediately preceding the second coming (ch. 6:14-16), is caused by the heavenly hosts' having left the celestial courts to accompany Christ to the earth (see Matt. 25:31).

Another view explains this silence in heaven to be a silence of awesome expectation (cf. references to silence in EW 15, 16; DA 693). Thus far the heavenly courts have been portrayed as filled with praise and song. Now all is quiet, in awesome expectancy of the things that are about to occur. So understood, this silence of the seventh seal forms a bridge between the opening of the seals and the blowing of the trumpets, for it implies that with the seventh seal the revelation is not complete—there is still more to be explained concerning God's program of events in the great controversy with evil (see on v. 5).

Half an hour. Some interpreters have understood this in terms of the prophetic time formula of a day representing a literal year (see on Dan. 7:25). On this basis "half an hour" would be equal to about one literal week (cf. EW 16). Others hold that there is no clear warrant in Scripture for taking as prophetic time any period less than a whole day, and so have preferred to understand "for the space of half an hour" as signifying simply a short period of unspecified length. Seventh-day Adventists have generally favored the first view.

2. I saw. See on ch. 4:1.

The seven angels. Although he has nowhere previously mentioned these seven angels, John evidently takes for granted that their identity is sufficiently established by the statement of the fact that they are "the seven angels which stood before God."

Stood. Rather, "stand."

Seven trumpets. In the present vision the seven angels blow their trumpets to announce forthcoming divine judgments (see on vs. 5, 6).

3. Another angel. That is, not one of the seven angels with the trumpets.

The altar. Compare Ex. 30:1-10.

Censer. Compare Lev. 10:1.

Much incense. See Ex. 30:34-38.

With the prayers. The picture is that of the angel adding incense to the prayers of the saints as these prayers ascend to the throne of God. The scene portrayed may be understood as symbolic of the ministration of Christ for His people (see Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1; cf. PP 356; GC 414, 415; EW 32, 252). Christ, as intercessor, mingles His merits with the prayers of the saints, which are thereby made acceptable with God.

4. Smoke of the incense. See on v. 3.

5. Filled it with fire. A change suddenly comes in the scene of intercession. Once more the angel fills his censer with coals of fire, but adds no incense.

Cast it into the earth. The meaning of this act is significant for the understanding of what follows as the trumpets are blown. Two interpretations may be suggested.

According to the view that Seventh-day Adventists have favored, the cessation of the angel's ministry at the altar of incense is symbolic of the end of the ministration of Christ for mankind—the close of probation. The voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquake that ensue when the angel casts the censer into the earth describe events to take place at the end of the seventh trumpet, following the opening of the temple (ch. 11:19), and at the seventh plague, when a voice comes from the temple declaring, "It is done" (ch. 16:17).

Some prefer to see ch. 8:3-5, not so much in its chronological, as in its logical, relationship to the seals and the trumpets. This view agrees with the preceding one that the ministry of the angel at the altar of incense is representative of Christ's intercession for His people throughout the Christian Era.

But it emphasizes the fact that the prayers of the saints are seen ascending, and interprets the significance of these prayers in terms of the prayers of the martyrs revealed under the fifth seal: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (ch. 6:10). Not only was this the prayer of the martyrs, it was also the theme of the prayers of all God's children who suffered under the horrors portrayed when the seals were opened. Thus when the prayers of ch. 8:3 are taken in the setting of the seals, the action of the angel in throwing a censer of fire unmixed with incense into the earth may be seen as symbolizing that these prayers are now being answered. In ch. 6:11 the suffering saints were given a temporary answer in that they were told to wait until the number of martyrs was made up. Now the real answer to their prayer comes. God's wrath against the persecutors of His people is not withheld forever. Finally it is poured out, and without benefit of the intercession of Christ. The trumpets are regarded as portraying these judgments. This second view attempts to tie together the seals and trumpets by setting forth the trumpets to be the answer of God to the events portrayed under the seals.

Voices. For repetitions of these portents see chs. 11:19; 16:18; cf. above on "cast it into the earth."

6. Seven angels. See on v. 2.

Seven trumpets. See on v. 2. A number of views have been set forth as to the interpretation of the successive scenes that follow the blowing of the trumpets.

One view of the trumpets is based on the assumption that since the symbolization of v. 5 points to the end of Christ's intercession, the events that follow might logically be taken to represent judgments of God poured out on the earth after the close of probation. According to this view these judgments parallel the seven last plagues (ch. 16). The proponents of this view point to certain aspects of each of the trumpets that find similar features in each of the plagues.

According to another view the seven trumpets should not be thought of chronologically, but as symbolic of the divine answer to the prayers of God's suffering people of all ages. In other words, this interpretation sees the trumpets as God's reassurance to His persecuted saints that in spite of the wars, plagues, famines, and death through which they may pass, He has not lost control of the world. He is still judge and will punish unrighteous men. See on v. 5.

The view favored by Seventh-day Adventists is that these trumpets retrace, to a large extent, the period of Christian history already covered by the seven churches (chs. 2; 3) and the seven seals (chs. 6; 8:1), and that they emphasize outstanding political and military events during this period. These events will be discussed below in the comments on the various trumpets.

7. Hail and fire. The picture here is that of a great storm of hail mixed with lightning, reminiscent of the seventh plague in Egypt (Ex. 9:22-25).

Earth. The earth, with its vegetation, is shown as the particular target of this scourge (cf. ch. 16:2). The scourge is singularly descriptive of the invasion of the Roman Empire by the Visigoths under Alaric. This was the first of the Teutonic incursions into the Roman Empire that played such an important part in its final downfall. Beginning about A.D. 396, the Visigoths overran Thrace, Macedonia, and Greece in the eastern part of the empire. Later they crossed the Alps and pillaged the city of Rome in A.D. 410. They also ravaged much of what is now France and ultimately settled in Spain.

Third part. This fraction occurs repeatedly in the Revelation (see vs. 8, 9, 11, 12; chs. 9:15, 18; 12:4; cf. Zech. 13:8, 9). It probably implies a substantial part, but not a major portion.

All green grass. The severity of this tempest is dramatized by showing it as destroying much of the vegetation of the earth.

8. As it were. John apparently finds in a burning mountain the closest representation of the scene that takes place before his eyes. The figure of "burning mountains" occurs in Jewish apocalyptic literature (see Enoch 18:13; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the*

Old Testament, vol. 2, p. 200), but there is no evidence that John derived from that source his description of the phenomenon he now sees. Compare Jer. 51:25, where the prophet describes Babylon as a "destroying mountain" that will be made a "burnt mountain."

Sea. The sea, with the life in it and upon it, is shown as the special object of this judgment (cf. ch. 16:3).

The catastrophe announced by the second trumpet has been seen as describing the depredations of the Vandals. Driven from their settlements in Thrace by the incursions of the Huns from Central Asia, the Vandals migrated through Gaul (now France) and Spain into Roman North Africa and established a kingdom centering around Carthage. From there they dominated the western Mediterranean with a navy of pirates, pillaging the coasts of Spain, Italy, and even Greece, and preying upon Roman shipping. The high point of their depredations came in A.D. 455, when for two weeks they looted and pillaged the city of Rome.

Third part. See on v. 7.

Sea became blood. This judgment is reminiscent of the first plague in Egypt (Ex. 7:20). In the second plague (Rev. 16:3) the sea "became as the blood of a dead man." "Blood" here doubtless implies wholesale human slaughter.

9. Creatures. Gr. *ktismata,* "things created." The Greek word does not necessarily imply life, hence the qualification "which . . . had life." See Ex. 7:21.

Life. Gr. *psuchai* (see on Matt. 10:28).

10. Fell a great star. This has been interpreted as portraying the invasion and ravages of the Huns under the leadership of their king Attila, in the 5th century. Entering Europe from Central Asia about A.D. 372, the Huns first settled along the lower Danube. Three quarters of a century later they were on the move again, and for a brief period raised havoc in various regions of the tottering Roman Empire. Crossing the Rhine in A.D. 451, they were stopped by combined Roman and German troops at Chalôns in northern Gaul. After a short period of marauding in Italy, Attila died in A.D. 453, and almost immediately the Huns disappeared from history. In spite of the short period of their ascendancy, so rapacious were the Huns in their devastations that their name has come down through history as synonymous with the worst slaughter and destruction.

Lamp. Gr. *lampas,* here probably meaning a torch (see on Matt. 25:1).

Third part. See on v. 7.

The rivers. This judgment falls upon the sources of fresh water, as contrasted with the salt-water bodies affected under the previous trumpet (v. 8; cf. ch. 16:4).

11. Name. As the "name" often denotes a characteristic of that to which it is attached, the name of this star may be taken as descriptive of the judgment that falls under this trumpet (see on Acts 3:16).

Wormwood. Gr. *apsinthos,* a notoriously bitter herb, *Artemisia absinthium.* In the present passage the waters themselves become wormwood.

12. Third part. See on v. 7.

The sun. The sun, moon, and stars have been interpreted to represent the great luminaries of the Western Roman government—its emperors, senators, and consuls. With the removal of its last emperor, in 476, the extinction of Western Rome began (see pp. 21, 22; cf. p. 111). Later, its senate and consulship came to an end.

Shone not for a third part. The thought seems to be that these bodies would be smitten during one third of the time of their shining, not that one third of the bodies themselves would be smitten so that they would shine with two-thirds brilliance. Thus one third of the day and one third of the night would be dark. Applied to the divisions of the Roman government, the figure may describe the successive extinction of the emperors, senators, and consuls.

13. I beheld. See on ch. 4:1. This temporary break in the sequence of the trumpets calls special attention to the last three, which are specially designated as "woes."

An angel. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "an eagle." The eagle may be thought of as an omen of doom (see Matt. 24:28; cf. Deut. 28:49; Hosea 8:1; Hab. 1:8).

Midst of heaven. That is, at the zenith, so that all may hear his message.

Woe, woe, woe. The woe is repeated three times because of the three judgments

yet to come at the blowing of the three remaining trumpets. Each of these is designated a "woe" (see chs. 9:12; 11:14).

Inhabiters of the earth. That is, the unrighteous (see on ch. 3:10).

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3 GC 414; PP 356; SR 377
3, 4 ChS 263; COL 156; DA 667; EW 32, 252; LS 100; ML 29; MYP 96; PP 353, 367; TM 93; 6T 368, 467; 8T 178

CHAPTER 9

1 *At the sounding of the fifth angel, a star falleth from heaven, to whom is given the key of the bottomless pit.* 2 *He openeth the pit, and there come forth locusts like scorpions.* 12 *The first woe past.* 13 *The sixth trumpet soundeth.* 14 *Four angels are let loose, that were bound.*

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; *and,* behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they

should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

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1. Fifth angel. The fifth trumpet is discussed in vs. 1-12. This trumpet is the first "woe" (see on ch. 8:13; cf. ch. 9:12, 13).

A star fall. Or, "a star fallen." The star depicted here is not seen falling, as under the third trumpet (ch. 8:10), but is shown already fallen upon the earth.

It is interesting to note in passing that the figure of a fallen star occurs also in Jewish apocalyptic literature to describe Satan as a star fallen from heaven (Enoch 88:1; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 251).

To him was given. This implies that the power represented by the key was not intrinsically his, but was allowed to him by a higher power.

The key. Possession of the key implies the power to open and close (see Rev. 3:7; cf. Matt. 16:19).

A number of commentators have identified the fifth and sixth trumpets with the ravages of the Saracens and the Turks. They point to the wars between the Persians under Khosrau II (A.D. 590-628) and the Romans under Heraclius I (610-641) as weakening the two empires, thus preparing the way for the Moslem conquest. The key, they suggest, is the fall of Khosrau, whose overthrow and murder in A.D. 628 marked the end of the Persian Empire as an effective power and opened the way for the advance of the Arabian forces.

Bottomless pit. Gr. *phrear tēs abussou,* "pit of the bottomless [place]," or "well of the abyss." The word *abussos* is used repeatedly in the LXX to translate the Hebrew *tehom* (see on Gen. 1:2, where *abussos* represents the primeval ocean). In Job 41:31 it represents the sea in general, and in Ps. 71:20, the depths of the earth. The *abussos* is also the abode of leviathan. Thus the LXX of Job 41:22, 23, 25 (vs. 31, 32, 34 of the Masoretic text) reads, "He [the dragon] makes the deep [*abussos*] boil like a brazen caldron; and he regards the sea as a pot of ointment, and the lowest part of the deep as a captive: he reckons the deep as his range. . . . He beholds every high thing: and he is king of all that are in the waters" (English trans. in Bagster's ed. of the LXX). With respect to the Arabs, the bottomless pit may be thought of as representing the vast wastes of the Arabian deserts, whence these followers of Mohammed issued forth, to spread their conquests over vast areas.

2. Bottomless pit. See on v. 1.

Darkened. Compare on ch. 6:12. Darkness is also a characteristic of the fifth plague (ch. 16:10). With respect to the Moslems, the darkening of the sun may be thought of as the obscuration of the sun of Christianity. Such was the effect of the spread of the religion of Islam.

3. Locusts. This visitation is reminiscent of the plague of locusts that infested Egypt (Ex. 10:13-15). As early as the 8th century A.D., Beatus, a Spanish monk, is said to have identified the symbol of the locusts with the Moslem Arabs, who in his day had just overrun North Africa, the Near East, and Spain. Since his time many expositors are on record as having made a similar identification.

As the scorpions. Normally locusts do not attack human beings, but these locusts are portrayed as having the venom of scorpions. Scorpions are described as hostile toward man (see Eze. 2:6; Luke 10:19; 11:12).

4. They should not hurt. Locusts destroy vegetation, not men. But these locusts are commanded not to harm any growing plant. Their attacks are to be directed only against unrighteous men.

Those who identify the locust symbol with the Saracens have suggested that this prohibition reflects the policy of the Arab conquerors not to destroy property wantonly or to kill Christians and Jews so long as they submitted to the payment of tribute. Concerning a certain class, Abu-bakr, Mohammed's successor, is recorded to have said to his soldiers: " 'You will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven

crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter, till they either turn Mahometans or pay tribute'" (quoted in Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* J. B. Bury, ed., vol. 5, p. 416). This class has not been definitely identified.

When applied to the Moslem Arabs this restriction may be thought of as representing their policy of permitting the conquered to live. This course was adopted so that the conquered might support the warriors out on conquest.

Have not the seal. Some have suggested that inasmuch as the keeping of the Sabbath is ultimately to be the outward sign of the inner work of sealing by the Holy Spirit (see on Eze. 9:4), the ones attacked by the "locusts" here are those who do not observe the true Sabbath.

In their foreheads. See Eze. 9:4; Rev. 7:3.

5. Should not kill. The punishment inflicted by the locusts is pain, not death.

Five months. For a discussion of this period see Additional Note at end of chapter.

Scorpion. See on v. 3. The sting of a scorpion may be exceedingly painful, but it is seldom fatal to man.

6. Seek death. Compare the attitude of men here with that portrayed in ch. 6:16. See Job 3:21; cf. Jer. 8:3.

7. Shapes. Gr. *homoiōmata,* "likenesses."

Like unto horses. See on Joel 2:4, of which this passage is reminiscent. Some see in the horses a reference to cavalry, a prominent feature of Arabian military forces.

Crowns. Gr. *stephanoi,* symbols of victory (see on ch. 2:10). Some see a reference here to the turban, which was long the national headdress of the Arabians.

Faces of men. Perhaps an implication that the agents of this visitation are human beings.

8. Hair of women. Some have applied this feature of the vision to the allegedly long hair worn by the Arabian troops.

Teeth of lions. This figure suggests strength and rapacity.

9. Breastplates of iron. The scales of the locusts may have suggested this description. The figure indicates the impregnability of the agents of this judgment.

Sound of chariots. Compare Joel 2:5.

10. Like unto scorpions. That is, like the tails of scorpions, which contain poisonous stings.

Hurt men. See on v. 5.

Five months. See Additional Note at end of chapter.

11. King over them. The wise man Agur declared that "the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands" (Prov. 30:27). The locusts in the present passage, however, are more highly organized in their destructive work, for they have a ruler whose commands they follow. Some who apply the fifth and sixth trumpets to the Moslem Arabs and Turks see in this king a reference to Osman (Othman) I (1299-1326), the traditional founder of the Ottoman Empire. His first attack upon the Greek Empire, which, according to Gibbon, took place on July 27, 1299, they take as marking the beginning of the five-month period of torment (Rev. 9:7, 10). For a discussion of this period see Additional Note at end of chapter.

Angel. Or, "messenger," the one in charge of the forces issuing from the bottomless pit.

Bottomless pit. See on v. 1.

Abaddon. Gr. *Abaddōn,* a transliteration of the Heb. *'Abbadon,* "destruction," "ruin." This word is used with a general meaning in Job 31:12, and is paralleled with "hell" (Heb. *she'ol,* the figurative realm of the dead; see on Prov. 15:11) in Job 26:6. The use of a Hebrew name here is significant with respect to the fact that much of John's symbolism is of Hebrew and Jewish origin. In Jewish tradition *'Abbadon* is personified (see Talmud *Shabbath* 89a).

Greek tongue. John supplies a Greek name that translates *'Abbadon* for his Greek-speaking readers.

Apollyon. Gr. *Apolluōn,* "one who destroys," "a destroyer."

12. Woe. See on ch. 8:13.

13. Sixth angel. That is, the second woe (see on chs. 8:13; 11:14; cf. ch. 9:12).

Four horns. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading "horns." For the horns on the altar of incense in the ancient wilderness tabernacle see Ex. 37:26.

The golden altar. Doubtless the same

altar as the one where the angel had ministered the prayers of the saints (ch. 8:3-5).

14. Four angels. Previously the prophet had seen four angels that had power to restrain the winds from blowing (ch. 7:1). They had worldwide power; the present four appear to be localized.

Most commentators who interpret the fifth trumpet as applying to the Saracens have seen the Turks in the sixth. Some of these identify the four angels as four sultanies of the Turkish (Ottoman) Empire, which they identify as Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Baghdad. Others see in these angels the destructive forces that moved against the Western world.

Are bound. Literally, "have been bound." These angels have been restrained from their work of judgment until the sixth angel sounds his trumpet.

Euphrates. Commentators who apply the sixth trumpet to the Turks generally give a literal interpretation to the Euphrates, in the sense that it was from the region of the Euphrates that the Turks entered the Byzantine Empire. But inasmuch as the names Sodom, Egypt (ch. 11:8), and Babylon (chs. 14:8; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21) are used symbolically in the Revelation, other commentators hold that the Euphrates should also be understood symbolically (see on ch. 16:12). Some of these note that, to the Israelites, the Euphrates constituted the northern boundary of the land which ideally they were to occupy (Deut. 1:7, 8) and which, at the height of their power, they dominated, at least to some extent (see on 1 Kings 4:21). Beyond the Euphrates were the heathen nations of the north who repeatedly swept down and engulfed Israel (cf. on Jer. 1:14). According to this point of view the Euphrates here indicates a boundary beyond which God holds the forces that accomplish His judgment under the sixth trumpet.

Still others connect the Euphrates with mystical Babylon. They point out that inasmuch as later in the Revelation the final apostasy is portrayed as mystic Babylon (ch. 17:5) and that particular attention is called to its sitting "upon many waters" (v. 1), and inasmuch as historical Babylon was literally situated upon the waters of the Euphrates (see Vol. IV, p. 796), the Euphrates is here symbolic of the domain of the power represented as mystic Babylon (cf. on ch. 16:12).

15. Four angels. See on v. 14.

For an hour. Concerning the expression "for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year" see Additional Note at end of chapter; cf. on ch. 17:12.

Third part. See on ch. 8:7.

16. Army of the horsemen. The four angels are portrayed as wreaking their judgments by means of a great army of cavalry. In ancient times the cavalry was the swiftest, most mobile branch of an army. Therefore, here, it may be thought of as symbolizing the rapidity and scope with which this visitation comes.

Two hundred thousand thousand. That is, two hundred million. The number is doubtless symbolic of a vast, innumerable host.

I heard. The syntax of this statement in Greek may imply that John heard this number and understood its significance. Oral information confirmed his impression of a numberless throng.

17. I saw. The description of the horses and their riders seems to follow the familiar Hebrew inverted parallelism: first the horses, then the riders are mentioned; then the riders are described, and finally the horses.

Breastplates. That is, of the riders.

Of fire. That is, fiery. Perhaps not only the armor of the cavalrymen appeared bright, but the troops themselves may have appeared to the prophet as clothed with fire. See below on "jacinth."

Jacinth. Gr. *huakinthinos,* a violet or dark-blue color. Some suggest that this may represent the smoke accompanying the fire (see below on "fire and smoke and brimstone"). Others see the color as descriptive of the Turkish uniform, in which the colors red (or scarlet), blue, and yellow are said to have predominated. The fire, they believe, represents the red color, and the brimstone the yellow.

Brimstone. Gr. *theiōdeis,* "sulphurous," "of brimstone." Fire and brimstone are frequently mentioned together in the book of Revelation (chs. 9:18; 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8). For a possible significance of the color see the foregoing on "jacinth."

Heads of lions. This comparison of the "horsemen" to the king of beasts suggests ferocity and majesty.

Fire and smoke and brimstone. The same things that appeared to clothe the cavalrymen also come forth from the mouths of their horses. The mention of "smoke" here in place of the "jacinth" of the horsemen strengthens the suggestion that the two are the same (see the foregoing on "jacinth"). Compare the description of leviathan in Job 41:19-21. Expositors who identify the sixth trumpet with the ravages of the Ottoman Turks see in the "fire and smoke and brimstone" a reference to the use of gunpowder and firearms, introduced about this time. They point out that the discharge of a musket by a mounted cavalryman could make it appear from a distance as if fire were coming out of the horse's mouth.

18. These three. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "these three plagues." The fact that these judgments are called plagues is taken by some as suggesting that a close parallel exists between the trumpets and the seven last plagues (see on ch. 8:6).

Third part. See on ch. 8:7.

Fire . . . smoke . . . brimstone. See on v. 17.

19. Mouth. John has already depicted these horses as killing men by the fire, smoke, and brimstone that issue from their mouths (see on v. 17).

Tails. These horses wreak havoc both with their heads and with their tails. Compare the locusts of the fifth trumpet, whose stings were in their tails (v. 10). With respect to the Turks, certain expositors see in these "tails" a reference to a horse's tail as a Turkish standard.

20. Rest of the men. The majority of men were not destroyed by this horrible visitation, but in spite of what their fellow men had suffered they did not take the lesson to heart as they should have done, and repent.

Works of their hands. Particularly the idols they had made (see Deut. 4:28; Ps. 135:15; Jer. 1:16). In modern days men who give to the structures of their own inventive genius greater importance in their lives than they do to God and His kingdom, stand equally condemned. While good in themselves, modern creature comforts—the works of men's hands—may often fill men's lives so fully that they become idols as much as the ancient gods of wood, stone, and metal ever were. Compare on 1 John 5:21.

Devils. Gr. *daimonia*, "demons" (see on 1 Cor. 10:20). This refers to the worship of spirits, common in ancient times and still widely practiced among many heathen groups.

Idols. As contrasted with the worship of spirits, this condemns the worship of concrete, but inanimate, objects.

Gold. Gold, silver, brass, stone, wood, are listed in the descending order of their value as materials.

Neither can see. The folly of idolatry is dramatized by the fact that these objects, worshiped as gods, have not even the common powers of an animal, much less a man (see Ps. 115:4-7; Jer. 10:5; Dan. 5:23).

21. Murders. The sin of idolatry against God often leads to crimes such as those here listed (see Rev. 21:8; 22:15; cf. Gal. 5:20).

Sorceries. See on ch. 18:23.

Fornication. Gr. *porneia*, "prostitution," "unchastity," a general term denoting every imaginable kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.

Thefts. See 1 Cor. 6:10.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 9

One of the first Biblical expositors on record to identify the Turks as the power portrayed under the sixth trumpet was the Swiss reformer, Heinrich Bullinger (d. A.D. 1575), although Martin Luther had already set forth this trumpet as symbolic of Moslems. However, on the dating of this trumpet, as of the fifth, commentators have shown wide divergence, although the decided majority of expositors have assigned dates for the fifth trumpet during the period in which the Saracens were in the ascendancy, and for the sixth trumpet

during the heyday of either the Seljuk or the Ottoman Turks.

In 1832 William Miller made a new approach to the dating of these trumpets by connecting them chronologically (in the fifth of a series of articles in the Vermont *Telegraph*). On the basis of the year-day principle (see on Dan. 7:25), Miller calculated the five months of the fifth trumpet (Rev. 9:5) to be 150 literal years, and the hour, day, month, and year of the sixth to be 391 years and 15 days. Many expositors before Miller had adopted these same calculations, but they had not connected the two periods chronologically. Miller set forth the view that the time period of the sixth trumpet followed immediately upon that of the fifth, so as to make the entire period one of 541 years and 15 days. This period he dated from A.D. 1298, when he considered the first attack by the Ottoman Turks on the Byzantine Empire occurred, to 1839. Thus, according to his view, both trumpets represented the Ottoman Turks, the fifth, their rise and the sixth, their period of domination.

In 1838 Josiah Litch, one of Miller's associates in the second advent movement in America, revised Miller's dates to A.D. 1299 to 1449 for the fifth trumpet, and 1449 to 1840 for the sixth. Litch accepted the date July 27, 1299, for the battle of Bapheum, near Nicomedia, which he took as the first attack by the Ottoman Turks on the Byzantine Empire. He saw the date 1449 as significant of the collapse of Byzantine power, for toward the end of 1448 a new Byzantine emperor, Constantine Palaeologus, had requested permission of the Turkish sultan Murad II before daring to ascend his throne, and he did not, in fact, receive the crown until January 6, 1449, after such permission had been granted. Litch believed that this 150-year period constituted the time during which the Ottoman Turks "tormented" (see v. 5) the Byzantine Empire.

As already stated, Litch set 1299 as the beginning of the fifth trumpet, to be more exact, July 27, 1299, his date for the battle of Bapheum. He gave to this fifth trumpet a period of 150 years. This brought him to July 27, 1449, for the beginning of the sixth trumpet. Adding on 391 years brought him to July 27, 1840. The 15 days carried him over into the month of August of that year. He predicted that in that month the power of the Turkish Empire would be overthrown. However, at the outset he did not fix on a precise day in August. A short time before the expiration of this period he declared that the Turkish Empire would be broken August 11, which is exactly 15 days beyond July 27, 1840.

At that time world attention was directed to events taking place in the Turkish Empire. In June, 1839, Mohammed Ali, pasha of Egypt and nominally a vassal of the sultan, had rebelled against his overlord. He defeated the Turks and captured their navy. At this juncture Mahmud II, the sultan, died, and the ministers of his successor, Abdul Mejid, proposed a settlement to Mohammed Ali by which he would receive the hereditary pashalik of Egypt, and his son Ibrahim, the rulership of Syria. However, Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia, who all had interests in the Near East, intervened at this point and insisted that no agreement between the Turks and Mohammed Ali be made without their consultation. Negotiations were protracted until the summer of 1840, when, on July 15, Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia signed the Treaty of London, proposing to back with force the terms suggested the previous year by the Turks. It was about this time that Litch announced that he anticipated Turkish power to come to an end on August 11. On that day the Turkish emissary, Rifat Bey, arrived at Alexandria with the terms of the London Convention. On that day also the ambassadors of the four powers received a communication from the sultan inquiring as to what measures were to be taken in reference to a circumstance vitally affecting his empire. He was told that "provision had been made," but he could not know what it was. Litch interpreted these events as a recognition by the Turkish government that its independent power was gone.

These events, coming at the specified time of Litch's prediction, exercised a wide influence upon the thinking of those in America who were interested in the Millerite movement. Indeed, this prediction

by Litch went far to give credence to other, as yet unfulfilled, time prophecies—particularly that of the 2300 days—which were being preached by the Millerites. Thus this occurrence in 1840 was a significant factor in building up the expectation of the second advent three years later (see GC 334, 335).

It should be made clear, however, that commentators and theologians in general have been greatly divided over the meaning of the 5th and 6th trumpets. This has been due principally to problems in three areas: (1) the meaning of the symbolism itself; (2) the meaning of the Greek; (3) the historical events and dates involved. But to canvass adequately these problems would carry us beyond the space limits permissible in this commentary.

Generally speaking, the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the fifth and sixth trumpets, particularly as touching the time period involved, is essentially that of Josiah Litch.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

5, 14, 15 GC 334

CHAPTER 10

1 A mighty strong angel appeareth with a book open in his hand. 6 He sweareth by him that liveth for ever, that there shall be no more time. 9 John is commanded to take and eat the book.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

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1. I saw. See on chs. 1:1; 4:1. Chapters 10:1 to 11:14 constitute a parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets. This parenthesis is similar to that of ch. 7, which comes between the sixth and seventh seals.

Another mighty angel. That is, in addition to the angels who had earlier appeared. He is apparently distinct from the

angels who hold the four winds (ch. 7:1), from those with the seven trumpets (ch. 8:2), from the angel at the altar (ch. 8:3), and from those in the river Euphrates (ch. 9:14). This angel may be identified as Christ (see EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 10:1-11). Here, as Lord of history, he makes the proclamation of v. 6.

Come down from heaven. Although the focus of the vision is now upon a heavenly being, its locale is still the earth.

Clothed. Gr. *periballō*, "to throw about," "to envelop," "to clothe." The angel is seen enveloped in a cloud. The Scriptures frequently associate clouds with appearances of Christ (see Dan. 7:13; Acts 1:9; Rev. 1:7; 14:14; cf. Ps. 104:3; 1 Thess. 4:17).

Rainbow. Compare Rev. 4:3; Eze. 1:26-28. The angel's face, "as it were the sun," shining through the cloud with which he is enveloped may be thought of as the occasion for the rainbow. Compare on Gen. 1:12, 13.

As it were the sun. Compare the description of Christ in ch. 1:16.

Feet. To compare feet to pillars appears incongruous, but the word "feet" (*podes*) is doubtless used here in the sense of the lower extremities, the legs and feet, which are likened to pillars of fire (cf. S. of Sol. 5:15; cf. on Eze. 1:7).

Pillars of fire. Compare the description of the feet of Christ in ch. 1:15.

2. In his hand. Compare the symbolism of Eze. 2:9.

A little book. Gr. *biblaridion*, "a little scroll," a diminutive form of *biblos*, "book," "scroll." In the NT *biblaridion* appears only in the present chapter. As contrasted with the scroll (*biblion*) in the hand of God in ch. 5:1, this little scroll is distinctly smaller. Compare the symbolism of Eze. 2:9.

Open. The Greek implies that the book has been opened and still is open. By contrast, the previous scroll was sealed with seven seals (ch. 5:1). Daniel had been instructed to "shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end" (ch. 12:4). This admonition applies particularly to the part of Daniel's prophecies that deals with the last days (see on ch. 12:4), and doubtless especially to the time element of the 2300 days (ch. 8:14) as it relates to the preaching of the first, second, and third angels' messages (Rev. 14:6-12). Inasmuch as the message of the present angel deals with time, and presumably with events at the time of the end, when the book of Daniel was to be unsealed (Dan. 12:4), it seems reasonable to conclude that the little book open in the hand of the angel was the book of Daniel. With the presentation to John of the little book open, the sealed portions of Daniel's prophecy are revealed. The time element, pointing out the end of the 2300-day prophecy, is made clear. Consequently the present chapter focuses upon the time when the proclamation of vs. 6, 7 was made, that is, during the years 1840 to 1844 (see on v. 6; see EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 10:1-11).

Upon the sea . . . on the earth. Sea and earth are used repeatedly to designate the world as a whole (see Ex. 20:4, 11; Ps. 69:34). The fact that the angel stands upon both sea and earth implies the worldwide proclamation of his message, and also his power and authority over the world.

3. Loud voice. Compare chs. 1:10; 5:2; 6:10; 7:2.

When a lion roareth. Only the deep, resounding note of the angel's voice is emphasized. What he said is not recorded.

Seven thunders. Another in the various series of sevens that characterize the Revelation (see on ch. 1:11).

4. I was about to write. John understands the voices of the seven thunders, and is prepared to record their message. The present passage indicates that John recorded the visions of the Revelation as they were shown him, and not at a later date.

Seal up. Like Daniel, long before, John is now bidden to "seal up" the revelation that had come to him (see Dan. 12:4). Paul also, in vision, had heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). The messages of the seven thunders obviously were not a revelation for the people of John's day. They doubtless revealed details of the messages that were to be proclaimed at "the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4; cf. on Rev. 10:2). Thus they may be understood as

a portrayal of events that would occur in connection with the proclamation of the first and second angels' messages (ch. 14:6-8; see EGW Supplementary Material on ch. 10:1-11).

5. Lifted up his hand. A gesture characteristic of the utterance of an oath, in ancient times as now (see Gen. 14:22, 23; Deut. 32:40; Eze. 20:15; Dan. 12:7).

6. Liveth. Compare chs. 1:18; 4:9; 15:7.

Who created. Compare Ex. 20:11; Ps. 146:6. No more solemn oath could be made (see Heb. 6:13). In swearing by the Creator, the angel, who is Christ (see on Rev. 10:1), swears by himself.

There should be time no longer. Gr. *chronos ouketi estai,* "time no more shall be." This cryptic declaration has been variously interpreted. Many expositors have understood it to mark the end of time, as such, and the beginning of eternity. Others have taken the word "time" in the sense of the time that elapses before the final events of history, and so have translated, "there shall be no more delay."

Seventh-day Adventists have generally understood these words to describe particularly the message proclaimed in the years 1840-1844 by William Miller and others in connection with the close of the 2300-day prophecy. They have understood the "time" to be prophetic time, and its end to signify the close of the longest time prophecy, that of the 2300 days of Dan. 8:14. After this there is to be no further message bearing on a definite time. No time prophecy extends beyond 1844.

7. Days. Some commentators have taken "days" here as prophetic year-days. Whether these are to be understood as days or years seems to make little difference, for the expression itself is general, and coming after the declaration of v. 6, they cannot specify a measurable time period (see on v. 6). The sense of the passage is that at the time of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God is to be completed. In God's plan this event was to follow upon the proclamation that "there should be time no longer" (v. 6). Compare the declaration under the seventh plague, "It is done" (ch. 16:17).

The seventh angel. See ch. 11:15-19 for events.

When he shall begin. Or, "when he shall sound." The seventh trumpet marks a climactic point in the great controversy between Christ and Satan, as revealed by the proclamation of the voices in heaven at that time (ch. 11:15).

The mystery of God. For comment on the word "mystery" see on Rev. 1:20; cf. on Rom. 11:25. Jesus used a similar phrase, "the mystery of the kingdom of God" (Mark 4:11), and Paul also speaks of "the mystery of God" (Col. 2:2) and "the mystery of Christ" (Col. 4:3). The mystery of God, that which He reveals to His children, is His purpose for them—the plan of redemption. Compare 1 Tim. 3:16; 6T 19.

Should be finished. See on ch. 11:15.

His servants the prophets. The declaration and exposition of the mystery of God (see the foregoing on "the mystery of God") has ever been the burden of His servants the prophets in their messages to men (see on Rom. 3:21).

8. The voice. Doubtless the voice that had forbidden John to write what had been declared by the seven thunders (v. 4), as shown by the repetition of the phrase "from heaven," and by the adverb "again."

Go and take. John is called upon to act a part in the vision.

The little book. See on v. 2.

Open. See on v. 2.

In the hand. See on v. 2.

The sea . . . the earth. See on v. 2.

9. Give me. John is placed here in the position of expressing his desire for the book. He acts the part of those who proclaimed the advent message in the years 1840-1844. Though mistaken in expecting Christ to return in 1844, they nevertheless were led of God, and found the message of the near advent precious to their souls. Their computation of the time element in the prophecy of Dan. 8:14 was correct (see comment there), but they were mistaken as to the nature of the event to take place at the end of the 2300 days.

Eat it up. Compare the symbolism in Eze. 3:1 (cf. Jer. 15:16). To eat up the book may be thought of as a figure of speech for comprehending fully the meaning of the message contained in the little roll. John's experience in Rev. 10:10 well describes

that of the advent believers as they came more fully to understand the meaning of the three angels' messages (ch. 14:6-12) in relation to the true fulfillment of the 2300-day prophecy.

Make thy belly bitter. See on v. 10. The order of the elements in vs. 9 and 10 is a familiar form of Hebrew parallelism (see on chs. 1:2; 9:17).

"It shall make thy belly bitter . . ."
"It shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. . . ."
"It was in my mouth sweet as honey . . ."
"My belly was bitter."

In thy mouth sweet. See on v. 10.

10. I took. See on v. 9.

Sweet as honey. Compare Eze. 3:3. As in Ezekiel's experience, God's messages to His servants have often been a mixture of sweetness and bitterness, for they may reveal both His love and His judgments. Prophets of God have experienced both the ecstacy of divine vision and the bitterness of delivering messages of rebuke to men.

In a specific sense the experience that came to John here in vision may be seen as typical of that of the advent believers in the years 1840-1844. When these believers first heard the message of the imminent second coming, it was to them "sweet as honey." But when Christ did not come as they expected, their experience was indeed bitter. Compare on v. 9.

My belly was bitter. See above on "sweet as honey."

11. He. Christ, the "angel" of vs. 1, 9.

Thou must prophesy again. Compare Eze. 3:1, 4. Though John's eating of the roll had ended in bitterness, Christ's reassuring words to the prophet are that he is now to prophesy again. The word translated "must" is in an emphatic position in the Greek. John, as a representative of the advent believers after the disappointment, is placed under strong obligation to deliver a further message. A great work remains to be done. They must go forth and proclaim the message of the third angel, of Rev. 14:9-12.

Before. Or, "about." Either meaning suits the context. The messages would be both "before many peoples . . ." and "about many peoples."

Many peoples. As the full meaning of the third angel's message dawned upon the advent believers, more and more they came to realize that it was a message for the world, that it was to be proclaimed "before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." This conviction has resulted in one of the most widespread programs of world evangelization that Christian history has seen, as Seventh-day Adventists have gone forth to proclaim "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (ch. 14:6) the message committed to them.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11 5T 454; 9T 123

CHAPTER 11

3 The two witnesses prophesy. 6 They have power to shut heaven, that it rain not. 7 The beast shall fight against them, and kill them. 8 They lie unburied, 11 and after three days and a half rise again. 14 The second woe is past. 15 The seventh trumpet soundeth.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thou-

sand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; *and,* behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

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1. There was given. The line of thought in ch. 10 carries over into ch. 11.

A reed. This reed was to be used as a measuring rod. Compare the symbolism of Eze. 40:3, 6; Zech. 2:1, 2.

The angel stood. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words (cf. R.S.V.).

Rise. John is bidden to enter into the action of the vision.

Measure. On the basis of Zechariah's symbol of the man with a measuring line who measured Jerusalem as an assurance that the city would be rebuilt (see on Zech. 2:2), it may be suggested that the measuring of the temple and worshipers here is also a promise of restoration and preservation. Between the sixth and seventh seals is a parenthetical assurance that in spite of the terrors that attend the second coming of Christ, God has a people who will stand (see Rev. 7; cf. on ch. 6:17). Similarly, the present parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets may also be intended as a reassurance that in the midst of the horrors attendant on the blowing of the trumpets, God's temple—that is, the plan of redemption portrayed there—and His true worshipers are secure.

This restoration and preservation of God's temple would seem also to have a particular application to the fuller understanding of the meaning of Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary that has come since 1844.

Temple. Gr. *naos* (see on chs. 3:12; 7:15;

cf. ch. 11:19). Following the great disappointment of October 22, 1844, the attention of the Adventist believers was directed to the heavenly sanctuary and to the work of Christ as high priest in that sanctuary. That the reference is not to the literal temple in Jerusalem may be deduced from the fact that when John received his visions, the temple lay in ruins. Because of the rejection of the Jews as God's chosen representatives (see on Matt. 21:43; see Vol. IV, pp. 26-33), that temple will never be restored as a divinely recognized center of worship (see on Eze. 40:1). Consequently "them that worship" are not literal Jews worshiping in their literal temple, but those who direct their worship to the heavenly temple, where Christ ministers in behalf of His children (Heb. 8:1, 2). In a special sense and in the context of this prophecy, the measuring takes place at a specific period in the history of the church.

Them that worship. That is, true spiritual Israel, the people of God, as contrasted with the "Gentiles" (v. 2). The measurement of worshipers suggests a work of judgment (see EGW Supplementary Material on this verse).

2. The court. In the temple of Herod, which John had known well, there was an inner court divided into the Court of the Women, the Court of Israel, and the Court of the Priests. Beyond these was a great outer court, the Court of the Gentiles. A barrier—a "middle wall of partition" (Eph. 2:14)—divided the outer and inner courts, and no Gentile was allowed to pass the barrier on pain of death (see Vol. V, p. 67). In view of the fact that the court mentioned here is "given unto the Gentiles," it would appear that John has this great outer court particularly in mind. The court has been regarded as representing this earth in contrast with "the temple of God" in heaven (v. 1).

Leave out. John is to measure none but the worshipers of God, those who have a right to enter within the barrier where Israelites alone could go. Only such can hope to be preserved from the final judgments that fall on the earth.

Given unto the Gentiles. As was true of the Court of the Gentiles in the earthly Temple. Here "Gentiles" may be understood as those who are not worshipers, who have not confessed themselves as belonging to the Israel of God.

The holy city. That is, Jerusalem (Dan. 9:24; cf. Luke 21:20). The giving over of the outer court to the Gentiles involves the downtreading of the Holy City. For the symbolic significance of Jerusalem see below under "tread under foot."

Tread under foot. The present passage is parallel with the description in Dan. 7:7, 23, which delineates a treading down by the fourth beast (see on Dan. 7:7, 8, 25). Inasmuch as this beast's activities are directed particularly against the "saints of the most High" (Dan. 7:25), it is not illogical to understand that "the holy city" here represents the people of God.

Forty and two months. This period is clearly identical with the "time and times and the dividing of time" of Dan. 7:25 (see comment there).

3. I will give power. The passage reads literally, "I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy," that is, I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy.

My two witnesses. A variety of interpretations of this symbol have been proposed. The allusions of vs. 5, 6 have led some to identify these witnesses as Elijah and Moses (see on vs. 5, 6), but the significance of these "two witnesses" goes beyond this. In v. 4 they are identified as "two olive trees" and "two candlesticks," symbols drawn from Zech. 4:1-6, 11-14. There they are said to represent "the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (v. 14). As the olive branches are portrayed furnishing oil for the lamps of the sanctuary (v. 12), so from these holy ones before the throne of God the Holy Spirit is imparted to men (see on Zech. 4:6, 14; see COL 408; cf. TM 338). Inasmuch as the fullest expression of the Holy Spirit to men is contained in the Scriptures of the OT and the NT, they may be considered to be the two witnesses (see GC 267; cf. on John 5:39). Concerning the Word of God the psalmist declares, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"; "the entrance of thy words giveth light" (Ps. 119:105, 130; cf. Prov. 6:23).

They shall prophesy. In spite of the dom-

inance of evil during the period of 1260 days (see on v. 2), the Spirit of God, especially as manifested in the Scriptures, would nevertheless bear His witness to those men who would receive Him.

A thousand two hundred and threescore days. A period identical with the "forty and two months" of v. 2 (see comment there).

Clothed in sackcloth. Wearing sackcloth was a common sign of mourning (2 Sam. 3:31) and of penitence (Jonah 3:6, 8). Thus the Scriptures might be described as being in mourning at a time when human traditions are in the ascendancy (see on Dan. 7:25).

4. The two olive trees. See on v. 3.

The two candlesticks. Or, "the two lampstands" (see on ch. 1:12). See on ch. 11:3.

Standing before . . . God. See on Zech. 4:14; Rev. 11:3.

5. Will hurt. That is, wishes to hurt, or is minded to hurt.

Fire proceedeth. This is reminiscent of Elijah's judgment on the messengers of Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10, 12). Ultimately, those who persist in resisting the witness of the Holy Spirit will be destroyed in the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:15).

Mouth. The singular form is doubtless used collectively for "mouths." Such a usage is common in Greek, as, for example, with "heart" (Matt. 15:8; Mark 6:52), "face" (Matt. 17:6; Acts 7:45).

6. Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority." *Exousia* occurs twice in this verse and in both instances is translated "power."

Shut heaven. As in v. 5, this appears also to be an allusion to Elijah, who predicted that there would be no rain in Israel for "these years, but according to my word" (1 Kings 17:1), or, as Luke gives it, "three years and six months" (Luke 4:25; cf. James 5:17).

Waters . . . to blood. The allusions thus far regarding these witnesses are reminiscent of Elijah (see the foregoing and on v. 5); this one appears to point to Moses and the first plague upon Egypt (Ex. 7:19-21).

All plagues. Not only do the witnesses have the power to call down on their enemies the same plague as that which fell first on Egypt, but they have authority to call down any of the plagues.

7. When they shall have finished. That is, at the end of the 1260 days (see Rev. 11:3; see on Dan. 7:25).

The beast. Gr. *to thērion,* "the wild beast." Thus far John has mentioned no "beast" (*thērion;* the "four beasts" of ch. 4:6 are not really beasts; see comment there). Yet the expression *"the* beast" seems to imply that the reader will understand which beast this is. Two interpretations of this symbol have been set forth.

Commentators who hold that the expression "the beast" implies some previous identification, since such identification is not to be found in the Revelation, find it in the book of Daniel, where the beast par excellence is the fourth beast of Dan. 7. Furthermore, they point out that that beast came up out of the sea, and the present beast "ascendeth out of the bottomless pit [*abussos*]," which in the OT has a definite association with the sea (see on Rev. 9:1). According to this view the power symbolized by the fourth beast of Daniel, and particularly its latter phase, would be the power that kills the two witnesses.

Other commentators identify this beast as a power that would seek to destroy the Scriptures (symbolized by the two witnesses) at the close of the 1260-day period, in A.D. 1798 (see on Dan. 7:25). Inasmuch as atheism was particularly popular in France at this time, and the anti-religious spirit of the day naturally militated against the use of and belief in Scripture, the First French Republic has been identified as the beast of the present passage. Seventh-day Adventists have generally held the latter view.

The bottomless pit. Gr. *abussos* (see on ch. 9:1; cf. the foregoing on "the beast"). With respect to France, the fact that the beast comes out of the bottomless pit has been understood as indicating that the nation had no foundation—it was an atheistical power. A new form of satanic power manifested itself (see GC 269).

Shall . . . kill them. That is, attempt to destroy the Word of God. For the manner in which France made war on religion see on v. 9.

8. Bodies. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading "body." However, the singular form would

be used collectively as is the term "mouth" in v. 5 (see comment there).

Shall lie. To leave a dead body unburied has ever been considered a revolting indignity (cf. Ps. 79:2, 3). See on Rev. 11:9.

The great city. The fact that this city is said to be the one "where also our Lord was crucified" would seem to identify it as Jerusalem, the "holy city" of v. 2. However, many commentators have understood the expression "where also our Lord was crucified" figuratively, as the names Sodom and Egypt are doubtless to be understood. Hence they identify "the great city" as France, which, toward the close of the 1260-year period, manifested the characteristics symbolized by these expressions. Generally speaking, Seventh-day Adventists hold this latter view.

Spiritually. Gr. *pneumatikōs,* that is, not literally, but by a spiritual figure of speech (cf. Isa. 1:10).

Sodom. Sodom is symbolic of moral degradation (Eze. 16:46-55). Such was the condition of France during the Revolution.

Egypt. This country was known for its denial of the existence of the true God and for its defiance of the commands of God. Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice . . . ? I know not the Lord" (Ex. 5:2). These attitudes were characteristic of the leaders of the Revolution in France.

Crucified. That is, in the person of His followers, many of whom perished in the persecutions in France.

9. People and kindreds. Other nations. These would observe the war on the Bible in France.

Three days and an half. In harmony with the principle of prophetic interpretation, that a day stands for a year, "three days and an half" would be equivalent to three years and a half. Seventh-day Adventists, who generally understand the beast of v. 7 to represent the First French Republic (1792 to 1804), especially in terms of its antireligious bias, find this prophecy fulfilled during that brief period in French revolutionary history when atheism was at its height. This period may be reckoned from November 10, 1793, when a decree, issued in Paris, abolished religion, to June 17, 1797, when, it is held, the French government removed restrictions against the practice of religion.

As is true of certain other portions of the Apocalypse, this matter of "three days and an half" has been the occasion for considerable difference of viewpoint on the part of commentators. This is true not only because of certain problems in the symbolism itself but also because of the difficulty in fixing upon certain precise dates in the history of the hectic period of the French Revolution. Fortunately, however, the exact location of this time period is not vital to an over-all understanding of the great prophetic time periods of the Bible or to an understanding of the main theme of the prophecy of which it is a part.

10. Dwell upon the earth. See on ch. 3:10.

Make merry. Gr. *euphrainō,* "to rejoice," "to make merry." *Euphrainō* is translated "be merry" in Luke 12:19. Now relieved from the torment, that is, the convicting testimony, of the two witnesses, the wicked quiet their consciences by losing themselves in merriment.

Send gifts. A sign of rejoicing (see Esther 9:22).

Tormented. By the convicting power of their prophecy (see v. 3). There are few greater tortures than that of a guilty conscience. When truth and righteousness are constantly presented before the willful sinner, they often become intolerable to him.

11. After three days and an half. That is, at the end of the period during which the witnesses' bodies lie unburied and exposed to public view (see on v. 9).

Spirit of life. That is, a spirit that is life. The Greek phrase here employed is used in the LXX to translate the Heb. *ruach chayyim,* "breath of life" (Gen. 6:17; 7:15). The Hebrews virtually equated breath with life. Consequently, to say that the breath of life entered into a man was to say that he received life (see Gen. 2:7).

From God. God, the Giver of all life, raises His faithful witnesses.

Stood upon their feet. Compare 2 Kings 13:21; Eze. 37:10.

Great fear fell. A guilty conscience, which had tormented the wicked during the time of the prophecy of the two witnesses (see on v. 10), once more asserts itself. Those who had rejoiced over the

death of the witnesses now stand aghast as they behold the miracle of the resurrection of these witnesses.

12. Voice from heaven. The speaker is not identified, but presumably he is God.

Come up hither. Not only are the witnesses resurrected by God; they are bidden to enter heaven. Thus while "their enemies" behold "them" they are completely vindicated from the outrages they had suffered, and the truth of the prophecy they had faithfully proclaimed for 1260 days is demonstrated to all. The voice of God Himself has welcomed them to heaven, before the very eyes of those who had sought to destroy them.

This exaltation of the witnesses has been understood as symbolizing the remarkable popularity that the Scriptures have enjoyed since the early 19th century. Soon after the French Revolution various national Bible societies were established. Particularly notable among these were the British and Foreign Bible Society, founded in 1804, and the American Bible Society, organized in 1816. These societies, with others, have circulated Scripture portions in more than 1,500 languages. Thus in the last century and a half, the Bible, rather than being relegated to oblivion as a spiritual guide, has come to enjoy its widest circulation.

Ascended . . . in a cloud. As Jesus bade His disciples farewell, a cloud "received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). So also the two witnesses are carried to heaven in a cloud. The figure fittingly describes the exaltation of the Scriptures in the period following their suppression in France (see on Rev. 11:9; cf. Dan. 4:22).

Enemies beheld them. See the foregoing on "come up hither."

13. Same hour. That is, almost immediately after the ascension of the witnesses.

A great earthquake. The symbol of an earthquake is used repeatedly in Scripture to portray the turmoil and upheaval that characterize the world immediately preceding the second advent (see Mark 13:8; Rev. 16:18). Applying the prophecy to France, commentators see in the earthquake a picture of the upheaval that shook the nation toward the close of the 18th century.

Tenth part. This is not the final earthquake, for only a fraction of the city (see on vs. 2, 8) falls at this time (cf. ch. 16:18). This earthquake signifies a temporary judgment that frightens into submission some of those who have gloried in the death of the witnesses. Some apply the expression "tenth part of the city" to the entire nation of France on the basis that France was one of the "ten kings" to arise from the fallen Roman Empire (Dan. 7:24). Others identify the city as papal Rome and France as one of its ten divisions.

Of men. Gr. *onomata anthrōpōn,* literally, "names of men." Some take the word *onomata,* "names," here in the sense of "persons" (see on Acts 3:16). Others apply *onomata* to titles, offices, or orders that were suppressed during the French Revolution.

Seven thousand. Comparatively a small number of persons are meant, but enough to bring survivors to recognize the sovereignty of God, whose witnesses they had despised.

The God of heaven. This title occurs frequently in Daniel (see Dan. 2:18, 19, 37, 44; cf. Ezra 5:11, 12; 6:9; 7:12).

14. The second woe. That is, the judgments under the sixth trumpet, which ended in 1840 (see ch. 8:13; cf. ch. 9:12; see Additional Note on Chapter 9).

The third woe. That is, the events portrayed under the seventh trumpet (vs. 15-19).

15. The seventh angel. This marks the beginning of the third woe (see on v. 14) and the end of the parenthesis between the sixth and seventh trumpets (chs. 10:1 to 11:14; see on ch. 11:1). Seventh-day Adventists date its beginning as 1844 (see on v. 19).

Great voices. These were probably those of the heavenly hosts (cf. ch. 5:11, 12). Similarly, in the seventh plague, a great voice is heard from the temple in heaven (ch. 16:17).

Kingdoms. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "kingdom." Christ receives the kingdom a short time prior to His return to this earth (see on Dan. 7:14). At the time of His coming all earthly opposition is crushed (see on Rev. 17:14).

His Christ. That is, His Anointed (see

Ps. 2:2). The hosts of heaven, who themselves have not received salvation through Christ, refer to Him as "his [God's] Christ," probably because the title "Christ" particularly refers to the second person of the Godhead in His function as the One anointed for the work of redemption.

He shall reign for ever. See Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27; Luke 1:33.

16. The four and twenty elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Fell upon their faces. Compare ch. 4:10.

17. Lord God Almighty. See on ch. 1:8. A particularly fitting title for God as victor.

Which art. See on ch. 1:4.

And wast. See on ch. 1:4.

And art to come. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words. They probably are omitted from the complete formula of ch. 1:4 because here the focus of the elders' praise is on the past and present position of God rather than on the future.

Hast taken . . . hast reigned. The tenses of the Greek may be rendered better, "hast taken . . . didst reign," that is, hast taken and didst begin to reign. The triumphant reign begins with God's asserting His omnipotence. God has ever been all powerful, and the reign of sin has been only by His sufferance, that the true nature of evil might be revealed to created beings. When that purpose has been accomplished, then He takes His "great power" and once more reigns supreme. See 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

18. Nations were angry. Compare Ps. 2:1. Such will be the condition of the nations prior to the coming of Christ. They will band together to oppose the work and people of Christ (see on Rev. 13:12; 14:8).

Wrath. The wrath of God is summed up in the seven last plagues (ch. 15:1). The work of opposition against Christ is brought to a halt by these plagues.

Time. Gr. *kairos*, a particular time with a definite purpose (see on ch. 1:3). This is a time of judgment, both of reward and of destruction.

That they should be judged. The mention of both reward and destruction indicates that John is speaking of the final judgment, which takes place after the millennium (ch. 20:12-15).

Reward unto thy servants. See Matt. 5:12; 6:1; 1 Cor. 3:8; Rev. 22:12. Since the events enumerated are sequential (see EW 36), the reward here spoken of is the inheritance of the new earth at the close of the millennium.

Prophets. God's special servants, who speak forth for Him. This class has borne heavy responsibilities and has often suffered most severely for their Lord.

Saints. Or, "holy ones." The members of the body of Christ characterized by the purity of their lives.

Them that fear. Gr. *hoi phoboumenoi*, a term used in the Acts for those who, though not fully proselytes to Israel, nevertheless worshiped the true God (see on Acts 10:2). If the same general meaning is intended here, this third class to receive a reward in the judgment may be understood as those who have not completely known Christ and His way, but who have lived in the fullness of the light that has come to them. Because they have feared the name of God, as He has been revealed to them, they too receive a reward (see DA 638). On the other hand, the phrase *hoi phoboumenoi* may simply be in apposition with the word translated "saints." The passage would then read, "the saints, even those fearing thy name."

Small and great. Worldly status is meaningless in the final judgment.

Destroy them which destroy. The fate of the wicked, who have destroyed the earth —physically, and also spiritually—is strikingly fitting. They themselves are destroyed.

19. The temple. There is opened before John a view of God's heavenly temple, with "the ark of his testament" the focal point of the vision. Now, in the typical sanctuary, which was a "copy of the true one" (Heb. 9:24, RSV) in heaven, the ark was in the most holy place, which was the center of the service of the Day of Atonement—a typical day of judgment. It is in connection with the beginning of the seventh trumpet that John sees the temple in heaven and very particularly "the ark of his testament." This indicates that the second and last division of Christ's heavenly ministry, answering to the typical Day of Atonement, has opened. Other scriptures reveal that this final phase of Christ's work began in 1844

(see on Dan. 8:14). Accordingly, Seventh-day Adventists place the beginning of the seventh trumpet in that year.

Ark of his testament. The ark in the typical sanctuary was the depository of the Ten Commandments, God's immutable moral law for all men in all ages. No believer in God in Jewish times could think of the ark without becoming immediately conscious of the Ten Commandments. John's vision of the ark above argues eloquently that in earth's last hours God's great moral law is to be central in the thinking and in the lives of all who seek to serve God in spirit and in truth (see on chs. 12:17; 14:12; cf. GC 433).

Lightnings, and voices, and thunderings. As under the seventh plague (ch. 16:18).

An earthquake. As under the seventh plague (ch. 16:18, 19; cf. on ch. 11:13).

Great hail. As under the seventh plague (ch. 16:21).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 TM 17; 7T 219
2-11 GC 266
3, 4 GC 267, 269
5, 7 GC 268
7 GC 273, 287
8 GC 269
10 GC 274
11, 12 GC 287
15 GC 301
18 EW 36; 6T 14
19 CW 30; EW 32, 42, 252; GC 415, 433; PP 356; SR 377, 379; 1T 76; 2T 693; 6T 368

CHAPTER 12

1 A woman clothed with the sun travaileth. 4 The great red dragon standeth before her, ready to devour her child: 6 when she was delivered she fleeth into the wilderness. 7 Michael and his angels fight with the dragon, and prevail. 13 The dragon being cast down into the earth, persecuteth the woman.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child.*

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

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1. There appeared. Chapter 12 begins a new line of prophecy, which continues to the end of the book. This section of prophecy sets forth the church of God in conflict with the powers of evil, and the church's ultimate triumph over them.

Wonder. Gr. *sēmeion,* "a sign," "a mark," "a token," from *sēmainō,* "to give a sign," "to signify," "to indicate" (see on ch. 1:1). The word is frequently translated "miracle" (Luke 23:8; John 4:54) where a miracle is described from the point of view of a sign of authority (see Vol. V, p. 209). In Rev. 12:1 *sēmeion* means a sign portending forthcoming events.

Heaven. Here doubtless meaning the sky, not the heaven where God dwells. For the nature of symbolic visions see on Eze. 1:10.

Woman. In OT figure the true church is at times represented by a woman (Isa. 54:5, 6; Jer. 6:2). When the church apostatized it was compared with a corrupt woman (Jer. 3:20; Eze. 23:2-4). The same figures appear in the NT (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 17:1-3).

In Rev. 12 the woman represents the true church. Since she is presented as about to give birth to Christ (see vs. 2, 4, 5) and later as being persecuted, following the ascension of Christ (vs. 5, 13-17), she represents the church of both the OT and the NT. Compare Acts 7:38.

Clothed with the sun. This may be thought of as representing the glory of God, especially as revealed in the gospel. By contrast the woman representing the false church is portrayed as arrayed in gaudy garments and as carrying a cup filled with abominations (ch. 17:4).

Moon. This symbol is understood by many commentators as representing the system of types and shadows of OT times, which were eclipsed by the greater revelation that came through Christ. The ceremonial law, being fulfilled in the life and death of Christ, could well be represented by the moon, which shines with light borrowed from the sun.

Crown. Gr. *stephanos,* a victor's crown (see on Matt. 27:29; Rev. 2:10), not *diadēma,* a kingly crown (see on ch. 12:3).

Twelve stars. In general commentators have applied this symbol to either the 12 patriarchs or the 12 apostles or to both. Since the principal emphasis in ch. 12 is on the NT church, the emphasis is doubtless on the 12 apostles. At the same time, the picture of 12 tribes is also carried over into the NT church (see on Rev. 7:4).

2. With child. The church is presented at the time the Messiah is about to be born. Some see a reference to Isa. 7:14. For the figure of a travailing woman see Isa. 26:17; 66:7, 8.

3. Wonder. Gr. *sēmeion* (see on v. 1).

Red dragon. In v. 9 the power thus represented is identified as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." Here the symbol represents Satan as working through pagan Rome, the power ruling the world when Jesus was born (see on v. 4; cf. GC 438). The dragon is described as "red," probably because of the fact that in all his connection with the church of God he has appeared in the role of persecutor and destroyer. It has been his studied purpose to destroy the children of the Most High.

Seven Heads. Seven heads appear also on the beast John saw rising from the sea (Rev. 13:1), and on the scarlet-colored beast (ch. 17:3). The heads in ch. 17:9, 10 are identified as "seven mountains"

and "seven kings." It seems reasonable to conclude that the seven heads of the dragon represent political powers that have championed the cause of the dragon, and through which the dragon has exercised his persecuting power. Some hold that the number "seven" is here used as a round number denoting completeness, and that it is not necessary to find precisely seven nations through whom Satan has operated. Compare on ch. 17:9, 10.

For a description of the seven-headed serpent in ancient mythology see on Isa. 27:1. The Talmud also mentions a dragon with seven heads (*Ḳiddushin* 29b, Soncino ed., p. 141).

Ten horns. The beast of ch. 13 and that of ch. 17 also had ten horns each. Some hold the ten horns of the dragon to be identical with those of these two beasts, and the latter to be identical with the ten horns of the fourth beast of Dan. 7. For an identification of the ten horns of Daniel's fourth beast see on Dan. 7:7. Others see in the ten horns of the dragon a more general designation for the minor political powers through which Satan has operated, in contrast with the seven heads, which may be regarded as representing the major political powers (see above on "seven heads"). They suggest that the number "ten" may be a round number, as so often elsewhere in Scripture (see on Luke 15:8). Compare on Rev. 17:9, 10.

Crowns. Gr. *diadēmata,* singular *diadēma,* literally, "something bound around," from *diadeō,* "to bind around." The word was used to describe the badge of kingship worn by Persian kings, a blue ribbon trimmed with white, worn on the turban. Hence the word came to be used as a badge of royalty. *Diadēmata* occurs only here and in chs. 13:1 and 19:12. *Diadēma* is contrasted with *stephanos,* also translated "crown" in the NT (Matt. 27:29; 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:8; etc.). *Stephanos* is a wreath, often signifying the garland, or chaplet, given as a prize for victory (see on 1 Cor. 9:25).

Upon his heads. The fact that the heads are wearing badges of royalty may be taken as further evidence that they represent political kingdoms (see above on "seven heads").

4. His tail drew. Literally, "his tail is drawing." In prophetic vision John saw the action in progress.

The third part. Some believe that the event here symbolized is further described in vs. 7-9, and that "the third part of the stars of heaven" represents a third of the heavenly angels, who joined Lucifer in his rebellion and were expelled from heaven (see 3T 115; 5T 291). Others interpret the "stars" as Jewish rulers, of which there were three classes—kings, priests, and the Sanhedrin. A third part being cast to the ground they interpret as Rome's taking away of the kingship from Judah.

To devour. This represents the efforts of Satan to destroy the infant Jesus. One needs only to recall the attitude of Herod as he listened to the message from the wise men (Matt. 2:16), to perceive the appropriateness of this figurative description of the event. In later years pagan Rome stood up against the "Prince of princes" (see on Dan. 8:25).

5. A man child. Literally, "a son, a male."

Rule all nations. An allusion to Ps. 2:8, 9, and clearly applicable to the Messiah. This application the Jews themselves recognized (Talmud *Sukkah* 52a, Soncino ed., p. 247). In Rev. 19:13-16 the being here described is identified as the "Word of God" and as "King of kings." See on chs. 2:27; 19:15.

Caught up. A reference to the ascension of Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:3; 10:12). For the purpose of this prophecy the symbolism passes over completely the story of the life, work, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It mentions only the ascension.

6. Wilderness. Gr. *erēmos,* "a forsaken, desert, empty place," "an uninhabited place." Here *erēmos* doubtless represents a place of seclusion or obscurity, an area or condition in which the church would be in a place of obscurity, away from the public gaze. See on ch. 17:3.

A place. This place is referred to in v. 14 as "her place." The idea is that the protection and sanctuary in obscurity here found by the woman were divinely appointed and prepared.

They. The subject is indefinite and doubtless refers to the various agencies God employed to preserve, strengthen,

and build up the church during the time when she was severely persecuted.

Feed. Gr. *trephō,* "to make to grow," "to bring up," "to rear," "to nourish." *Trephō* is rendered "nourished" in v. 14. God cares for His own. Even though the church is persecuted and driven into exile the Lord nourishes it.

Days. This period of 1260 days is referred to seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation. As 1260 days it appears in Rev. 11:3; 12:6; as 42 months in Rev. 11:2; 13:5; and as 3½ times in Dan. 7:25; 12:7; Rev. 12:14. For the calculation of this period see on Dan. 7:25. Adventists generally date this period as from A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798. During this period God's hand was over the church, preserving it from extinction.

7. And there was. Literally, "and there became."

War in heaven. John now presents briefly the history of the great controversy between Satan and Christ in heaven, from its origin to the time of Christ's victory at the cross (Rev. 12:7-9; cf. Col. 2:14, 15), the final casting out of Satan at that time to this earth (Rev. 12:10-12), and the course of the controversy on earth down to the time of the end (Rev. 12:13-16; see on Dan. 11:35). This brief survey stands as a background for the extended delineation of developments in the conflict during the time of the end, by means of which it is finally and successfully terminated (Rev. 12:17 to 20:15).

In ch. 12:9-11 John speaks most particularly of the phase of the conflict waged in heaven in connection with Christ's death on the cross. For contextual evidence that points to this conclusion see on v. 9.

Though the revelator is focusing primarily on the turning point of the controversy reached at the time of the cross, it is proper to understand the words, "there was war in heaven," as referring also to the time prior to the creation of the earth, when the hostility of the dragon began, and Lucifer aspired to be like God (see on Isa. 14:13, 14; Eze. 28:12-16). At that time he and the angels who sympathized with him were expelled from heaven (see 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The loyal angels did not then understand fully all the issues involved. But when Satan basely shed the blood of Christ, he stood exposed completely and forever before the heavenly world. Henceforth his activities were further restricted (see DA 761).

Michael. Gr. *Michaēl,* a transliteration of the Heb. *mika'el,* meaning "who [is] like God?" Michael is referred to as "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13), as "the great prince" (Dan. 12:1), and also as "the archangel" (Jude 9). Jewish literature described Michael as the highest of the angels, the true representative of God, and identified him with the angel of Jehovah (see Talmud *Yoma* 37a, Soncino ed., p. 172; Midrash Rabbah, on Gen. 18:3; Ex. 3:2, Soncino ed., pp. 411, 53). According to Midrash Rabbah, on Ex. 12:29, Michael was the angel who vindicated Israel against Satan's accusations (Soncino ed., p. 222). A careful examination of the Scripture references to Michael points to the conclusion that he is none other than our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (see on Dan. 10:13; cf. on Jude 9).

His angels. That is, the loyal angels, the "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

Dragon. See on v. 3.

His angels. That is, the angels who sided with Satan in his warfare against Christ (see on v. 4).

8. Prevailed not. Inasmuch as the phrase "war in heaven" (v. 7) may have a dual application, describing both the original controversy in heaven between Lucifer and God and the controversy on earth between Satan and the incarnate Christ, the phrase "prevailed not" would appropriately apply to both stages of the conflict. In neither was Satan successful.

Their place. This phrase may be understood either as the place once possessed, or occupied, by them, or the place once assigned them. Lucifer was at one time the covering cherub (see on Eze. 28:14), and the angels who joined him in rebellion held various positions of responsibility. These, Lucifer and his angels lost when they were cast out of heaven.

9. The great dragon. See on v. 3.

Was cast out. Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven in ages past (2 Peter

2:4), prior to the creation of this world (PP 36-42; cf. EW 145, 146; GC 498-500; 3SG 36-39; 1SP 17-33). Nevertheless, it seems that until the cross he had access to heavenly beings, and to a limited extent, possibly as "prince of this world" (John 12:31; Luke 4:6), but not as an inhabitant of heaven, to the precincts of heaven (DA 761; cf. SR 26, 27; see below on "into the earth"). However this may be, a decisive casting out occurred at the cross, as our Lord Himself declared (John 12:31, 32; cf. PP 68-70; DA 490, 679, 758). That John here (Rev. 12:9) refers most particularly to events connected with Christ's triumph on the cross is evident from the context (vs. 10-13). The following points may be noted:

1. The proclamation in vs. 10-12 by a "loud voice . . . in heaven" is more or less parenthetical, its purpose being to explain the significance of the casting down of Satan in v. 9, first with respect to the inhabitants of heaven and then to those of this earth. Following this explanatory parenthesis, v. 13 takes up the narrative of Satan's activities at the point where it was left in v. 9. Accordingly, vs. 10-12 constitute, primarily, a statement concerning the status of the plan of salvation at the point of time when Satan was "cast out into the earth."

2. The first declaration by the "loud voice" consists of a series of facts relative to Christ's triumph over Satan on the cross —the plan of "salvation" was made sure, "strength" was provided for resisting the wiles of Satan, Christ's "kingdom" was made sure, and His "power," literally, "authority," to be man's Saviour, high priest, and king was confirmed (Matt. 28:18; GC 503).

3. The reason assigned in Rev. 12:10 for this fourfold achievement is specifically said to be that "the accuser of our brethren is cast down." This clearly links these accomplishments with the casting down of v. 9.

4. At the time of the casting down of vs. 9, 10, 13 "the accuser of our brethren" had already been actively accusing "them before our God day and night." Obviously, the fall here referred to came after a period during which Satan had been accusing "the brethren," and it would therefore appear that this cannot be the original casting out of Satan prior to the creation of our earth.

5. Verse 11 specifically states that it was "the blood of the Lamb"—the death of Christ upon the cross—that had made victory over the "accuser of our brethren" possible.

Old. Gr. *archaios,* "ancient," "old," from *archē,* "beginning." Our English word "archaic" comes from *archaios.* Compare John 8:44.

Serpent. A reference to the serpent who deceived Eve (Gen. 3:1).

Devil. Gr. *diabolos,* "a slanderer" (see on Matt. 4:1).

Satan. Gr. *Satanas,* a transliteration of the Heb. *śaṭan,* meaning "adversary" (see on Zech. 3:1).

Deceiveth. Gr. *planaō,* "to cause to wander," "to lead astray," "to deceive" (see on Matt. 18:12).

World. Gr. *oikoumenē,* literally, the "inhabited [world]," from *oikeō,* "to dwell" (see on Matt. 4:8).

Into the earth. The controversy in heaven began over plans for the creation of man (see 3SG 36). When the earth was created and Adam was appointed its vicegerent, Satan directed his efforts at overthrowing the newly created man. When he succeeded in bringing about the downfall of Adam and Eve he claimed the earth as his domain (see on Matt. 4:8, 9). However, he did not confine his efforts to this earth but tempted also the inhabitants of other worlds (see EW 290). Not until the second coming of Christ will Satan be completely confined to this earth (see on Rev. 20:3; cf. EW 290; DA 490).

10. A loud voice. There is great rejoicing in the courts of heaven over the casting down of Satan and his host.

Now is come. The focus of time is the cross (see on vs. 7, 9). Well might the inhabitants of heaven rejoice, for Satan's destruction was now assured. It was certain in the plan of God before, but now heavenly intelligences joined in the song, for they had seen Satan's malignity against Christ revealed at Calvary.

Salvation. Gr. *sōtēria,* "deliverance," "preservation," "salvation," here, perhaps,

"victory." The Greek has the article, hence we should read "the victory."

Strength. Gr. *dunamis,* "power," "might," "strength." The reference here is doubtless to the display of power in the overthrow of the dragon.

Kingdom. Satan had contended that he was the rightful ruler of this world. His failure to lead Jesus into sin assured the kingdom for Christ.

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority."

His Christ. Or, "His Anointed." Christ means "anointed" (see on Matt. 1:1).

The accuser. Satan was the accuser of the brethren in OT days (see Job 1:8-12; Zech. 3:1). This role he has continued since the cross, but in a restricted sense (see on John 12:31; cf. DA 761). Rabbinical writings frequently represent Satan as the great accuser (see Talmud *Sanhedrin* 89b, Soncino ed., p. 595; Midrash Rabbah, on Ex. 32:2, Soncino ed., p. 494).

Brethren. Compare ch. 6:11.

Day and night. That is, whenever the opportunity presented itself.

11. They overcame. The mind of the prophet is absorbed in contemplation of those who have been accused by the instigator of evil. He thinks of how they have suffered, and the indignities to which they have been exposed. He remembers how amid hardships they overcame, not in their own strength, but "by the blood of the Lamb."

By the blood. Literally, "because of the blood," or "on the basis of the blood." The saints overcame because of the victory of Calvary. For the significance of the "blood" see on Rev. 1:5; cf. on Rom. 5:9.

Lamb. See on John 1:29.

By the word. Literally, "on account of the word," or "on the basis of the word."

Their testimony. That is, their personal witness concerning Jesus and the gospel.

Loved not their lives. What fidelity! Men would die rather than disobey God. See on John 12:25.

12. Rejoice, ye heavens. There was rejoicing in heaven, for the angels and the inhabitants of other worlds knew Satan was doomed by Christ's victory at Calvary.

Woe. For the church there was further persecution, hence its members could not yet rejoice.

Great wrath. He is angry because of his defeat. Rather than experience remorse and sorrow for evil, he plunges more and more deeply into iniquity. He goes forward with intensified and renewed malignity in his efforts to persecute the church of the living God. Compare 1 Peter 5:8.

Short. Gr. *oligos,* "few," "small," "little," when used of number, quantity, or size; "short," when used of time. *Oligos* is a relative term and describes that with which it is associated in terms of the context. Thus *oligos* describes the "few little fishes" in the narrative of the feeding of the 4,000 in comparison with the number that would be required to feed that multitude (Matt. 15:34). The number that find the way of life are "few" (*oligos*) compared with the number that choose the way of destruction (Matt. 7:14). Jesus laid His hands on a "few" (*oligos*) sick folks compared with the number who might have been healed had there not been such unbelief (Mark 6:5).

Oligos is used with reference to time in eight instances in the NT. In five of these instances the time element is implied in the word itself (Mark 6:31; James 4:14; 1 Peter 1:6; 5:10; Rev. 17:10) and the word is translated respectively "a while," "little time," "season," "a while," "short space." In three instances the time element is expressed by a word modified by *oligos* (Acts 14:28, which reads literally, "not a little time"; Heb. 12:10; Rev. 12:12). The length of time expressed by *oligos* is dependent upon that with which it is compared. For example, the rest described in Mark 6:31 as lasting *oligos* probably continued only a few days, or at the most a few weeks. On the other hand, in James 4:14 *oligos* describes the life span of a man. In Rev. 12:12 *oligos* defines the period of time from the casting out of Satan at the time of the crucifixion of Christ to the end of Satan's tyranny over the inhabitants of earth. This period of time is described as *oligos* in comparison with the more than 4,000 years preceding the crucifixion.

It may appear that the 2,000 years since the crucifixion, during which Satan has been actively at work against the church, is hardly a "short time" either absolutely or when compared with all the time from

Adam to the cross. However, this expression should be understood against the background of the whole tenor of the book of Revelation, which presents the second coming of Christ as near (see on ch. 1:1; cf. ch. 22:20). If Jesus is coming "quickly," then the time for Satan to work is "short." See on ch. 17:10.

13. Woman. See on v. 1. Being now unable to attack the Son of God directly, the dragon attempts to hurt the Son through the mother, by persecuting the mother of the man-child, the church (see on v. 6).

Man child. See on v. 5.

14. Two wings. The figure of eagle wings was familiar to God's ancient people. The deliverance from Pharaoh and his hosts is referred to by this figure (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11). Some see in these wings a symbol of the haste with which the church was obliged to find safety.

Nourished. See on v. 6.

A time, and times. See on v. 6.

15. Water as a flood. In Ps. 74:13 and Eze. 29:3 a dragon is identified as a water animal, hence, probably the figure of water as a symbol of destruction. Satan sought to destroy the Christian church by the inundation of false doctrines as well as by persecution (cf. on Rev. 17:15).

16. Earth helped the woman. Some hold that "earth" here represents areas where there was a scarcity of peoples, in contrast with "waters," which sometimes represent "peoples," "nations," and "tongues" (ch. 17:15). They point out that at the time of the Reformation there were multitudes of people in Europe and the Far East, but that the North American continent was very sparsely populated. Thus they point to this land as the "earth" which here brings relief to the persecuted church of the Old World. The Protestant lands of Western Europe, which became a haven from persecution, may also be included. Others point to the Protestant Reformation itself as the major factor in breaking the spell of the apostate church.

Swallowed up. That is, made ineffectual the devices of destruction.

17. Was wroth. Or, "was enraged." Failure to destroy the church in the wilderness intensifies the wrath of the dragon, so much so that he sets about with great determination to wage war upon the people of God, particularly the "remnant of her seed."

To make war. In an endeavor to destroy the Christian church. His supreme effort in this direction is still in the future (see on chs. 13:11-17; 16:12-16; cf. GC 592).

Remnant. Gr. *loipoi,* "remaining ones," from *leipō,* "to leave," "to leave behind." See Additional Note at end of chapter.

Keep the commandments. That the remnant is thus identified indicates that the commandments of God will be especially controverted in this struggle between the dragon and the church (see on ch. 14:12; see GC 445-450).

Testimony of Jesus Christ. Or, "witness of Jesus Christ." In the Greek this phrase may be understood either as the "testimony" (or "witness") Christians bear concerning Jesus, or as the "testimony" (or "witness") that originates with Jesus and is revealed to His church through the prophets (see on ch. 1:2). A comparison with ch. 19:10 clearly favors the latter interpretation. There the "testimony of Jesus" is defined as the "spirit of prophecy," meaning that Jesus is witnessing to the church through the medium of prophecy.

The close relationship between the "testimony of Jesus" and prophecy is further demonstrated by a comparison between chs. 19:10 and 22:9. In ch. 19:10 the angel identifies himself as "thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus," and in ch. 22:9 as "thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets." Thus, on the reasonable conclusion that these two expressions of the angel are parallel, those who have the testimony of Jesus are identified with the prophets. Since it is the distinctive work of the prophets to bear messages from Jesus to the people (see on ch. 1:1), the interpretation that the testimony of Jesus refers to the "testimony," or "witness," that Jesus bears to the church is strongly supported. Seventh-day Adventists thus interpret the passage and believe that the "remnant" will be distinguished by the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in their midst. The "testimony of Jesus Christ," they believe, is the witness of Jesus in their midst through the medium of the prophetic gift. See Additional Note on Chapter 19.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 12

Inasmuch as the language and imagery of the Revelation are drawn largely from the OT (see p. 725; cf. on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13; see Additional Note on Rev. 18), a correct understanding of the word "remnant" as used in Rev. 12:17 calls for consideration of its Hebrew equivalents in the setting of OT usage. The three Hebrew words most commonly used for "remnant" are: (1) *peleṭah* (or *paleṭ, paliṭ*), "what escapes," "those who escape," from *palaṭ*, "to escape," "to deliver"; (2) *she'erith* (or *she'ar*), "the rest," "what remains," "remainder," "remnant," and its verb form *sha'ar*, "to leave over," "to be left over," "to remain"; (3) *yether*, "what remains," "remainder," "remnant," from *yathar*, "to leave over," "to be left over." Instances of the use of these words with respect to God's chosen people may be classified as follows:

1. Members of Jacob's family preserved under Joseph's care in Egypt are spoken of as "a posterity," literally, "a remnant" (*she'erith;* Gen. 45:7). Here, emphasis is upon the fact of preservation. So far as is known the entire family was preserved.

2. In the midst of general apostasy Elijah protested, "I, even I only, remain [*yathar*] a prophet of the Lord" (1 Kings 18:22), "I, even I only, am left," but God declared, "I have left [*sha'ar*] me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal" (1 Kings 19:14, 18; cf. Rom. 11:4, 5).

3. A small "remnant" (*peleṭah*) of the ten tribes "escaped [*sha'ar*] out of the hand of the kings of Assyria," who had led the vast majority of the nation into captivity, and remained in Palestine (2 Chron. 30:6). By 722 B.C. Judah alone was "left" (*sha'ar*) to function as a nation (2 Kings 17:18). Accordingly, it became the "remnant" (*she'ar*) of the twelve tribes and sole heir to the covenant promises, privileges, and responsibilities that originally belonged to all twelve (Isa. 10:22; see Vol. IV, pp. 26-32).

4. A few years later Sennacherib conquered all of Judah except Jerusalem, which, in turn, is spoken of as a "remnant." This "remnant [*peleṭah*] that is escaped [*sha'ar*] of the house of Judah" was to "take root downward," to "bear fruit upward," and to "go forth" as *the* "remnant" (*she'erith*) of God's chosen people, His appointed instrument for the salvation of the world (2 Kings 19:4, 30, 31; Isa. 37:4, 31, 32; cf. Isa. 4:2; 10:20). God also purposed to "recover" a "remnant" (*she'ar*) of the Israelites and Judahites that had gone captive into Assyria, and to prepare a "highway" for this "remnant [*she'ar*] of his people," as He formerly had when their ancestors left the land of Egypt (Isa. 11:11, 12, 16).

5. When the "king of Babylon" invaded Palestine a century later, he too "left [*yether; sha'ar* in 2 Kings 25:22; cf. ch. 24:14] a remnant [*peleṭah; she'ar* in 2 Kings 25:22]" (Eze. 14:22; cf. Jer. 40:11; 42:2), which was to "escape" (*palaṭ*), that is, survive, the sword, pestilence, and famine that accompanied the siege of Jerusalem (Eze. 7:16). But Jeremiah warned that even some of this "remnant" (*yether;* ch. 39:9), or "residue [*sha'ar*] of Jerusalem," that God desired should "remain [*sha'ar*] in this land," would later be "removed into all the kingdoms of the earth" (ch. 24:8, 9). Most of this "remnant" fled to Egypt, but Jeremiah warned that "none of the remnant [*she'erith*] of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there," should "escape [*paliṭ*] or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah" (ch. 44:14).

6. The Lord promised to "leave a remnant" (*yathar*) of those taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, which would "escape the sword" and "remember" God in the lands of their captivity (Eze. 6:8, 9). A "remnant" (*she'erith*) of those in captivity (Jer. 23:3; cf. ch. 31:7) would eventually "escape [*palaṭ*] out of the land of Babylon" (ch. 50:28). Nehemiah speaks of the returned captives as "the Jews that had escaped [*peleṭah*]," "the remnant [*peleṭah*] that are left [*sha'ar*] of the captivity" (ch. 1:2, 3). To this "remnant" (*she'erith*) God entrusted all the covenant responsibilities and promises (Zech. 8:12; cf. Vol. IV, pp. 30-32), but warned that if they should again break God's commandments He would consume them, "so that

there should be no remnant [*she'erith*] nor escaping [*peleṭah*]" (Ezra 9:14).

7. Many references to the "remnant" occur in a context that clearly anticipates the Messianic kingdom (see Isa. 4:2, 3; 11:11, 16; cf. ch. 11:1-9; Jer. 23:3; cf. ch. 23:4-6; Micah 4:7; cf. ch. 4:1-8; 5:7, 8; cf. ch. 5:2-15; Zeph. 3:13).

A composite description of the "remnant" in these and other OT passages identifies the group thus designated as composed of Israelites who survived calamities such as war, captivity, pestilence, and famine, and who were spared in mercy to continue as God's chosen people (Gen. 45:7; Ezra 9:13; Eze. 7:16). Repeatedly, this "remnant" was "left [*sha'ar*] but a few of [from] many" (Jer. 42:2; cf. Isa. 10:22). Remembering the true God and turning to Him (2 Chron. 30:6; Isa. 10:20; Eze. 6:8, 9), they renounced the authority of false religious systems (1 Kings 19:18) and refused to do iniquity (Zeph. 3:13). Loyal to God's commandments (Ezra 9:14), they were "called holy" and were "written among the living in Jerusalem" (Isa. 4:3). Accepting anew the responsibilities and privileges of God's everlasting covenant, they "take root downward, . . . bear fruit upward," and "go forth" to declare His glory among the Gentiles (2 Kings 19:30, 31; Isa. 37:31, 32; 66:19).

The "remnant" of OT times is thus composed of successive generations of Israelites—God's chosen people. Again and again the majority apostatized, but each time there was a faithful "remnant" that became exclusive heirs to the sacred promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the covenant originally made with Abraham and confirmed at Sinai. This "remnant" was the formally appointed group to which God purposed to send the Messiah and through which He proposed to evangelize the heathen; it did not consist of scattered individuals as such, however faithful they might be, but was a corporate entity, God's visible, divinely commissioned organization on earth. It should also be noted that the various Hebrew terms translated "remnant" do not connote the *last* of any thing or group of people, except in the sense that, in each instance, those who "remain" are temporarily, in their generation, the last existing link in the chosen line. Ever since the days of Abraham there has been "a remnant" according to God's "grace" (cf. Rom. 11:5).

God warned those who returned from Babylonian captivity that there would be "no remnant nor escaping" should they *again* prove disloyal to Him (Ezra 9:14; cf. Deut. 19:20). Accordingly, when the Jews rejected the Messiah and renounced their allegiance to the covenant (DA 737, 738), the "kingdom of God" was to be taken from them as a people and "given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43; cf. 1 Peter 2:9, 10). This meant the permanent, irrevocable cancellation of their special standing before God *as a nation* and the transfer of the promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the covenant relationship to the Christian church (see Vol. IV, pp. 32-36).

In Rom. 9:27 Paul declares that "though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, [only] a remnant [*kataleimma*] shall be saved" (see on Rom. 9:27). He is here applying the term "remnant" of Isa. 10:22 to Jews of his day who, as individuals, had accepted Christ as the Messiah. But it was as members of the Christian church, and no longer as Jews, that they had a right to this title. In Rom. 11:5 he speaks of these Christian Jews as "a remnant [*leimma*] according to . . . grace." In chs. 9 to 11 Paul presents the Christian church as heir to the promises, privileges, and responsibilities of the everlasting covenant. Thus it is the divinely commissioned successor to Judaism as trustee of the revealed will of God, as the corporate representative of His purposes on earth, and as His chosen instrument for the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of men (see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

Aside from Rom. 9:27; 11:5; Rev. 12:17, the term "remnant" in the NT (Matt. 22:6; Rev. 11:13; 19:21) is not significant with respect to God's people. In Rev. 3:2, however, the expression "which remain" is from *loipos,* the same word translated "remnant" in ch. 12:17.

A few centuries after Christ the church experienced the great papal apostasy. For some 1260 years papal power more or less effectively suppressed and scattered God's

true representatives on earth (see Additional Note on Dan. 7; see on Dan. 7:25; cf. Rev. 12:6). Through the Reformation of the 16th century (see on ch. 12:15, 16) God purposed once more to lead forth a "remnant," this time from mystical Babylon. Various Protestant groups served as Heaven's appointed harbingers of truth, point by point restoring the glorious gospel of salvation. But group after group became satisfied with its partial concept of truth and failed to advance as light from God's Word increased. With each refusal to advance, God raised up another group as His chosen instrument for the proclamation of truth.

Finally, with the passing of the 1260 years of papal supremacy (see on ch. 12:6, 14) and the arrival of the "time of the end," the time when Heaven's last message (ch. 14:6-12) was to be proclaimed to the world (see on Dan. 7:25; 11:35), God raised up another "remnant," the one designated in Rev. 12:17 (cf. vs. 14-17). This is *the* "remnant" of the long and worthy line of God's chosen people that has survived the fierce onslaughts of the dragon down through history, most particularly the darkness, persecution, and error of the "time, and times, and half a time," or 1260 "days" of vs. 6, 14. It is God's *last* "remnant" by virtue of the fact that it is the appointed herald of His final appeal to the world to accept the gracious gift of salvation (ch. 14:6-12).

From the very first, Seventh-day Adventists have boldly proclaimed the three messages of ch. 14:6-12 as God's last appeal to sinners to accept Christ, and have humbly believed their movement to be the one here designated as the "remnant." No other religious body is proclaiming this composite message, and none other meets the specifications laid down in ch. 12:17. Hence none other has a valid, scriptural basis for claiming to be "*the* remnant" of v. 17.

However, Adventists repudiate emphatically and unequivocally any thought that they alone are children of God and have a claim upon heaven. They believe that all who worship God in full sincerity, that is, in terms of all the revealed will of God that they understand, are presently potential members of that final "remnant" company mentioned in ch. 12:17. Adventists believe that it is their solemn task and joyous privilege to make God's last testing truths so clear and so persuasive as to draw all of God's children into that prophetically foretold company that is making ready for the day of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

3 EW 92
3, 4 GC 438
4 3T 115; 5T 291
6 GC 55, 266; SR 331
7 EW 146; 3T 328
7-9 SR 19; 1T 440; 6T 456
9 EW 215; GC 438, 582; PP 77, 331, 431
10 COL 166; DA 626, 761; GC 395, 520; MB 57; PK 585; PP 689; TM 37, 504; 2T 106; 5T 34, 95, 137, 286, 470, 620; 6T 11
11 CD 162, 186; EW 114; GC xi; ML 141; MM 264, 296; MYP 347; PP 77; SL 78
12 EW 46; GC ix, 623; PP 689; 1T 178, 210; 2T 161; 3T 327, 374, 407; 4T 210; 5T 297, 429, 644; 6T 31; 8T 100; 9T 16
17 DA 398; GC 592; PK 605; TM 39, 133; 1T 223, 330, 337; 2T 105; 3T 110, 571; 5T 213, 449, 472; 8T 41, 117

CHAPTER 13

1 *A beast riseth out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, to whom the dragon giveth his power.* 11 *Another beast cometh up out of the earth:* 14 *causeth an image to be made of the former beast,* 15 *and that men should worship it,* 16 *and receive his mark.*

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like

unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

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1. **And I stood.** Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "and he stood." If this reading is adopted, it would be better to connect the clause "and he stood upon the sand of the sea" with ch. 12:17, as is done in certain Greek editions and English versions (see RSV). The "he" would refer to the dragon, who stands upon the seashore awaiting the emergence of the beast, whom it is his purpose to invest with his power and authority (ch. 13:2). If the reading "I stood" is adopted, John is simply describing the vantage point from which he saw the beast ascending.

Sand of the sea. The sea here doubtless represents peoples, nations, tongues (see on Rev. 17:1, 2, 8; cf. on Dan. 7:2).

A beast. For the significance of beasts in symbolic prophecy see on Dan. 7:3. For the identification of the beast see on Rev. 13:2.

Out of the sea. This beast arises "out of the sea." The beast of v. 11 comes "out of the earth." The one arises where there are multitudes of peoples (see above on "sand of the sea"); the other arises where the population is sparse (see on v. 11).

Seven heads. Some identify these heads with those on the dragon, as well as with those on the beast of ch. 17 (see on ch. 12:3). Others see in these heads the various political organizations through which the new beast works after the dragon with his seven heads relinquishes "his power, and his seat, and great authority" (ch. 13:2). For a comment on the number seven see on ch. 1:11.

Ten horns. Some identify these horns with those on the dragon (see on ch. 12:3). Others limit the application of these horns to nations through which the power

represented by the beast exercised its will and authority (see on ch. 12:3).

Crowns. Gr. *diadēmata,* "kingly crowns" (see on ch. 12:3). These crowns on the horns confirm the identification of the horns as political powers.

Name. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading "names."

Blasphemy. Gr. *blasphēmia,* meaning "railing," "slander," when directed against men, and impious speech when directed against God. The latter sense is doubtless predominant here. The name or names are represented as being on the heads. They doubtless represent the blasphemous titles assumed by the beast (see on Dan. 7:25).

2. Leopard . . . bear . . . lion. There is doubtless an allusion here to the symbolism of Dan. 7. Of the beasts seen by Daniel the first was like a lion, the second like a bear, the third like a leopard. The beast seen by John had physical characteristics drawn from all three. This doubtless denotes that the power represented by the beast of Revelation possessed characteristics prominent in the kingdoms of Babylon, Persia, and Greece. Some have noted that John alludes to these powers in the reverse order of their appearance in history, as he looks backward from his day.

Dragon. See on ch. 12:3.

Gave him his power. Though primarily representing Satan, the dragon, in a secondary sense, represents the Roman Empire (see on ch. 12:3). The power succeeding the Roman Empire, which received from the dragon "his power, and his seat, and great authority," is clearly papal Rome. "Out of the ruins of political Rome, arose the great moral Empire in the 'giant form' of the Roman Church" (A. C. Flick, *The Rise of the Mediaeval Church* [1900], p. 150). This identification is confirmed in the specifications enumerated in the following verses.

Behind this activity was Satan, seeking to exterminate the church. When he found that his efforts to annihilate the followers of Christ through persecution proved unavailing, he altered his tactics and sought to lure the church away from Christ through the establishment of a vast counterfeit religious system. Instead of working directly through paganism the dragon now worked behind the façade of a professedly Christian organization, hoping thereby to disguise his identity.

Seat. Gr. *thronos,* "throne." The popes ascended the throne of the Caesars. The capital of the papal system was the same as that occupied by the Roman Empire at its height.

Great authority. The papacy exercised control in matters political and religious, and over the consciences of men.

3. One of his heads. See on v. 1.

Wounded. Gr. *sphazō,* "to slay," "to slaughter." The word is translated "slain" in ch. 5:6. The phrase may be translated, "smitten to death." Adventists believe that this prediction met its dramatic fulfillment in 1798 when Berthier, at the head of a French army, entered Rome, declared the political rule of the papacy at an end, and took the pope prisoner to France, where he soon died (see on Dan. 7:25; see GC 439).

However, this incident marked only the climax of a long series of events. The decline of papal power had begun many years before (see Additional Note on Dan. 7). The launching of the Protestant Reformation was a significant event in the long series.

Wound. Gr. *plēgē,* "a blow," "a stroke," also the wound caused by a stroke. Either meaning may be adopted in this text. The "deadly wound" could be either the stroke producing death or the wound producing death.

Was healed. There was a gradual revival in papal life in the years following the revolution in France. The papacy suffered a new setback when in 1870 the Papal States were taken from it. A significant event occurred in 1929 when the Lateran Treaty restored temporal power to the pope, who was given the rule of Vatican City, a section of the city of Rome about 108.7 acres in extent. However, the prophet envisioned a much greater restoration. He saw the wound completely healed, as the Greek implies. Following the healing he saw "all that dwell upon the earth," except a faithful few, worshiping the beast (v. 8; cf. GC 579). This is still future. Though the

papacy receives homage from certain groups, vast populations show it no deference. But that is to change. The beast of v. 11 "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed" (v. 12).

All the world wondered. Or, "all the world was amazed." That the papal power should revive was deemed incredible.

4. Worshipped the dragon. Worshiping the beast is in fact worshiping the dragon, for the beast is but the visible agency of the dragon, carrying out the dragon's program. The era of the revived papacy will also be characterized by a period when spiritism is especially active. Back of spiritism is Satan working "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10). Through Roman Catholicism, spiritism, and apostate Protestantism, Satan aims to cause the world to worship him. He will be successful except for a noble remnant that refuses to bow to his demands (Rev. 12:17; 13:8).

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority." Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading, "because he gave the authority to the beast," in place of "which gave power unto the beast." See on v. 2.

Worshipped the beast. See above on "worshipped the dragon."

Who is like? Perhaps a parody on similar expressions about God (see Ex. 15:11; Ps. 35:10; 113:5).

Able to make war. Apparently, resistance to the demands of the beast meant war. The suggestion is that he ruled by force of arms, and that resistance would be futile. Finally Christ and the armies of heaven will be successful in their warfare against him and will cast the beast "alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (ch. 19:20).

5. Great things. For examples of the boastful claims of the papacy see on Dan. 7:25. The specifications of Rev. 13:5-7 clearly identify the power symbolized by the beast with that represented by the little horn of the fourth beast of Dan. 7. Among the parallels the following may be noted: (1) The beast of Rev. 13 had a "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" (v. 5); the little horn of Dan. 7 also had a "mouth speaking great things" (v. 8). (2) The beast was "to continue forty and two months" (Rev. 13:5; see on ch. 12:6); the horn was to continue "until a time and times and the dividing of time" (see on Dan. 7:25). (3) The beast was "to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev. 13:7); the horn "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (Dan. 7:21).

Blasphemies. See on v. 1; cf. v. 6, where these blasphemies are further described.

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority."

Continue. Gr. *poieō,* "to do," "to perform," "to execute."

Forty and two months. See on ch. 12:6; cf. on ch. 11:2.

6. Blaspheme his name. By assuming divine titles. For examples see on Dan. 7:25.

His tabernacle. This is the second object of his blasphemy. This power presumes to set up his temple on earth, and thus draws the attention of the people away from the sanctuary in heaven, the "true tabernacle," where Jesus ministers as high priest (Heb. 8:1, 2). But this power seeks to cast down the work of this sanctuary (see on Dan. 8:11; cf. vs. 12, 13). The heavenly ministry of the sacrifice of Christ is discounted, and the sacrifice of the mass on earth is substituted.

That dwell in heaven. This, the third aspect of the blasphemy of the papal power, touches the inhabitants of the heavenly realm. The reference is probably to the members of the Godhead and those associated with them in service for mankind. This has been fulfilled in part in the Catholic claim to have power to forgive sins, also in ascribing powers and virtues to Mary that apply only to Christ. Thus the minds of men are turned away from the heavenly mediatorial work of Jesus to the confessional on earth.

The papal head has also claimed power over the angels of God. "Indeed, the excellence and power of the Roman pontiff is not only in the sphere of heavenly things, earthly things, and those of the lower regions, but even above the angels, than whom he himself is greater" (translated from Lucius Ferraris, "Papa II," *Prompta Bibliotheca,* Vol. VI, p. 27; see on Dan. 7:25).

7. War with the saints. The language here is almost identical with that in Dan. 7:21, "The same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." For the fulfillment of this prediction see on Dan. 7:25.

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority."

Over all kindreds. This refers to the sphere of its operations, and applies to the heyday of the papacy, perhaps during the Middle Ages, when it exercised almost undisputed sway over Europe (see Additional Note on Dan. 7), but especially when, in the future, the power of the papacy will be more fully revived (see on Rev. 13:3; 17:8).

8. All . . . shall worship him. This is especially true of the period of the revived papacy (see on v. 3). The manner in which such universal adoration will be achieved is described in vs. 11-18. Compare 6T 14.

The book of life. See on Phil. 4:3.

Lamb slain. See on ch. 5:6.

From the foundation of the world. This phrase may be connected with either "written" or "slain." Both ideas are supported in the Bible. The viewpoint that names are recorded from the foundation of the world is found in ch. 17:8, and amplified in statements such as, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34), and, "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (see on Eph. 1:4).

On the other hand, the idea that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world is closely related to Peter's statement, ". . . as of a lamb without blemish . . . : who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:19, 20). Inasmuch as the decision that Christ would die for the guilty race was reached before this world was created, and confirmed at the time man fell (see PP 63, 64), He may in that sense be regarded as though slain from the foundation of the world.

9. Ear, let him hear. See on ch. 2:7.

10. Leadeth into captivity. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of the word "leadeth." Without it the clause may be translated, "If a man is destined for [or "goes into"] captivity. . . ." The idea may be regarded as similar to that expressed in Jer. 15:2, "Such as are for death, to death. . . ."

The KJV reading, which has some textual support, assures the persecuted children of God that those who pursue them and condemn them to exile and to death will themselves meet a similar fate. A partial fulfillment of this may be seen in the capture and exile of the pope in 1798 (see on Dan. 7:25; see Additional Note on Dan. 7).

Some commentators interpret v. 10 as a warning to Christians not to use force against the antichristian power.

The sword. Having used the sword, the beast will, in the end, perish by the sword of divine justice. Compare the Saviour's statement, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matt. 26:52).

Patience. Gr. *hupomonē,* "perseverance," "fortitude," "steadfast endurance." *Hupomonē* is from *hupo,* "under," and *menō,* "to remain." The Greek word implies more than a passive resignation; it denotes an active endurance (see on Rom. 5:3). During the warfare of the beast the saints steadfastly endure.

Faith. Gr. *pistis,* "belief," "trust," "confidence," "faith," "faithfulness." For the meaning "belief," "confidence," etc., see on ch. 14:12. For the meaning "faithfulness" see on Heb. 11:1; cf. on Hab. 2:4. Either the active sense of "faith" or the passive sense of "faithfulness" suits the context, although the closely parallel phrase in Rev. 14:12 seems to require the active sense (see comment there).

11. Another beast. That is, another in addition to the one already mentioned (v. 1). The Greek implies that it is of the same kind as the first beast. This is confirmed as its characteristics are unfolded. It works in close collaboration with the first beast.

Coming up. Gr. *anabainō,* "to ascend," "to rise," "to spring up." In Matt. 13:7 *anabainō* is used of growing plants. The form of the Greek word calls attention to the process of emergence. The prophet sees the action as going on.

Out of the earth. The first beast arose out of the sea (see on v. 1). The four beasts of Dan. 7 also arose from the sea (v. 3). Since "sea" represents peoples and nations

(see on Rev. 13:1; 17:1, 2, 8), "earth" may reasonably be assumed to represent a sparsely settled region. The nation thus represented would therefore not arise by war, conquest, and occupation, but would develop into greatness in a region of few inhabitants.

Adventist commentators have seen in this second beast a symbol of the United States of America. This power accurately fulfills the specifications of the prophecy. When the first beast was going into captivity in 1798 (see on ch. 13:10) the United States was growing into prominence and power. The nation arose, not in the Old World, with its teeming multitudes, but in the New World, with its relatively few inhabitants (see GC 439-441).

Had. Literally, "was having."

Two horns. These may be taken to represent the two notable features of the American system of government, civil and religious liberty, both of which are guaranteed in the Constitution of the United States. Civil liberty found its expression in a republican form of government and religious liberty in Protestantism.

A lamb. A symbol of youthfulness and peaceful intent. Other nations have been described as wild beasts because of their warlike attitudes. This beast with the horns of a lamb could well indicate a nation that, in the beginning of its history, had no such aspirations. Its main concern was to live peacefully, order its own affairs, and be a haven of rest for the oppressed of many nations.

Spake. Literally, "was speaking," that is, it was its habit to speak as a dragon. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "is speaking." This tense agrees with that of the following verses, which describe the activities of the beast during the period when it speaks like a dragon. The narrative of its exploits is told in the dramatic present tense.

As a dragon. There is a striking contradiction between the appearance and actions of the beast. In appearance it is gentle and apparently harmless, but in action it is persecuting and cruel, as vs. 12-18 reveal. When the prophecy is applied to the United States it is immediately apparent that fulfillment of the prediction is future. The United States today continues to maintain the principles of freedom guaranteed in the Constitution. The manner in which a change in policy will be brought about is outlined in the present prophecy. The change comes in connection with the final crisis immediately preceding the time when "the kingdoms of this world . . . become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15; cf. Ps. 2:2; Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27).

12. Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority." This verse is an amplification of the clause, "spake as a dragon" (v. 11). The fulfillment is future (see on v. 11). During the height of its power the first beast, the papacy (see on v. 2), exercised widespread authority in both religious and political matters (see on Dan. 7:8). For the second beast to exercise *all* the authority of the first beast, it will have to enter the field of religion, and seek to dominate religious worship. For the United States to take this step will mean a complete reversal of its present policy of granting full freedom of religion to its citizens. Such a step is here predicted (see 5T 451).

The change in policy will doubtless come in innocently. Repeated attempts have been made to enact stricter laws enforcing Sunday as a rest day—earlier on religious, more recently on so-called social, grounds—penalizing observers of another day. Innocent as it may seem, any attempt to regulate a religious day by law violates the fundamental principle of religious liberty. This prophecy predicts that Sunday, an institution of the papacy (see on Dan. 7:25), will one day be enforced by law under threat of economic sanctions and worse for those who keep the Sabbath (see Rev. 13:12-18; cf. p. 977; 1T 353, 354; GC 604, 605).

Before him. That is, in his presence. The first beast, who had been fatally wounded, has come back to life, and is once more active in world affairs. His promoter and agent is the second beast.

Causeth the earth. That is, the inhabitants of the earth. The movement here described is more than a national enterprise; it takes on international proportions (cf. GC 562, 579; TM 37; 6T 18, 19, 352, 395; 7T 141).

To worship. Prophecy here points to the enactment of some religious measure the observance of which would be regarded as an act of worship, in that the worshiper, by observing it, acknowledges the authority of the first beast in matters of religion. A hint as to the nature of the enactment is found in ch. 14:9-12. These verses contrast the saints with the worshipers of the beast and his image and note that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the saints is the keeping of the commandments of God (v. 12). According to Daniel the power here represented as the beast was to "think to change times and laws" (ch. 7: 25). History records a most audacious attempt to change the divine law—in the substitution of Sunday in place of the Sabbath of the Lord (see on Dan. 7:25). It is possible, then, to see a specific application here to a civil decree requiring the observance of Sunday, an institution of the papacy, and forbidding observance of the Sabbath of the Ten Commandments. In such a way men would be led to "worship" the "first beast." They would heed its command above that of God in the matter of the day of worship. See further on Rev. 13:16, 17. See GC 442-450; 6T 352.

The matter of the day of worship is, of course, only one feature of the universal homage the "beast" will eventually receive (see on v. 8). What is here envisioned is a universal movement under the leadership of Satan, who is seeking to secure for himself the allegiance of the inhabitants of this earth. He will succeed in uniting the various religious elements and in securing the loyalty of men to the new organization patterned after the old (see on v. 14). He is the power behind the "beast." It is he, the real antichrist, who is working to make himself as God (see 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; cf. GC 593; TM 62; 6T 14; 9T 230).

13. Wonders. Gr. *sēmeia* (see on ch. 12:1). This reveals the agency by which the prince of evil will secure the allegiance of earth's inhabitants. These miracles will deceive men into believing that the new organization, the image (see on ch. 13: 14), has the blessing of God resting upon it.

So that. The last clause in v. 13 is explanatory of the first. Among the signs he works are conspicuous ones that attract the attention of men. The bringing down of fire from heaven may be an attempt to counterfeit the miracle on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:17-39). As the ancient sign gave evidence of the power of the true God, so the beast will make it appear that God is supporting his program. Seventh-day Adventists expect these miracles to come through the agency of spiritism (see GC 588). Satan, claiming to be God, will seek to support his claim by means of undeniable miracles (see 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; 9T 16).

14. Deceiveth. Jesus warned concerning "false Christs, and false prophets" who would arise and "shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). Paul declared that the Antichrist would work in the last days "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:9, 10). In preparation for Armageddon "spirits of devils, working miracles" will "go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world" (Rev. 16: 14). In general, the world today does not believe in miracles. What certain groups claim as miracles, these skeptics attribute to chance circumstances, to sleight of hand, or to fraud. Physical science has no place in its scheme for the supernatural. Satan is well pleased to have a general disbelief in miracles. It suits his purpose to deceive. Verses 13 and 14 of ch. 13 reveal that when the time is right he will employ his supernatural power in a special way to deceive. "No mere impostures are here foretold" (GC 553). Men, unable to explain Satan's miracles, will attribute them to the power of God. The whole world will be led captive. See 9T 16; GC 589, 624; EW 88.

Image. Gr. *eikōn*, "a likeness," "an image." In 2 Cor. 4:4 and Col. 1:15 Christ is spoken of as the *eikōn* of God. It is the purpose of the plan of salvation to transform man into the *eikōn* of Christ. An *eikōn* implies an archetype and in many respects is like its archetype.

An image to the first beast would be an organization functioning on much the same principles as that beast's organization. Among the principles by which the first

beast operated was the use of the secular arm to support religious institutions. In imitation the second beast will repudiate its principles of freedom. The church will prevail upon the state to enforce its dogmas. State and church will unite, and the result will be the loss of religious liberty and the persecution of dissenting minorities. Compare on Rev. 13:12; see GC 443-448.

Wound by a sword. See on v. 3.

15. Life. Gr. *pneuma,* "spirit," "wind," "breath." The symbolical image John saw in vision became animated by the miracle-working power of the second beast. The new organization begins to function, and like its predecessor, threatens with extinction those who refuse compliance.

Speak. The first thing this newly formed image does is to "speak," undoubtedly through its laws and enactments.

Cause. Having spoken officially through its laws, the image next puts them into effect. Since these are religious laws, they will cut across the conscientious convictions of many. Force will be exercised in the carrying out of these enactments.

Should be killed. This is the story of the ages. Legislation in matters of religion has ever been followed by persecution. It was so during the Middle Ages: witness the massacre of the Albigenses, Waldenses, and others—by the civil power, to be sure, but prompted by the dominant church of the day. In its attempt to make all earth's inhabitants give allegiance to the first beast (see on v. 8) the second beast will issue a decree threatening with death all who maintain their loyalty to God (see GC 615; PK 605, 606).

16. Causeth all. Everyone is affected by this legislation. Apparently only the faithful remnant refuse compliance (see v. 8; cf. ch. 12:17).

Mark. Gr. *charagma,* "an impress," "a stamp," "a mark." This is evidently some badge of loyalty to the beast, some special feature that denotes that the one displaying such a mark worships the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed (v. 8). Adventist interpreters understand this mark to be not a literal brand but some sign of allegiance that identifies the bearer as loyal to the power represented by the beast. The controversy at that time will center on the law of God, and particularly on the fourth command (see on ch. 14:12). Hence Sunday observance will constitute such a sign, but not until the time when the beast's power will be revived and Sunday observance in place of Sabbath observance becomes law. Adventists hold that simultaneously the third angel's message will warn against the reception of the mark (ch. 14:9-11). This message, swelling into a loud cry (ch. 18:1-4), will enlighten men as to the issues involved. When the issues are thus clearly before them, and men nevertheless choose to support an institution of the beast, observing it and disobeying God's Sabbath command, they thereby show their allegiance to the beast power and receive the mark.

Right hand . . . foreheads. This mark being in the hand or in the forehead may indicate that not only one's labor (the hand) but also one's belief is affected. The phrase may also designate two classes—those who submit to the decrees of the beast merely from expediency and those who so do from personal conviction.

17. Buy or sell. This stern measure will be taken in an effort to secure compliance with the dictates of the image. But the measure will be unavailing (see on ch. 14: 1, 12). This measure will doubtless bring on the death decree (see on ch. 13:15).

Mark. See on v. 16.

Or the name. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the word "or." If it is omitted, the phrase "name of the beast" may be considered to be in apposition with the word "mark." The passage would then read, "the mark, that is, the name of the beast." This would imply that the mark John saw in vision was the name of the beast. This relationship may be compared with the seal of God placed on the forehead of the saints (ch. 7:2), concerning whom John later declared that they had "his Father's name written in their foreheads" (ch. 14:1). Compare on ch. 14:11.

The word "or," however, appears in P^{47}, the oldest extant Greek manuscript of Revelation, and may well have been in the autograph copy. If so, the phrases,

"the mark," "the name of the beast," "the number of his name," being connected by "or," may indicate degrees of affiliation with the beast or his image. God condemns any degree of association (ch. 14:9-11).

Number of his name. See on v. 18.

18. Here is wisdom. Compare the phrase, "here is the mind which hath wisdom" (ch. 17:9). The wisdom here commended is doubtless that to which Paul refers in Eph. 1:17. Only by divine enlightenment will men understand the mysteries of the Word of God (see on I Cor. 2:14).

Understanding. Or, "intelligence." Those who wish to know the meaning of the cryptic number may understand.

Count. Or, "calculate."

Number of the beast. It should be noted that the beast has already been conclusively identified (see on vs. 1-10). The number provides confirmatory evidence of this.

Since the early days of Christianity there has been much discussion as to the significance of 666. One of the earliest to write on the subject was Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130-c. 202). He identified the beast as the Antichrist, and believed that the numerical values of the letters of his name would add up to 666. He suggested the name *Teitan,* a name sometimes accounted divine, as having great probability. He also suggested, but as much less probable, the name *Lateinos,* this being the name of the last kingdom of the four seen by Daniel. At the same time he warned that "it is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to await the fulfilment of the prophecy, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned" (*Against Heresies* v. 30. 3; *ANF,* vol. 1, p. 559).

Since Irenaeus' day 666 has been applied to many names. The number alone cannot identify the beast since numerous names can add up to 666. However, inasmuch as the beast has already been identified, the number 666 must have a relationship to this power. Otherwise there would be no valid reason for the angel giving John the information contained in v. 18, at this point in the prophetic narrative.

An interpretation that gained currency in the period following the Reformation was that 666 stood for *Vicarius Filii Dei,* meaning "vicar of the Son of God," one of the titles for the pope of Rome. The numerical value of the component letters of this title totals 666 as follows:

V	5
I	1
C	100
A	.....
R	.....
I	1
V (U=V)	5
S	.....
F	.....
I	1
L	50
I	1
I	1
D	500
E	.....
I	1
	666

This interpretation was based on the identification of the pope as Antichrist, the historic Reformation concept. The principal exponent of this interpretation was Andreas Helwig (c. 1572-1643; see L. E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers,* vol. 2, pp. 605-608). Many since his day have adopted this interpretation. Inasmuch as this commentary identifies the beast as the papacy, it also accepts this view as being the best thus far presented, though recognizing that there may be more implied in the cryptogram than this interpretation provides.

Regarding the title *Vicarius Filii Dei,* the Catholic journal *Our Sunday Visitor,* of April 18, 1915, reported in answer to a query, "What are the letters supposed to be in the Pope's crown, and what do they signify, if anything?" "The letters inscribed in the Pope's mitre are these: *Vicarius Filii Dei,* which is the Latin for Vicar of the Son of God. Catholics hold that the Church which is a visible society must have a visible head" (p. 3). The issue of November 15, 1914, admitted that the Latin numerals added together total 666, but went on to declare that many other names also yield this total. In the issue of August 3, 1941, page 7, the subject of *Vicarius Filii Dei* again came up for discussion, and the statement was made that this title is not inscribed on the pope's tiara. The

tiara, it averred, bears no inscription whatsoever (p. 7). The *Catholic Encyclopedia* distinguishes between the mitre and the tiara by describing the tiara as a nonliturgical ornament and the mitre as one worn for liturgical functions. Whether the inscription *Vicarius Filii Dei* appears on the tiara or the mitre is really beside the point. The title is admittedly applied to the pope, and that is sufficient for the purposes of prophecy.

Number of a man. The beast represents a human organization.

Six hundred threescore and six. There is some textual evidence (cf. p. 10) for the reading 616. However, the reading 666 is overwhelmingly attested.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 GC 54, 445, 578; SR 331
2, 3 GC 439
3 GC 579; 6T 14
5-7 GC 54, 439; SR 331
8 AA 229; GC 579; PP 63
10, 11 GC 439
11 GC 440; TM 117; 5T 452; 9T 229
11, 12 GC 441, 442, 578
11-17 DA 122
13 EW 59, 87; GC 612
13, 14 GC 553; SR 395
14 GC 441, 443, 445, 578; 5T 698
15-17 EW 36, 67, 282; GC 635; LS 117; PK 605; 1T 204, 354; 4T 251; 5T 213, 450, 473
16 GC 604; PK 189; 9T 16
16, 17 GC 445, 450, 579; SR 382; 5T 81, 216, 525; 6T 17, 130; 8T 117; 9T 232
17 5T 152

CHAPTER 14

1 *The Lamb standing on mount Sion with his company.* 6 *An angel preacheth the gospel.* 8 *The fall of Babylon.* 15 *The harvest of the world, and putting in of the sickle.* 20 *The vintage and winepress of the wrath of God.*

AND I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs.

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1. I looked. Rather, "I saw."

A Lamb. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "the Lamb." The definite article, if it is accepted, doubtless refers to the Lamb mentioned in ch. 5:6 (see comment there). For the use of the article to refer back to previously introduced prophetic items see on Dan. 7:13; cf. on Rev. 1:13.

Mount Sion. See on Ps. 48:2. Rev. 14:1-5 is closely connected with ch. 13:11-18. The 144,000 are here shown with the Lamb on Mt. Zion to indicate their triumph over the beast and his image. Earlier John had seen them passing through the severest trial; he had seen them boycotted and condemned as worthy of death. But in their darkest hour they were delivered and are now with the Lamb, eternally secure from the conflicts of earth.

Hundred forty and four thousand. For the identity of this group see on ch. 7:4.

His Father's name. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "his name and the name of his Father." In ch. 7:3 the 144,000 are said to be sealed "in their foreheads." There is, therefore, a close connection between the seal and the divine name. Evidently in vision the seal that John saw contained the name of the Father and the Son. Ancient seals contained the name of the authenticating agent. For examples of inscriptions on these seals see on ch. 7:2. Applied to the 144,000, the names represent (1) ownership—the 144,000 belong to God; (2) character—the 144,000 reflect the image of Jesus fully. Compare on ch. 13:17, where the mark of the beast and the name of the beast are closely connected.

In their foreheads. Compare the mark of the beast on the forehead (see on ch. 13:16).

2. I heard a voice. Or, "I heard a sound." Some think that the harpers and singers here are not the 144,000, but the angels, the message of whose song only the 144,000 are able to understand. However, in ch. 15:2, 3 the 144,000 are clearly represented as having harps and as singing, so that others believe the 144,000 are referred to in ch. 14:2 also.

Voice of many waters. Or, "sound of many waters" (see on ch. 1:15).

Voice of a great thunder. Or, "sound of great thunder." Thunder is here, as elsewhere, connected with the divine presence (see Job 37:4; Ps. 29; Rev. 4:5; 6:1).

Voice of harpers. Literally, "sound as of harpers." The sound that John heard was like that of harpers. Perhaps he did not see actual instruments being played, hence his cautious identification. For a discussion of ancient harps see Vol. III, pp. 34-36.

3. Sung. Literally, "sing." The narrative is told in the dramatic present tense (cf. on ch. 13:11).

The throne. The throne has earlier been introduced (ch. 4:2).

Before the four beasts. See on ch. 4:6.

Elders. See ch. 4:4.

No man could learn. The experience is of such a personal nature that only those who pass through it can appreciate its significance. To them the song is a treasured and comprehensive summation of the experiences through which they have passed in the closing stages of the conflict between good and evil.

Redeemed. Gr. *agorazō,* "to buy," "to purchase." The word is translated "buy" in chs. 3:18; 18:11. Compare the phrases "redeemed us to God" (ch. 5:9), "redeemed from among men" (ch. 14:4). Compare on Rom. 3:24; 1 Cor. 6:20.

4. Defiled. Gr. *molunō,* "to defile," "to stain," "to soil" such things as the conscience (1 Cor. 8:7) or clothing (Rev. 3:4). Here doubtless the reference is, figuratively, to the defilement of illicit relationships (see below on "virgins"). The tense of the Greek verb may be significant. It refers the action to a specific point, or period, of time, here doubtless to the time when the coalition of religious elements, symbolized by "women" (see below on "women") will bring every pressure to bear upon the saints to renounce their fealty to God and His commandments and to join their organization (see on chs. 16:14; 17:2, 6). Any yielding would be an act of defilement. Now standing victoriously upon Mt. Zion, the saints are commended for their fidelity.

Women. A woman is often used in Scripture to represent a church, a pure woman the true church and an immoral woman the apostate church (see on ch. 12:1). In ch. 17:1-5 (see comment there) the Church of Rome and various apostate churches who follow in her footsteps are symbolized by an impure woman and her daughters. It is to these churches that the prophet here doubtless refers (see above on "defiled").

Virgins. Gr. *parthenoi,* a term used of both men and women, here of men. This is clear both from the Greek and from the figure of "virgins" not being defiled with "women." Because the whole passage is metaphorical, literal virginity, whether of men or of women, is not the point under consideration. If it were, this passage would contradict other scriptures that commend marriage and the marriage relation (see on 1 Cor. 7:1-5). The saints are here called virgins because they have either kept themselves aloof from Babylon or no longer have dealings with her (see on Rev. 18:4). They have refused any connection with Babylon and her daughters at the time when these have become the agents of Satan in his final effort to eradicate the saints (see on ch. 13:15). They were not defiled by association with this union of religious elements rallied by Satan, though they may formerly have belonged to one of the various bodies now amalgamated.

Follow the Lamb. This seems to point to some special privilege the 144,000 will have, the details concerning which are not revealed and hence are a matter of conjecture. Compare on ch. 7:14-17.

Redeemed from. See on v. 3.

Firstfruits. Gr. *aparchē,* "first fruits," related to the verb *aparchomai,* "to make a beginning [in sacrifice]," "to offer first fruits." The ancient Israelites offered first fruits to the Lord, both as personal (Deut. 26:1-11) and as national (Lev. 23:10, 17) offerings. The offering of the first fruits was an acknowledgment of the goodness of God in giving the harvest. The national offering also had typical significance (see on 1 Cor. 15:20).

Applied to the 144,000, the term "firstfruits" may be understood in two ways.

1. As being the first installment, or pledge, of the great harvest. The 144,000 are those who are victors in the great conflict with the beast and his image (see on ch. 14:1). From this struggle they are delivered and are now safe before the throne of God. "These, having been translated from the earth, from among the living, are counted as 'the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb' " (GC 649).

2. As meaning simply "gift," or "offering." In the LXX *aparchē* is most frequently the translation of the Heb. *terumah,* "a contribution," "an offering." In Ex. 25:2, 3 *terumah* is used for the contribution of the children of Israel for the building of the sanctuary. Frequently *terumah* describes the "heave offering" (see Num. 5:9, where the LXX has *aparchē*).

Ancient inscriptions show that *aparchē* was commonly used for a "gift" to a goddess, without any reference to time. Where *aparchē* is the translation of *terumah* there is also no reference to time.

The 144,000 may thus be considered as "firstfruits" either in the sense of being a part of a larger harvest or in the sense of being a gift, or offering, to God.

5. Was found. The form of the Greek verb suggests that a certain point of time is under consideration. At that point of time investigation proves the 144,000 to be faultless. This does not mean that they had never erred, but that by the grace of God they had overcome all defects of character.

Guile. Gr. *dolos,* "deceit," "subtlety," "fraud," "guile." Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading *pseudos,* "falsehood," "lie." The gospel of Jesus Christ changes sinful, erring man into one who has no pretense, no make-believe, no deceit, no sin.

Without fault. Gr. *amōmos,* "faultless," "blameless" (see on Eph. 1:4; cf. COL 69; TM 506).

Before the throne. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this phrase.

6. I saw. A new scene begins. Chronologically the events represented in this vision precede those represented by the vision of vs. 1-5.

Another. Gr. *allos,* another of the same kind. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word. Many angels have already been mentioned (chs. 1:1, 20; 5:2; 7:1; etc.), so that the designation "another" is not necessary.

Angel. This is a symbolic vision. The angel represents God's saints engaged in the task of proclaiming the everlasting gospel, especially the features mentioned in this verse, at a time when the "judgment is come" (v. 7). It is, of course, also true that literal angels assist men in the task of proclaiming the gospel, but this is not the predominant idea here.

Midst of heaven. The angel of ch. 8:13 was also seen flying through the midst of heaven. The area of flight indicates the worldwide nature of the angel's work and message. The work grows and develops until it is brought to the sight and hearing of all mankind.

Everlasting. Gr. *aiōnios* (see on Matt. 25:41). The Scriptures elsewhere speak of the "glorious" gospel (2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:11), but only here is the word "everlasting" used in connection with the gospel of the grace of God. There is but one gospel to save men. It will continue as long as there are men to be saved. There never will be another gospel.

Gospel. Gr. *euaggelion* (see on Mark 1:1).

To preach. Gr. *euaggelizō,* "to proclaim good tidings," a verb form related to *euaggelion* (see above). Compare the use of *euaggelizō* in Rom. 1:15; 10:15.

Dwell on the earth. As indicated by the following phrases, a worldwide proclamation of the gospel is here envisioned.

Every nation. The universality of the message is emphasized by this and the following phrases.

Kindred. Or, "tribe."

7. Loud voice. The message of both the first angel and the third angel are given with a "loud voice" (v. 9). The loud voice indicates that the message will be proclaimed so that all may hear. It also emphasizes the importance of the message.

Fear. Gr. *phobeō,* "to fear," "to reverence." *Phobeō* is used here not in the sense of being afraid of God, but in the sense of coming to Him with reverence and awe. It conveys the thought of absolute loyalty to God, of full surrender to His will (cf. on Deut. 4:10).

God. The message to fear God is especially timely in the period represented by the preaching of this angel, for men are worshiping gods of materialism and pleasure and many others of their own devising.

Glory. Gr. *doxa* (see on Rom. 3:23). Here *doxa* doubtless signifies "honor," "praise," "homage." Compare Ps. 115:1; Isa. 42:12; 2 Peter 3:18; Jude 25.

Hour. Or, "time," not a literal hour. Compare this use of "hour" in John 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; Rev. 14:15. Conceived of in this way, it is possible to understand the phrase "hour of his judgment" as referring to the general time when the judgment will take place and not as necessarily re-

ferring to the precise moment when the judgment begins. Thus it is possible to say that the first angel's message was proclaimed in the years preceding 1844 even though the actual work of judgment had not yet begun (see below on "judgment").

Judgment. Gr. *krisis,* "the act of judging," contrasted with *krima,* "the sentence of judgment" (see on ch. 17:1). Seventh-day Adventist expositors understand the judgment here mentioned as that which began in 1844, represented in type by the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary (see on Dan. 8:14). That the reference here is not to the executive judgment at the coming of Christ when all receive their rewards, is seen by the fact that the messages of the three angels (Rev. 14:6-12) precede the second coming of Christ (v. 14). Furthermore, the message concerning the judgment is accompanied by an appeal and a warning that reveal that the day of salvation has not passed. Men may still turn to God and escape the wrath to come. Historically, the preaching of William Miller and his associates in the period from 1831 to 1844, concerning the close of the 2300 days in 1844, may be regarded as marking the beginning of the message of the first angel (see F. D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry,* p. 284). But that message has had validity ever since and will continue to have until the curtain falls on man's opportunity for salvation.

Is come. Or, "has come."

Worship. Gr. *proskuneō,* "to do homage," "to worship." The worship of God is in contrast with the worship of the beast (ch. 13:8, 12) and that of its image (v. 15). In the crisis soon to come, the inhabitants of the earth will be called upon to make their choice, as did the three Hebrew worthies in days of old, between the worship of the true God and that of false gods (Dan. 3). The message of the first angel is designed to prepare men to make the proper choice and to stand firm in the time of crisis.

Made heaven, and earth. The Creator of the universe is the true and only object of worship. No man, no angel, is worthy of worship. This is the prerogative of God only. Creatorship is one of the distinguishing features of the true God in contrast with false deities (Jer. 10:11, 12). The appeal to worship God as Creator has become especially timely in the years following the initial preaching of the first angel's message, because of the rapid spread of the theory of evolution. Furthermore, the call to worship the God of heaven as Creator of all things implies that due heed be given to the sign of God's creative works—the Sabbath of the Lord (see on Ex. 20:8-11). If the Sabbath had been kept as God intended, it would have served as a great safeguard against infidelity and evolution (see Acts 14:15; PP 336). The Sabbath will be a point especially controverted in the closing crisis (see on Rev. 13:16).

8. Followed. Gr. *akoloutheō,* "to accompany," "to follow" (see Matt. 19:27, 28; Mark 1:18, where the word has the idea of accompanying Jesus personally). It seems to have both meanings in this text. In point of time the second angel follows the first, but it is also true that the first angel continues his ministry when the second angel joins him. In this sense the second angel's message accompanies that of the first.

Another angel. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the inclusion of the word "second." In some manuscripts the word for "second" stands in place of the phrase "another angel"; in others, as an addition to the phrase; still other manuscripts read "a second angel" instead of "another angel."

Saying. The first and third angels' messages are proclaimed with a "loud voice" (vs. 7, 9). The message concerning the fall of Babylon is later proclaimed with a loud voice (see on ch. 18:1, 2).

Babylon. The ancient, literal city by this name was already largely a desolate ruin in John's day (see on Isa. 13:19). As with so many other terms and expressions in the Revelation, the significance of this name (see on Acts 3:16) may best be understood in terms of the role of its historical counterpart in OT times (see pp. 867-869; see on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13; Rev. 16:12, 16; Additional Note on Chapter 18). The designation "mystery, Babylon" in ch. 17:5 specifically identifies the name as figurative (see on Rom. 11:25; Rev. 1:20; 17:5; cf. on ch. 16:12).

In Babylonian the name *Bab-ilu* (Babel,

or Babylon) meant "gate of the gods," but the Hebrews derogatorily associated it with *balal,* a word in their language meaning "to confuse" (see on Gen. 11:9). The rulers of Babylon doubtless called their city the "gate" of the gods in the sense that they chose to think of it as the place where the gods consorted with men, to order the affairs of earth (see on Judges 9:35; Ruth 4:1; 1 Kings 22:10; Jer. 22:3). The name thus seems to have reflected the claim of the Babylonian kings that they had been commissioned to rule the world by divine mandate (see Vol. II, p. 157; PP 119; see on Gen. 11:4).

Babylon was founded by Nimrod (see on Gen. 10:10; 11:1-9). From the very beginning the city was emblematic of disbelief in the true God and defiance of His will (see on Gen. 11:4-9), and its tower a monument to apostasy, a citadel of rebellion against Him. The prophet Isaiah identifies Lucifer as the invisible king of Babylon (see on Isa. 14:4, 12-14). In fact, it would appear that Satan designed to make Babylon the center and agency of his master plan to secure control of the human race, even as God purposed to work through Jerusalem (see Vol. IV, pp. 26-30). Thus, throughout OT times, the two cities typified the forces of evil and good at work in the world. The founders of Babylon aspired to set up a government entirely independent of God, and had He not intervened, they would eventually have succeeded in banishing righteousness from the earth (PP 123; cf. on Dan. 4:17). For this reason God saw fit to destroy the tower and to scatter its builders (see on Gen. 11:7, 8). A period of temporary success was followed by more than a millennium of decline and subjection to other nations (see Vol. I, pp. 136, 137; Vol. II, p. 92; see on Isa. 13:1; Dan. 2:37).

When Nebuchadnezzar II rebuilt Babylon it became one of the wonders of the ancient world (see Additional Note on Dan. 4). His plan to make his kingdom universal and eternal (see on Dan. 3:1; 4:30) was a success to the extent that, in splendor and power, the new Babylonian Empire surpassed its predecessors (see Vol. II, pp. 92-94; see on chs. 2:37, 38; 4:30). However, it also became haughty and cruel, (see Ed 176). It conquered God's people and threatened with defeat His purpose for them as a nation. In a dramatic series of events God humbled Nebuchadnezzar and secured the submission of his will (see Vol. IV, pp. 751, 752). But his successors refused to humble themselves before God (see Dan. 5:18-22), and eventually the kingdom was weighed in the balances of heaven, found wanting, and its mandate revoked by the decree of the divine Watcher (see on Dan. 5:26-28). Later Babylon became one of the capitals of the Persian Empire, but it was partly destroyed by Xerxes (cf. Vol. III, pp. 459, 460). Over the centuries the city gradually lost more and more of its importance and eventually, toward the close of the 1st century A.D., virtually ceased to exist (see on Isa. 13:19; Rev. 18:21).

Ever since the fall of ancient Babylon Satan has sought, through one world power after another, to control the world, and would probably long since have succeeded had it not been for repeated instances of divine intervention (see on Dan. 2:39-43). Undoubtedly his most nearly successful attempt to subvert the church has been through the papal apostasy of the Middle Ages (see Vol. IV, p. 837; see on Dan. 7:25). But God intervened to prevent the success of each subsequent threat to the ultimate accomplishment of His purposes (see Rev. 12:5, 8, 16), and the nations have never been able to "cleave" together (see on Dan. 2:43). Evil is inherently divisive. However, near the end of time Satan will be permitted to achieve what appears, briefly, to be success (see on Rev. 16:13, 14, 16; 17:12-14).

Apparently toward the close of the 1st century A.D. Christians were already referring to the city and empire of Rome by the cryptic title Babylon (see on 1 Peter 5:13). By that time the once magnificent literal city of Babylon lay, almost, if not altogether, in ruins, an uninhabited waste, and thus a graphic illustration of the impending fate of mystical Babylon. The Jews were again in exile under the merciless hand of Rome (see Vol. V, pp. 69-80; Vol. VI, p. 87), even as they had once been exiled by Babylon, and Christians also ex-

perienced repeated sporadic persecution at her hand (see Vol. VI, pp. 61, 83, 84, 87). Among Jews and Christians alike, Babylon thus became an appropriate and incriminating term to describe imperial Rome.

During the early Christian centuries the cryptic designation Babylon for the city and empire of Rome appears commonly in both Jewish and Christian literature. For instance, Book V of the Sibylline Oracles, a pseudepigraphical Jewish production dating from about A.D. 125 (see Vol. V, p. 89), gives what purports to be a prophecy of the fate of Rome closely parallel to the description of that of mystical Babylon in the Revelation. Speaking of Rome as a "wicked city" that loves "magic," indulges in "adulteries," and has a "bloodthirsty heart and a godless mind," and observing that "many faithful saints of the Hebrews have perished" because of her, the writer predicts her eventual desolation: "In widowhood shalt thou sit beside thy banks. . . . But thou hast said, I am unique, and none shall bring ruin on me. But now God . . . shall destroy thee and all of thine" (vs. 37-74; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 400; cf. Rev. 18:5-8). In 2 Baruch, another pseudepigraphical work of the 1st or 2d century A.D., the name Babylon is used of Rome in the same way as in the Revelation (ch. 11:1; Charles, *op. cit.,* p. 486). Similarly, the writer of the Jewish Midrash Rabbah, on S. of Sol. 1:6, says, "They called the place Rome Babylon" (Soncino ed., p. 60). Tertullian, who lived at the close of the second century, specifically declares that the term Babylon in the Apocalypse refers to the capital city of imperial Rome (*Against Marcion* iii. 13; *Answer to the Jews* 9; see also Irenaeus *Against Heresies* v. 26. 1). Among the Jews of early Christian times Edom was another cryptic designation for Rome (see Midrash Rabbah, on S. of Sol. 1:6, p. 60; also Talmud *Makkoth* 12a, Soncino ed., p. 80).

Babylon, both literal and mystical, has thus long been recognized as the traditional enemy of God's truth and people. As used in the Revelation the name is symbolic of all apostate religious organizations and their leadership, from antiquity down to the close of time (see on chs. 17:5; 18:24). A comparison of the many passages of the OT where the sins and fate of literal Babylon are set forth at length, with those in the Revelation descriptive of mystical Babylon, makes evident the appropriateness of the figurative application of the name (see on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Rev. 16:12-21; 17; 18; see Additional Note on Chapter 18). A perusal of these and other passages reveals the importance, also, of a thorough study of the OT with respect to literal Babylon as a background for understanding the import of NT passages relating to mystical Babylon.

Is fallen, is fallen. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the second "is fallen." The passage seems to echo Isa. 21:9, where in the LXX textual evidence is divided between reading "is fallen" once or twice. The Hebrew repeats the term. Repetition lends emphasis to the message. Babylon is a comprehensive term that John employs to describe all religious bodies and movements that have fallen away from the truth. This fact requires us to view this "fall" as progressive and cumulative.

This prophecy of the fall of Babylon finds its last-day fulfillment in the departure of Protestantism at large from the purity and simplicity of the gospel (see on Rev. 14:4). This message was first preached by the advent movement known as Millerism, in the summer of 1844, and was applied to the churches that rejected the first angel's message concerning the judgment (see on v. 7). The message will have increasing relevance as the end draws near, and will meet its complete fulfillment with the union of the various religious elements under the leadership of Satan (see on chs. 13:12-14; 17:12-14). The message of ch. 18:2-4 announces the complete downfall of Babylon and calls upon God's people who are scattered throughout the various religious bodies comprising Babylon, to separate from them.

That great city. The adjective "great" is applied to Babylon consistently throughout the book of Revelation (see chs. 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 21).

All nations. The universal nature of the apostasy is here described. The substitu-

tion of human laws for the laws of God and the enforcement of religious decrees by the state will become universal (see on ch. 13:8; cf. 6T 18, 19, 395; 7T 141).

Drink. A figure describing the acceptance of the false teachings and policies of Babylon. Coercion is suggested in the phrase "made all nations drink." Religious elements will bring pressure to bear upon the state to enforce their decrees.

Wine of the wrath. The figure is probably borrowed from Jer. 25:15, where Jeremiah is bidden to "take the wine cup of this fury . . . , and cause all the nations . . . to drink it." But wrath is not Babylon's object in offering the wine to the various nations. She contends that drinking of her wine will bring peace to nations (see on Rev. 13:12). However, the drinking of it brings down on men the wrath of God.

Some suggest that the word here translated "wrath" (*thumos*) should be rendered "passion." The passage could then be translated, "she has caused all nations to drink the wine of her passionate immorality" (cf. RSV). However, elsewhere in the Revelation *thumos* seems to have the meaning "anger," "wrath," and that meaning should probably be adopted here also.

Fornication. A figure of the illicit connection between the church and the world or between the church and the state. The church should be married to her Lord, but when she seeks the support of the state, she leaves her lawful spouse. By her new connection she commits spiritual fornication. Compare on Eze. 16:15; James 4:4.

9. Third angel. Compare vs. 6, 8.

Followed. See on v. 8.

Loud voice. See on vs. 7, 8.

If any man. The Greek is equivalent to "he who."

Worship. Gr. *proskuneō* (see on v. 7).

The beast. That is, the beast described in ch. 13:1-10 (see comment there). The second beast solicits the worship of men for the first beast (see on ch. 13:12). It should be noted that this warning will have ultimate force only after the healing of the deadly wound (see on ch. 13:3), and the formation of the image to the beast (see on v. 14), when the mark of the beast becomes an issue (see on v. 16). As preached today, the third angel's message is a warning concerning issues to come, a warning that will enlighten men as to the issues involved in the developing struggle and enable them to make an intelligent choice.

And his image. See on ch. 13:14. The conjunction "and" identifies the worshipers of the beast with those of the image. A further conjunction identifies these worshipers with those who receive the mark. The beast and the image are united in their aims and policies and in their demand that men receive the mark of the beast. Hence, one who worships the beast also worships the image and is a bearer of the mark.

Mark. See on ch. 13:16.

10. Wine of the wrath. That is, wine, which is the wrath. Men who drink of the wine of the wrath of Babylon's fornication (v. 8) will drink of the wine of the wrath of God. The warning is clear and plain. None need misunderstand.

Poured out. Literally, "mixed." The clause reads literally, "which is mixed unmixed." The potion is prepared without the usual addition of water. Compare this verse with Ps. 75:8, where the wine is apparently mixed with spices to increase its intoxicating power.

Cup of his indignation. Or, "cup of his wrath."

Shall be tormented. Gr. *basanizō*, "to torture," "to torment," "to distress." Compare the use of *basanizō* in Matt. 8:6, 29; 14:24 (translated "tossed"); 2 Peter 2:8. The seven last plagues fall upon the worshipers of the beast and his image (Rev. 16:2). In addition, these devotees of the beast rise in the second resurrection and receive their punishment (ch. 20:5, 11-15). It is not clear to which phase of punishment the revelator here refers. Perhaps it is to both. In both there will be torment. The first will end in death when Jesus appears from heaven (see on ch. 19:19-21), the second in eternal death (see on ch. 20:14).

Fire and brimstone. The figure is apparently drawn from Isa. 34:9, 10 (see comment there). Compare Gen. 19:24, where fire and brimstone are mentioned in connection with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The presence. Both the plagues and the destruction of the wicked after the mil-

lennium will take place upon this earth. However, in the latter case the camp of the saints will be upon the earth. Christ will be with His people, and doubtless many angels will be there.

11. For ever and ever. Gr. *eis aiōnas aiōnōn,* literally, "unto ages of ages." This expression may be compared with the phrase *eis ton aiōna,* literally, "unto the age," generally translated "for ever" (see Matt. 21:19; Mark 3:29; Luke 1:55; etc.), or the phrase *eis tous aiōnas,* literally, "unto the ages," also generally translated "for ever" (Luke 1:33; Rom. 1:25; 11:36), or the adjective *aiōnios,* literally, "age-lasting," generally translated "eternal," or "everlasting" (Matt. 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46; etc.). Like *aiōnios* (see on Matt. 25:41), the expressions *eis ton aiōna* and *eis tous aiōnas* do not necessarily denote endless existence. But, it may be asked, Do not these expressions at times denote perpetuity? If so, should not the compound expression *eis aiōnas aiōnōn,* "unto ages of ages," be regarded a more emphatic declaration of perpetuity?

This compound expression occurs elsewhere as *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn,* literally, "unto the ages of the ages," and in every case is connected with God or Christ, and so expresses endless existence. However, this meaning is derived, not from the expression itself, but from that with which it is associated. The expression itself means multiplied ages.

The following is a possible explanation of the use of the compound expression here. The subject matter is the torment of the worshipers of the beast in an inferno of fire and brimstone. The age of a man in such an environment would be very brief, so that if the expression *eis ton aiōna,* "unto the age," had been used, it would be possible to conclude that the punishment would be but momentary. The compound expression shows that the torment would be for a certain period, not unending of course, as is evident from other scriptures that show that the final fate of the wicked will be annihilation (see Matt. 10:28; Rev. 20:14).

The figure of the smoke ascending forever is doubtless drawn from Isa. 34:10, where the desolation of Edom is described. That the ancient prophet did not envision unending fires is seen from the fact that following the conflagration, concerning which he says, "The smoke thereof shall go up for ever," the country becomes a desolate waste inhabited by wild beasts (vs. 10-15). The figure denotes complete destruction. See on Mal. 4:1.

Rest. Gr. *anapausis,* "cessation," "rest," "refreshment." The meaning here is that for the duration of the punishment, which continues until death ensues, there will be no relaxation of the punishment.

Day nor night. That is, daytime, or nighttime. The time of day matters not; the torment is continuous.

Worship the beast. The classification is repeated (cf. v. 9), doubtless for emphasis. The third angel utters a most fearful threat. The inhabitants of earth will be without excuse if they do not escape the entanglement here warned against. They should put forth every effort to discover the identity of the beast, his image, and mark, and to become acquainted with his wiles and policies.

12. Patience. Gr. *hupomonē* (see on Rom. 5:3). Here the translation "steadfast endurance" would be a more suitable rendering. The context calls attention to the fearful struggle with the beast and his image. Every attempt will be made to force the remnant to join the movement promoted by the second beast, including the threat of boycott and death (Rev. 13:11-17). At the same time Satan will work with all "deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:10; cf. Matt. 24:24), making it appear that the power of God is manifest in the movement. Through all this the faithful remnant steadfastly endure and maintain their integrity. Their steadfastness merits special commendation.

Saints. Gr. *hagioi,* literally, "holy ones" (see on Rom. 1:7).

Keep the commandments of God. This statement is particularly significant in its context. Led captive by Satan's delusions, the world will bow to the beast and its image, and carry out its dictates and decrees (see on ch. 13:8). The saints, on the other hand, refuse to comply with its demands. They keep the commandments of God. The special point controverted will

be the fourth of the Ten Commandments. There is general agreement among Christians that the other nine are of universal obligation, but early in the Christian Era men began to set aside the seventh-day Sabbath and to substitute the observance of the first day of the week as the day of worship (see on Dan. 7:25). Sunday-observing Christians today set forth various reasons as to why they observe the first day of the week instead of the seventh, and as to why they feel free to ignore the original Sabbath. Some say that the Decalogue was abolished along with all OT laws; others that the time element in the fourth commandment is ceremonial but the observance of one day every seven is a moral obligation. In the Roman Church the claim was long made that the church had, by its divine authority, transferred the sacredness of the day. However, in recent decades attempts have been made to invoke the authority of Christ and the apostles. Since all those views are unsupported by Scripture, they are unacceptable to all for whom the Bible and the Bible only is the rule of faith. The crisis will come when symbolic Babylon prevails upon the state to enforce Sunday observance by civil law and seeks to punish all dissenters. This is the issue described in Rev. 13:12-17 (see comment there, especially on vs. 12, 16). In this dark hour those who cling to the Bible will refuse to give up the observance of the true Sabbath. Among the identifying features of the faithful ones that might have been mentioned, the prophecy points out two predominant marks: the keeping of the commandments of God and of the faith of Jesus.

Faith of Jesus. Or, "faith in Jesus." The Greek may be understood either way, though the latter meaning is generally preferred. For the difference in meaning between the two expressions and for the importance of faith to Christian experience see on Rom. 3:22. The faith of Jesus and the keeping of the commandments represent two important aspects of Christian living. The commandments of God are a transcript of the character of God. They set forth the divine standard of righteousness that God would have man attain but which in his unregenerate state he cannot attain to. "The carnal mind . . . is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Despite his best attempts, man continually comes short of the glory of God (see on Rom. 3:23). But Jesus came to enable men to be restored to the divine image. He came to show men what the Father is like, and in this sense amplified the moral law. Through His power men are enabled to keep the divine requirements (see on Rom. 8:3, 4) and thus reflect the divine image.

The remnant church thus honors the commandments of God, and observes them, not in any legalistic sense but as a revelation of the character of God and of Christ, who dwells in the heart of the true believer (Gal. 2:20).

13. Voice. The voice is not identified, but is apparently distinguished from the voice of the third angel (vs. 9-12).

Write. See on ch. 1:11.

Blessed are the dead. This is one of the seven so-called beatitudes of the book of Revelation (cf. on Matt. 5:3). The others are found in Rev. 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.

In the Lord. Not the dead generally are here pronounced blessed, but only those who die "in the Lord." These are they who died with their faith fixed in Jesus (cf. on 1 Cor. 15:18; 1 Thess. 4:16).

From henceforth. This doubtless refers to the period of the three angels' messages, which embraces the period of persecution by the beast and its image, when the boycott is imposed and the death penalty passed (see on ch. 13:12-17). Those who go to their graves in this period rest, as it were, a little moment until the indignation be overpast. Then they will be privileged to come forth in the special resurrection preceding the general resurrection of the righteous (see on Dan. 12:2).

The Spirit. See on ch. 1:4.

Labours. Gr. *kopoi,* "wearying toil," "weariness," "strenuous effort." Compare the use of the word in 2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23, 27; 1 Thess. 1:3. Death is a rest from the wearying toil of life.

Works. Gr. *erga,* "activities," a general term here contrasted with *kopoi* (see above).

Follow them. This expression has been

interpreted in two ways: (1) On the basis that the Greek reads, literally, "follow with them," that is, accompany them, some consider that John here refers to the laying down of the burdens of this life and the continuation of activities in the future world. Activity would, of course, cease during the period between death and the resurrection, for that is a time of unconsciousness and inactivity (see on Ps. 146:4; 2 Cor. 5:1-3). But heaven will be a place of pleasurable activity (see Ed 301-309). (2) Others interpret the clause "their works do follow them" as referring to the influence a good man leaves behind when he dies.

14. A white cloud. Verses 14-20 are a symbolic vision of the coming of Christ. Rules for the interpretation of symbolic visions (see on Eze. 1:10) must be applied in an exposition of the passage. For the significance of clouds with reference to the coming of Christ see on Acts 1:9-11; cf. Matt. 24:30; Luke 21:27; Rev. 1:7. The nature of the three angels' messages and the fact that immediately following them the coming of Christ is discussed, show that the three messages are God's final message of warning to the world (cf. on ch. 18:1-4).

Son of man. See on ch. 1:13.

Crown. Gr. *stephanos,* "a wreath," "a crown," here, of victory (cf. on ch. 12:3). The golden crown may be contrasted with the "crown [*stephanos*] of thorns" (Matt. 27:29).

Sharp sickle. Jesus is represented coming as a reaper to gather the harvest (vs. 15, 16).

15. Another angel. That is, in addition to the three who delivered the messages of warning before the second advent of Christ (vs. 6, 8, 9).

Temple. Gr. *naos* (see on ch. 3:12). The temple has earlier been introduced into the prophetic picture (see ch. 11:1, 2, 19). It will be noticed that John frequently alludes to items introduced in earlier visions. The setting remains largely the same. For example, the four "beasts" introduced in ch. 4:6 appear repeatedly in subsequent visions (see chs. 7:11; 14:3; 15:7; 19:4).

The harvest. Verses 15-20 describe the great harvest at the end of all things. The harvest comprehends two distinctive events. One is described in vs. 16, 17, and the other in vs. 18-20. The first refers to the gathering of the righteous, represented here by ripened grain, as shown in the Greek by the word translated "ripe." The second refers to the wicked, represented by the clusters of "fully ripe" grapes.

Is ripe. Gr. *xēraino,* "to become dry," "to become withered," used of the ripening of grain crops.

16. Was reaped. This represents the gathering of the righteous (cf. Matt. 13:30; Luke 3:17).

17. Another angel. Compare v. 15.

Temple. See on v. 15.

Sickle. Compare v. 15.

18. Altar. Probably the altar mentioned in chs. 8:3, 5; 9:13.

Power over fire. The reason for mentioning that this angel has power over fire is not clear. Perhaps fire is a symbol of vengeance. Compare the phrase "angel of the waters" (ch. 16:5).

Cried. Compare v. 15.

Clusters of the vine. The figure of the two harvests is borrowed from the ancient Palestinian agricultural year, which consisted of two main harvests, the grain harvest and the vintage (see Vol. II, pp. 109, 110). Here the vintage represents the wicked gathered for destruction.

19. Winepress. The figure is suitable with reference to the color of the wine, which resembles blood. The figure is probably drawn from Isa. 63:1-6 (see comment there).

Wrath of God. The reference here is, perhaps, particularly to the seven last plagues (ch. 15:1).

20. Trodden. The wine press in days of old was trodden by the feet of men (see on Isa. 63:2, 3).

Without the city. The picture is probably drawn from OT prophecies describing the destruction of God's enemies outside Jerusalem (see on Joel 3:12, 13).

Horse bridles. A figure of speech indicating the great and complete slaughter of the wicked hosts. A parallel figure is found in the apocryphal book of Enoch: "And in those days in one place the fathers together with their sons shall be smitten And brothers one with another shall fall in death Till the streams flow with their blood. . . . And the horse shall walk up to

the breast in the blood of sinners, And the chariot shall be submerged to its height" (ch. 100:1-3; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament,* vol. 2, p. 271).

Furlongs. Sixteen hundred furlongs would be about 184 mi. (see Vol. V, p. 50). No satisfactory explanation can be found for the particular number (1,600). Jerome thought it to be an allusion to the length of Palestine. This, however, is speculation, and adds little to the understanding of the passage. The main thought is that the enemies of the church of God are to be completely and finally overthrown. Therefore the church can look forward to full and complete deliverance from all her enemies, and to joyful triumph in the kingdom of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AA 590; EW 15, 19, 31, 37, 40; LS 65, 117; PK 591; 1T 59, 69; 5T 475, 752
1-3 GC 648
2-5 AA 591; GC 649
3 GC 649
3-5 PK 591; 5T 476
4 COL 223; ML 362; TM 149, 422; 8T 331
4, 5 EW 30
5 GC xi; GW 80; MB 69; PK 252; 1T 216, 705; 3T 266; 5T 482
6 COL 228; DA 633; GC 450, 453, 611; GW 470; MM 131, 330; 6T 434; 7T 51
6, 7 COL 227; GC 311, 355; PK 299; 1T 53; 8T 26
6-10 7T 140; 8T 94
6-12 Ev 19, 20; GC 390; GW 470; 5T 455; 6T 17, 60, 133, 406; 8T 197
6-14 COL 79
7 EW 232, 233, 240; GC 352, 368, 369, 379, 424, 435, 438; PK 714; SR 356, 359
7, 8 EW 241
7-10 PK 187
8 EW 237, 247, 273; GC 381, 388, 389, 390, 536, 603; LS 59; PK 715; PP 124; SR 364; TM 61; 1T 53
9 FE 113; SR 383; 1T 207
9, 10 CS 51; EW 65; GC 438, 445, 604, 627; SR 381; 1T 223
9-11 GC 594; TM 132
9-12 CH 452; CT 548; CW 140; Ev 233; EW 75, 279; LS 96; TM 89; 1T 78, 337; 5T 383; 6T 31, 128, 229, 401; 8T 116, 118, 159; 9T 16
10 5T 212, 524
12 CM 122, 145; CW 30, 144; Ev 281, 581; EW 35, 254, 279; FE 479; GC 436, 445; LS 103; ML 73; MM 94, 98, 164; PK 300; RC 66; SR 381, 383, 401; TM 133, 219; 2T 450; 3T 446; 5T 206, 472, 501, 525; 6T 61, 144, 290, 292, 395, 434; 7T 150; 8T 41, 77, 153, 197; 9T 15, 61
12-19 6T 15
13 CH 375; MH 230; 5T 313
14 DA 633; EW 15, 35, 286; LS 65, 103; SR 410
14, 15 1T 60, 183
14-17 EW 31
15 GC 311

CHAPTER 15

1 The seven angels with the seven last plagues. 3 The song of them that overcome the beast. 7 The seven vials full of the wrath of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto

the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

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

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1. Another. That is, with reference to the sign mentioned in ch. 12:1.

Sign. Gr. *sēmeion* (see on ch. 12:1).

Great and marvellous. With reference to its far-reaching effects.

Seven angels. For the use of the number "seven" in Revelation see on ch. 1:11.

Seven last plagues. Literally, "seven plagues, the last." These plagues are outlined in ch. 16. They are the last with respect to their kind; there will be no more plagues as such, although the ultimate destruction of Satan and sinners is still future (ch. 20:11-15).

Filled up. Gr. *teleō*, "to finish," "to execute," "to perform," "to accomplish." The special punishment reserved for the worshipers of the beast and his image (ch. 16:2) is summed up in the seven last plagues (see on ch. 14:10).

Wrath of God. See on ch. 14:10.

2. Sea of glass. See on ch. 4:6.

Mingled with fire. In ch. 4 the sea of glass is likened "unto crystal" (v. 6). Here it has a hue like fire doubtless through a reflection of the glory of God.

Had gotten the victory. These are the people who responded to, and accepted, the message of warning mentioned in ch. 14. They have been saved out of the world of trouble and evil, and are now secure in the kingdom of God. The victory was obtained by the blood of the Lamb (ch. 12:11). They stood loyal to God even when the death penalty was pronounced (see on ch. 13:15). Now they stand safe on the sea of glass. The victory is complete, the struggle is over. They overcame, they triumphed, and now in the heavenly kingdom they sing the anthem of victory.

Beast. See on ch. 13:2.

Image. See on ch. 13:14.

Mark. See on ch. 13:16.

Number of his name. See on ch. 13:18.

Harps of God. See on chs. 5:8; 14:2. Verses 2-4 are parenthetical. Preceding a description of the fearful seven last plagues, the prophet is given a view of the triumph of the church of God over all her enemies. The saints will not be swallowed up in the overflowing scourge, but will be delivered.

3. Song of Moses. This is undoubtedly a reference to the song of deliverance after Israel crossed the Red Sea (Ex. 15:1-21). That song celebrated the deliverance from Egyptian oppression; the new song, deliverance from the tyranny of "Babylon the great" (Rev. 17:5).

Servant of God. Compare Joshua 14:7, where Moses is designated "the servant of the Lord," and Ex. 14:31, where he is called "his [the Lord's] servant."

Of the Lamb. The deliverance of the saints was wrought by Christ, the Lamb of God (see on ch. 17:14), and it is but natural that He should be adored and exalted in the song of deliverance.

Great and marvellous. There are many allusions to OT phraseology in this song. The marvelous works of God are extolled in Ps. 139:14; cf. Ps. 111:2, 4. There may be a specific reference here to the "works" of God in the seven last plagues. The "sign" delineating these plagues is described as "great and marvellous" (Rev. 15:1).

Lord God Almighty. See on ch. 1:8.

Just and true. Or, "righteous and genuine." Compare Deut. 32:4 (LXX); Ps. 145:17; Rev. 16:7; 19:2; GC 671.

King of saints. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between the reading "King of nations" and "King of ages." The reading "King of saints" has little support. In Jer. 10:7 the Lord is called "King of nations." This reading fits the thought of Rev. 15:4, where the prediction is made that all nations shall come and worship before God.

4. Who shall not fear thee? Compare Jer. 10:7. The message of the first angel in Rev. 14 was, "Fear God, and give glory to him." The saints had heeded this appeal, and now that their pilgrimage is over they join in this wonderful ascription of praise to the glory of God. Compare the cry of

the worshipers of the beast, "Who is like unto the beast?" (ch. 13:4).

Glorify thy name. Compare Ps. 86:9.

Holy. Gr. *hosios* (see on Acts 2:27; cf. on ch. 13:34). The adjective appears with reference to God in the LXX of Deut. 32:4. This is the first of three reasons given why men should glorify their Maker. The other two are, "for all nations shall come and worship before thee," and "for thy judgments are made manifest."

Thy judgments. Here, doubtless, particularly the judgments of God against the beast, his image, and his worshipers.

5. Temple. Gr. *naos* (see on ch. 14:15).

Tabernacle of the testimony. Or, "tent of the witness." This name apparently applies to the most holy place in Num. 17:7 (see comment there). In Acts 7:44 it seems to refer to the entire structure (cf. on Num. 9:15). Here the latter meaning probably applies. The wilderness tabernacle was a type of "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:2).

6. Seven angels. See v. 1.

Linen. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "stone," which, however, creates an unusual and unlikely figure. White garments are the typical attire of celestial beings (Matt. 28:3; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; cf. Acts 10:30).

7. Four beasts. See on ch. 4:6-8.

Vials. Gr. *phialai,* "bowls," such as might be used for boiling liquids, for drinking, or for pouring out libations. In the LXX the word is used for a "basin" (Ex. 27:3) or a "bowl" (Num. 7:13).

8. Filled with smoke. Compare Ex. 40:34, 35; Isa. 6:4.

No man. Literally, "no one." This undoubtedly means that the time for intercession is past; no one can enter and have access to the mercy seat. The time of preparation is over; now the time has come for the pouring out of the unmingled wrath of God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 EW 16, 34, 286, 288; GC 648; LS 66; 1T 61; 5T 485; 9T 17
2, 3 AA 589, 590; GC 450; MB 31; PP 289; 5T 752
3 GC 669, 671; ML 346; PP 79; SR 426; TM 432; 8T 44
3, 4 DA 58; Ed 308; 7T 28
4 GC 670
8 EW 36; LS 117

CHAPTER 16

2 *The angels pour out their vials full of wrath.* 6 *The plagues that follow thereupon.* 15 *Christ cometh as a thief. Blessed are they that watch.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9 And men were scorched with great

heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

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

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

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

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

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

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

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1. **I heard.** See on ch. 1:2, 10.

A great voice. Compare ch. 1:10.

Out of the temple. In view of the fact that the seven plague-bearing angels had already departed from the temple (ch. 15:6), and that "no man [literally, "no one"] was able to enter into the temple" (see on v. 8), this would seem to be the voice of God Himself.

Seven angels. For the significance of the number "seven" in the Revelation see on ch. 1:11.

Go. Although John does not specify the moment for the giving of this fearful command, the context makes evident that it will be issued soon after the close of probationary time but prior to the coming of Christ (cf. on ch. 15:8). Obviously, the unprecedented series of calamities here foretold (see below on "pour out the vials") is yet future.

The fact that the first plague is poured out upon men who have received the mark of the beast and who worship its image (ch. 16:2) places the plagues after the setting up of the image and the affixing of the mark (see on ch. 13:14-17), and also after the proclamation of the third angel, which warns against the beast and its mark (see on ch. 14:9-11). Furthermore, the fact that the seven last plagues constitute the fullness of divine wrath untempered by mercy (chs. 14:10; 15:1; 16:1) clearly implies that the probation of those upon whom they fall has closed (see on ch. 22:11). The fact that at the time of the fifth plague men are still suffering from the sores of the first plague (ch. 16:11) clearly implies that the plagues are poured out successively and within a comparatively short period of time (see on v. 2). It appears also that the judgment of mystical Babylon, which takes place under the seventh plague (v. 19), precedes that of the kings of the earth at the appearance of Christ (see on chs. 17:16; 18:11, 20; 19:2, 11-19; cf. chs. 6:15-17; 14:14).

Pour out the vials. That is, afflict the earth with the calamities figuratively represented by the seven bowls (see ch. 15:7). In certain respects the seven last plagues are similar to the ten plagues upon Egypt (Ex. 5:1 to 12:30). Both testify to the superior authority and power of God. Both result in the decisive defeat of men who had chosen to defy God, and thus in the deliverance of His chosen people from

a situation that would otherwise be without remedy. Both demonstrate the justice of God and bring honor and glory to His name.

Each of the ten plagues upon Egypt was painfully literal; and each was designed to demonstrate how false were the claims of, and how futile was reliance upon, false religion (see on Ex. 7:17; 12:12; cf. PP 333, 758-760). Similarly, the seven last plagues will be literal, yet each will strike a telling blow at some aspect of apostate religion and thus have symbolic overtones. It is obvious, for instance, that the first angel did not pour a literal chemical compound from a literal bowl upon men who had received a literal mark inflicted by a literal beast. But the angel himself is probably literal, and the men upon whom his vial falls are certainly literal men, and their sufferings equally literal. The symbolic import of the third plague is clearly pointed out in Rev. 16:5, 6.

Wrath of God. See on 2 Kings 13:3; Rev. 14:10. It may be asked why God would torment men in the fearful manner described in ch. 16 *after* the close of human probation, when there will be no opportunity for repentance. Why does Christ not come and terminate the reign of sin immediately? In OT times various calamities, such as invasion, famine, pestilence, earthquake, and other natural disasters, were often permitted by God as remedial, disciplinary agencies to bring men to repentance (see Isa. 1:5-9; 9:13; 10:5, 6; 26:9; Jer. 2:30; 5:3; Hosea 7:10; Joel 1:4; 2:12-14; Amos 4:6-11; Haggai 1:5-11; see on 1 Sam. 16:14; 2 Chron. 18:18). Quite obviously the seven last plagues can serve no such beneficent purpose (see above on "go"). However, there can be no doubt that the plagues do serve a necessary function in the outworking of the plan of Heaven.

It may be observed that the first four or five plagues are, in a sense, of a preliminary nature and lead men to realize that they have been fighting against God (see GC 640). But instead of repenting they curse Him more bitterly than ever and become even more resolute in their opposition (see Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). The plagues thus serve to reveal the spirit of rebellion which fully controls their hearts. The tares, as it were, are proved to be tares (cf. Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43), and God's justice in destroying them is made evident (cf. GC 670). Conversely, the trials of the great time of trouble attending the plagues perfects the characters of the saints, and leads them to trust more confidently in God. Compare on Rev. 7:4.

As willingness to die for another is the supreme manifestation of love (John 15:13), so the intent to take another's life marks the ultimate degree of hatred. During the last two plagues a situation develops that makes this distinction fully apparent, even to the participants themselves, and the justice of God in terminating human history is thus made evident to men as well as angels (see Rom. 14:11; Phil. 2:10; GC 638-640; cf. PP 260; cf. on Rev. 16:13, 14, 16, 17). It will then be demonstrated before the universe that, to a man, the remnant people would rather die than disobey God, and that those who have chosen the service of Satan would, if permitted, slay all who stand in the way of their purpose to control the earth. Caught in the very act of attempting to execute the death decree, they stand without excuse before God. See on ch. 16:17.

The line is thus clearly drawn between those who serve God and those who serve Him not, and through the unconverted the devil is permitted to demonstrate what the universe would be like should he be allowed to control it (see GC 37). Compare on ch. 7:1.

Upon the earth. That is, upon the inhabitants of earth.

2. The first. The numerical designation of each angel implies that the plagues are successive (see on vs. 1, 11).

Noisome and grievous. Or, "painful and severe," or "troublesome and annoying."

Sore. Gr. *helkos,* "ulcer," "sore," "suppurating wound." In the LXX *helkos* is used of the boils that befell the Egyptians (Ex. 9:9, 10), of a "botch" that could not be healed (Deut. 28:27), and of the boils that came upon Job (Job 2:7). Against this "sore" the vaunted miracle-working power of the spirits now cooperating with apostate Christianity (Rev. 13:13, 14; 18:2; 19:20) apparently proves unavailing (see on ch. 16:14). The falsity of the claims that

men have based on miracle-working power is demonstrated in a way that they cannot deny (cf. Ex. 8:19).

The men. This first installment of "the wrath of God" (v. 1) falls upon those who have failed to heed either the third angel's message, which warned them against worshiping "the beast and his image" (ch. 14:9), or God's final call to come out of mystic Babylon (ch. 18:1-4). This plague will not be universal (see GC 628).

Mark of the beast. See on ch. 13:16.

Which worshipped his image. See on ch. 13:14, 15.

3. Upon the sea. Under the third plague the "rivers and fountains of waters" are similarly affected (v. 4). The sea is useful primarily as a highway for international commerce and travel. It has been suggested that, by the obstruction of international travel and trade (see chs. 13:13-17; 16:13, 14; 17:3, 12), this plague is designed to demonstrate in a signal way God's displeasure with respect to Satan's plan to bind the nations of earth together under his control. Compare Balaam's experience (Num. 22:21-35). Like the first plague, the second is not universal (see on Rev. 16:2; see GC 628).

Blood. Doubtless in consistency, odor, and color, but not necessarily in composition.

Of a dead man. Nothing more offensive can be imagined than the coagulated blood of a dead man.

Every living soul. Or, "every living thing" (RSV). The word for "soul" (*psuchē*) is used of animal life as well as of human life (see on Matt. 10:28; cf. on Ps. 16:10). In Rev. 8:9 *psuchē* is translated "creatures," obviously referring to marine life. In Gen. 8:1 the Hebrew equivalent (*nephesh*, "living thing") is similarly used of animals (cf. Job 12:10).

4. Rivers and fountains of waters. In Bible times "rivers and fountains of waters" were primarily useful for such everyday requirements as drinking, bathing, and irrigation. Whereas the second plague would doubtless result in great inconvenience and perhaps interruption of travel (see on v. 3) the effects of the third would be immediate and serious. Compare the first plague on the land of Egypt (see on Ex. 7:17, 19). Like the first and second plagues, the third is not universal (see GC 628).

5. I heard. See on ch. 1:2, 10.

Angel of the waters. That is, one having jurisdiction over the waters. Compare the angels of chs. 7:1 and 14:18, which have power over the "winds" and over "fire" respectively. Reference here may well be to the angel assigned to pour out the third plague upon the "rivers and fountains of waters."

Thou art righteous. The terrible nature of the third plague apparently calls forth a statement in defense of God for authorizing it. He is altogether just in this demonstration of His "wrath" (see on chs. 15:3, 4; 16:1).

Lord. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word.

Art, and wast. See on ch. 1:4.

Shalt be. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "O Holy One," or "the Holy One." This expression occurs in every ancient Greek manuscript except one now known and in the Textus Receptus, on which the KJV was largely based. The reason for the reading of the KJV is not apparent. The changelessness of God stands forth in striking contrast with the devastating changes now taking place on earth.

Thus. Literally, "these [things]," that is, the first three plagues and possibly those that have not yet fallen.

6. They have shed. Literally, "they have poured out." This doubtless includes the unshed blood of the living saints, who have been marked out for martyrdom (see on chs. 17:6; 18:20). By condemning the people of God to death the wicked have as truly incurred guilt for their blood as if it had already been shed (GC 628; cf. Matt. 23:35).

Saints and prophets. See on Acts 9:13; Rom. 1:7; Rev. 18:20.

Thou hast given them. The plague is stated to be a direct act on the part of God (see on v. 1; cf. GC 36, 37).

They are worthy. The punishment is precisely appropriate to the crime. The wicked deserve the punishment now meted out to them; it is in no sense an arbitrary act on the part of God (see on v. 1).

7. I heard. See on ch. 1:2, 10.

Another. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word. The preferred reading, literally, is, "I heard the altar say," probably meaning, however, not the altar but an angel who had been serving at it or standing by it (cf. ch. 14:18). The altar is doubtless not personified.

The altar. That is, the altar of incense. No mention is made of an altar of burnt offering in heaven (cf. chs. 8:3; 9:13; 14:18). For the function of the altar of incense in the ancient tabernacle service see on Ex. 30:1, 6.

Even so. Literally, "yes."

Lord God Almighty. See on ch. 1:8.

True and righteous. Or, "true and just" (see chs. 1:5; 3:7; 6:10; 15:3). In visiting these terrible judgments upon those who have rejected divine mercy, God is "true" in the sense that He is true to His word —He is carrying out what He had promised to do (ch. 14:9-11; etc.). He is "righteous," or "just," in the sense that justice demands the meting out of punishment to those who have defied Heaven. See on ch. 16:1.

Judgments. That is, "acts of judgment," meaning the plagues.

8. Upon the sun. According to the Greek the first three plagues are poured out "into" (*eis*) the earth, the sea, and the fountains and rivers of waters, respectively. The next three are poured out "upon" (*epi*) the sun, the beast's throne, and the river Euphrates, respectively. The seventh is poured out "into" (*eis;* however, textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "upon" [*epi*]) the air. What distinction, if any, Inspiration may have intended is not clear.

Power was given. Literally, "it was given," or "it was permitted."

Scorch men with fire. Or, "burn men with fire." Normally, the sun warms and cheers men, and controls plant growth, climate, and many other natural processes necessary to the maintenance of life upon the earth. Now, it sends forth an excess of warmth and energy that tends to torment men and to destroy life. Though men doubtless suffer directly from this intense heat, its worst results are doubtless the most severe drought and famine the world has ever known (see GC 628). But the literal plague is accompanied by a famine for God's Word (cf. Amos 8:11, 12). Throughout the land there is a feverish but vain quest for a means of alleviating the suffering and want occasioned by the first four plagues and of averting further calamities (GC 629). It is not motivated by godly sorrow, but by sorrow of the world (see on 2 Cor. 7:9-11). The objective is to escape the misery occasioned by the plagues, not to enter into a genuine state of reconciliation with God. Accordingly, Satan convinces the inhabitants of the earth, not that they are sinners, but that they have erred in tolerating God's chosen people (see EW 34; see on Rev. 16:14). Like the three preceding plagues, this one is not universal (GC 628).

9. Blasphemed. Gr. *blasphemeō* (see on ch. 13:1). Here, to blaspheme God is to speak of Him in a derogatory fashion. Under the fourth plague men begin to blame Him for their misery and to realize, at last, that they are fighting against Him (see on ch. 16:1).

Name of God. That is, God Himself. The name stands for the person who bears it (see on Matt. 6:9; Acts 3:16).

Power over these plagues. They view the plagues as a demonstration of divine power (see on v. 1).

Repented not. Instead of acknowledging their guilt they proceed to lay the blame for their miserable plight upon those who have remained true and loyal to God (see EW 34; GC 624). In utter perversity they refuse to yield to His will, and demonstrate themselves to be what they really are—devoted servants of Satan (see on v. 1). The refusal to repent proves them to be altogether and unalterably opposed to God.

Give him glory. That is, acknowledge Him to be "true and righteous" (see on v. 7). Those suffering from the plagues refuse to admit themselves in the wrong and God in the right, even in the face of severe judgments that would lead honest, contrite men to amend their ways (cf. Isa. 26:9, 10). Their hearts prove to be utterly hardened and unsusceptible to either divine mercy or severity (see on Ex. 4:21; Eph. 4:30; Rev. 16:1).

10. Seat. Gr. *thronos,* "throne" (see on ch. 13:2). "The seat of the beast" is apparently his headquarters. "The beast" here

represents primarily the papacy in its revived state, not so much in its religious aspect as in its assumed role of a world power dominant over other world powers (see on chs. 13:1, 2, 10; 17:3, 8, 9, 11).

His kingdom. Or, "its kingdom." Except for the small remnant that still resists his supremacy Satan numbers the world as his subjects, and it is through the revived papacy in particular that he seeks to secure undisputed control over the entire human race (see GC 571, 580, 656; 5T 472; 7T 182; see on chs. 16:13, 14; 17:8, 12; cf. ch. 19:19). It would therefore appear that for the duration of this plague the entire world is enveloped in a pall of darkness. Thus, while men grope unrepentantly for light in a spiritually dark world (see ch. 16:8, 9) God sends upon them literal darkness, symbolic of the deeper spiritual night that is yet to enshroud the earth (see on vs. 13, 14).

Darkness. The entire clause reads literally, "his kingdom became darkened," the Greek implying that it remained so for a period of time. This is literal darkness (see on v. 1), with its attendant cold and misery. The absence of light and heat would be all the more impressive and painful after the intense heat experienced under the fourth plague.

Gnawed their tongues for pain. Or, "kept biting their tongues out of pain," that is, because of pain. Possibly an intense cold accompanied the prolonged darkness.

11. Blasphemed. Men confirm their perverse hatred of God. Their attitude under the fourth plague (see on v. 9) persists unabated.

God of heaven. See on ch. 11:13.

Their pains. That is, the effects of the plagues (v. 10).

Their sores. That is, the effects of the first plague (v. 2). Apparently the sores of the first plague are not immediately fatal, at least not in all cases. Apparently, also, the plagues fall successively rather than simultaneously, and their effects persist (see on v. 2).

Repented not. See on v. 9.

12. The sixth angel. Generally speaking, Adventist expositors have set forth one or the other of two interpretations of vs. 12-16. According to the first interpretation "the great river Euphrates" represents the Ottoman Empire; the drying up of its waters, the gradual dissolution of that empire; the "kings of the east," the nations of the Orient; and Armageddon, the literal valley of Megiddo in northern Palestine. Thus, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire is seen as preparing the way for Oriental nations to join battle with those of the West in the valley of Megiddo.

According to the second interpretation the Euphrates represents the people over whom mystical Babylon holds sway; the drying up of its waters, the withdrawal of their support from Babylon; the "kings of the east," Christ and those accompanying Him; and Armageddon, the last battle of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, fought out on the battlefield of this earth. Thus, the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon is seen as the removal of the last barrier to her ultimate defeat and punishment.

According to the first view the battle of Armageddon begins as essentially a political conflict and comes to a climax with the appearance of Christ and the armies of heaven. According to the second view the battle of Armageddon begins when the united religious and political powers of earth open their final attack on God's remnant people.

Though these two views appear to be mutually exclusive, they actually have much in common.

Proponents of both views on Armageddon are generally agreed on the following points:

1. That it is the last great battle of earth's history and that it is still future.

2. That it is "the battle of that great day of God" (v. 14).

3. That "the great river Euphrates" is symbolic of human beings.

4. That the three "unclean spirits" (v. 13) represent the papacy, apostate Protestantism, and spiritism (or paganism).

5. That these three "spirits" constitute the agencies that will summon the nations to battle.

6. That the gathering agencies—"three unclean spirits"—are religious in nature and that the forces gathered are political and military.

7. That preparations for the battle take place under the sixth plague, but that the battle itself is fought under the seventh plague.

8. That in one phase it will be a real battle between real people employing real weapons.

9. That there will be bloodshed on an unprecedented scale.

10. That all the nations of earth will be involved.

11. That eventually Christ and the armies of heaven intervene and bring the battle to a close.

12. That the living saints witness the battle, but not as direct participants.

The fundamental difference between the two views consists in whether the three terms, Euphrates, "kings of the east," and Armageddon, retain a measure of literal, geographical significance, or whether they are to be interpreted in a completely figurative sense. The first view assumes that these terms retain geographical significance. The second view affirms that they are to be interpreted altogether figuratively, in terms of the context of chs. 13 to 19. For further comment on the various points of similarity and difference between the two views see on vs. 12-19. Compare on Dan. 11:36-40.

As might be expected, variations and modifications of these two major views are held by some Adventist expositors. However, space limits prevent exploring these. For an earlier discussion of the view that the battle of Armageddon is the battle between Christ and the wicked nations at the second advent, see James White in *The Review and Herald,* Jan. 21, 1862, p. 61. For a formal presentation of the view that the battle of Armageddon involves also a political and military gathering of the nations of earth in Palestine, see Uriah Smith, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (1944), pp. 691-701.

Great river Euphrates. See p. 724; see on ch. 9:14. Proponents of both the first and the second views agree that John does not here refer to the literal river as a river, or to the drying up of its literal waters. There is also general agreement that the waters of the river Euphrates here represent human beings (cf. ch. 17:15). According to the first view, however, the Euphrates represents the former Ottoman Empire, through which this river flowed, and since the fall of that empire at the end of World War I, its modern successor, Turkey. This view assumes that the term Euphrates, while not referring to the literal river as a river, nevertheless retains a measure of literal geographical significance, to the extent of being a designation for the geographical area traversed by the river, the Mesopotamian valley. For more than 1,000 years this area was administered by the Saracens and the Turks, and more recently by the government of Iraq.

According to the second view the significance of the term Euphrates is to be ascertained from the context which reveals that the term Babylon is used exclusively as a symbol of apostate Christianity (see on chs. 14:8; 17:5). Historically and geographically the literal river Euphrates was *the* river of literal Babylon (Jer. 51:12, 13, 63, 64). As *the* river of mystical Babylon, "that great city" (see on Rev. 17:18), the Euphrates would here be dissociated altogether from its former literal, geographical significance and be understood in terms of its companion symbol, mystical Babylon. The waters of the Euphrates would thus be the "many waters" of ch. 17:1-3, 15 on which mystical Babylon sits, the "inhabitants of the earth," whom she makes "drunk with the wine of her fornication" (ch. 17:2; cf. ch. 13:3, 4, 7, 8, 14-16).

Water. See on ch. 17:1, 15.

Dried up. The form of the verb in the Greek denotes as an accomplished fact the act of drying up. According to the first view the drying up of the river Euphrates here referred to began to meet its fulfillment in the gradual shrinking of the Ottoman Empire, with the complete fulfillment of this prophetic feature still future.

According to the second view the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates refers to the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon in connection with the sixth plague (see above on "great river Euphrates"; see on Rev. 16:14, 16, 17, 19; cf. Isa. 44:26 to 45:2). Proponents of this view find the results of the drying up described symbolically in Rev. 16:18, 19; 17:15-18, and literally in GC 654-656.

Way. Gr. *hodos*, "road," "highway." In the setting of vs. 12-16 this is the "way" by which the "kings" and their armies pass through the Euphrates to join battle with their opponents. According to the first view this "way" would be geographically through the Mesopotamian valley, formerly the territory of the Ottoman Empire. According to the second view, "way" is figurative—the "way" by which the situation on earth is prepared for Christ and the armies of heaven to triumph over Babylon (v. 19) and "the kings of the earth" (v. 14).

Kings of the east. Literally, "kings from the [sun] rising" (see on ch. 7:2). In harmony with the geographical significance that they attribute to "the great river Euphrates," those who hold the first view understand the "kings of the east" in a geographical sense, as denoting nations situated to the east of the Mesopotamian valley.

According to the second view "the kings of the east" represent Christ and those accompanying Him. This view bases the term "kings of the east," like the other symbolic expressions of Rev. 16:12, on the historical incident of Cyrus conquering Babylon and later releasing God's people, the Jews, to return to their native land.

Prepared. According to the first view the "way of the kings of the east" began to be prepared by the shrinking of the Ottoman Empire (see above on "dried up"). According to the second view the "way" will be "prepared" by the withdrawal of human support from mystical Babylon (see on vs. 1, 12, 14, 17). According to the first view this preparation is of a geographic and military character; according to the second, it is of a moral and spiritual character.

13. I saw. See on ch. 1:1.

Three unclean spirits. Proponents of both views agree on identifying the "dragon," "beast," and "false prophet" as modern spiritism (GC 561, 562), or paganism, the papacy, and apostate Protestantism (cf. chs. 13:4, 14, 15; 19:20; 20:10). The "three unclean spirits" apparently either symbolize or represent this evil trio of religious powers, which together constitute latter-day "great Babylon" (ch. 16:13, 14, 18, 19; see on chs. 16:19; 17:5).

Like frogs. Perhaps no significance should be attached to this comparison, which probably is intended only to highlight the repulsiveness of the "three unclean spirits" in the sight of God.

Out of the mouth. The mouth is the instrument of speech. Coming forth from the mouth of the "dragon," of the "beast," and of the "false prophet," these three "unclean spirits" represent the policy that this threefold religious union proclaims to the world, spoken of in ch. 17:2 as the "wine" of Babylon (see on chs. 16:14; 17:2, 6).

Dragon. See on chs. 12:3; 13:1. The first member of this threefold religious union is generally identified either as spiritism or as paganism. Indeed, many pagans worship spirits and practice various forms of spiritism more or less resembling modern spiritism as practiced in Christian lands.

Beast. See on chs. 13:1; 17:3, 8.

False prophet. Apparently to be identified with the second beast of ch. 13:11-17 (see on v. 11), which sponsors the first beast of vs. 1-10, and by the miracles he has power to do in the presence of the beast (vs. 12-14), deceives men into making an "image" to it. Compare chs. 19:20; 20:10.

14. Spirits of devils. Literally, "spirits of demons," or "demonic spirits." In the Gospels the term "unclean spirit" is used interchangeably with "devil" (see Mark 1:27, 34; 3:11, 15; 6:7; etc.). See Rev. 18:2; cf. 5T 472, 473.

Working miracles. Or, "performing signs [*sēmeia*]," that is, miracles from the viewpoint of their value as authenticating the claims, or attesting the power and authority, of the person performing them (see Vol. V, p. 208). These miracles are also referred to in chs. 13:13, 14; 19:20. Supernatural manifestations of various kinds constitute the means by which Satan, working through various human agencies, succeeds in uniting the world behind his purpose to obliterate those who constitute the only barrier to his unchallenged dominion over mankind.

Kings of the earth. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of the words "of the earth and." The "kings" are the political powers of earth, in contrast

with the threefold religious union of v. 13 (see comment there), which summon the nations of earth to unite in a crusade to destroy God's people (9T 16; GC 562, 624). This universal religio-political combine (see on ch. 17:3) aspires to rule the world. According to the first view these "kings" represent the nations of the West, in contrast with the "kings of the east" (ch. 16:12), the nations of the Orient. According to the second view the expression "kings of the earth and of the whole world" includes the nations of both East and West (see on v. 12). For further information concerning the identity of the "kings of the earth" and the temporary success of this plot see ch. 17:2, 12, 14; see on v. 12; cf. 7T 182.

To gather. According to the first view this gathering consists of political and military preparations on the part of "the kings of the earth and of the whole world." According to the second view it refers to efforts put forth by the threefold religious union to secure united action on the part of the political powers of earth for the purpose of waging war on the remnant of God's people.

The battle. Proponents of both views agree that different aspects of the same battle are described in chs. 14:14-20; 16:12-19; 17:14-17; 19:11-21; cf. 6T 406. According to the first view this is primarily a politico-military battle to be fought in the literal valley of Megiddo between the nations of East and West (see on ch. 16:12, 13). According to the second view this battle is one in which the nations unite to destroy the people of God, and is therefore primarily a religious conflict.

That great day. That is, the day of God's wrath (see on v. 1). Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "the great day." See on Isa. 2:12.

God Almighty. See on ch. 1:8.

15. Behold. Or, "See!"

I come as a thief. That is, to the ungodly (see on 1 Thess. 5:2, 4; 2 Peter 3:10; cf. Matt. 24:43; Luke 21:35).

Blessed. Or, "happy" (see on Matt. 5:3).

He that watcheth. See on Matt. 24:42. The saints are to be alert and vigilant, lest they be deceived (see above on "I come as a thief").

Keepeth his garments. That is, remains steadfast in faith and character and wholly loyal to God. See on Matt. 22:11.

Lest he walk naked. That is, lose his garment of character as a result of yielding his faith. Compare ch. 17:16.

They. Probably meaning people generally.

See his shame. That is, see that he has surrendered his faith. Even though destiny has been fixed at the close of probation (see on ch. 22:11), God's people must not relax their vigilance. Rather, they must become increasingly alert as Satan intensifies his deceptions.

16. He gathered. Or, "they gathered." The Greek may be translated either way. The pronoun "they" would refer to the three unclean spirits of vs. 13, 14, and "he" to the angel of v. 12. The context favors the translation "they." For the gathering process see on v. 14.

Proponents of both views agree that the gathering takes place under the sixth plague, but that the battle itself is fought under the seventh (see Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 702; see on Rev. 16:12, 17).

Them. That is, the kings of the earth of v. 14.

Together. According to the first view the military forces of earth are gathered together in the literal valley of Megiddo, in northern Palestine (see on vs. 12, 14). According to the second view the kings of the earth are united in mind and purpose (see on ch. 17:13, 17). Compare Ps. 83:4, 5.

Place. Gr. *topos*, "place," which is used variously of a geographical location, a "place" in a book, status, or, figuratively, "condition," or "situation," as in Acts 25:16 ("licence") and Heb. 12:17. According to the first view, which stresses geographical implications, this would refer to the valley of Megiddo, the plain of Esdraelon in northern Palestine (see on Rev. 16:12, 14). According to the second view, which stresses the figurative meaning of the various expressions of vs. 12-16 (see on v. 12), this would be the "condition," or frame of mind, into which the kings of the earth are gathered—the compact to annihilate the people of God (see on chs. 16:14; 17:13).

In the Hebrew tongue. Perhaps by this

John intended to direct his readers to a study of Armageddon as a "Hebrew" term and to a review of Hebrew history, that the cryptic name might be understood.

Armageddon. Gr. *Harmageddōn,* a transliteration from the Hebrew, as John explains. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading *Harmagedōn,* but may also be cited for the readings *Armegedon, Armagedō, Mageddon,* and others. In view of the fact that no geographical location ever bore this name, so far as is known, the significance of the term is not readily apparent. Also, opinions differ as to what Hebrew word or words the Greek transliteration represents. The reading *Harmageddōn* is from two Hebrew words, the first of which may have been *'ir,* "city," though more probably *har,* "mountain." As noted, however, some ancient manuscripts omit the first syllable *ar-* or *har-* altogether.

For the second part of the name, *-mageddōn,* two different derivations have been suggested: (1) That *-mageddōn* is from the Heb. *megiddo* or *megiddon* (1 Kings 9:15; Zech. 12:11), the ancient city of Megiddo, which gave its name to the important pass through the mountains to the southwest, to the valley of Jezreel to the north and northeast (2 Chron. 35:22), and to the Kishon (Judges 4:7, 13; 5:19, 21), which flows through the valley. (2) That *-mageddōn* is from *mo'ed,* the Hebrew word commonly used throughout the OT for "congregation" (Ex. 27:21; 28:43; 29:4, 10, 11, 30, 32; etc.), for an appointed "feast" (see on Lev. 23:2), and for an "assembly" and the "places of the assembly" (Lam. 1: 15; 2:6). The first derivation links the composite name Armageddon with the geographical and historical environment of ancient Megiddo, while the second suggests a possible connection with the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

In Isa. 14:13, where *har-mo'ed* is translated "mount of the congregation," or "mount of assembly," and designates the mountain on which Solomon's Temple stood, to the north of ancient Jerusalem, Lucifer is represented as aspiring to replace God as Israel's sovereign ruler (see comment there). Compare "Tabernacle of the congregation" (Ex. 33:7; etc.).

Proponents of the first view of Armageddon consider the derivation to be from the Heb. *har-megiddo,* "mountain of Megiddo," and interpret the name as it is used in Rev. 16:16 in terms of the geographical environment and historical associations of the ancient city of Megiddo. Proponents of the second view understand the first derivation figuratively, that is, in terms of the historical events of OT history associated with the vicinity of ancient Megiddo (see Judges 4:4 to 5:31, especially ch. 5:31; chs. 6:33 to 7:25; 1 Kings 18:36-40; Ps. 83; cf. 2 Chron. 35:20-24), but without attributing geographical significance to the term Armageddon in Rev. 16:16 (see on v. 12). They understand the second derivation, *har-mo'ed,* figuratively also, on the basis of its use in Isa. 14:13, in terms of the great contest between Christ and Satan (see Rev. 12:7-9, 17; 17:14; 19:11-21).

17. Seventh angel. Concerning the significance of the number seven in the Revelation see on ch. 1:11.

Into the air. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "upon the air" (see on v. 8). The effect of this plague appears to be universal.

A great voice. Evidently, the voice of God. Compare ch. 1:10. See GC 635, 636; 1T 353, 354.

Temple of heaven. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reading simply "temple" or "heaven."

From the throne. In other words, the statement constitutes an official proclamation from the Sovereign of the universe (see on ch. 4:2-5).

It is done. The same words are to be uttered a second time, at the re-creation of the new earth (ch. 21:6). Similar words—"It is finished"—were spoken by our Lord upon the cross (John 19:30) as He brought His ministry of sacrifice to a close, thereby assuring the success of the plan of redemption. In the context of Rev. 16:17 the dramatic announcement marks the moment when the revelation of the mystery of iniquity is complete, when the true character of the universal religio-political union of vs. 13, 14, 19, is unmasked (see comment there and on v. 1).

God permits the forces of evil to advance to the point of apparent success in their

sinister design to eradicate the people of God. As the moment appointed in the death decree arrives (see on v. 14) and the wicked rush forward with shouts of triumph to annihilate the saints (GC 631, 635; EW 283, 285), the voice of God is heard declaring, "It is done." This declaration terminates the time of Jacob's trouble (cf. on v. 15), delivers the saints, and ushers in the seventh plague (EW 36, 37, 282-285; GC 635, 636; 1T 353, 354).

18. Voices. Or, "sounds," "noises." Compare chs. 4:5; 8:5; 11:19. What the "voices" utter may be similar to the declaration of ch. 11:15 (cf. GC 640).

Thunders. Or, "peals of thunder."

Lightnings. Or, "flashes of lightning." Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) that this word precedes "voices, and thunders."

A great earthquake. A literal earthquake, as the remainder of v. 18 implies (see on v. 1; cf. vs. 20, 21), but accompanied by a figurative earthquake, which shatters mystical Babylon (v. 19). As a literal earthquake leaves a literal city in ruins, so a figurative earthquake brings ruin and desolation to "great Babylon" (see on chs. 17:16; 18:6-8, 21). The threefold union of vs. 13, 14 collapses (cf. Isa. 28:14-22).

Such as was not. Both literally and figuratively.

19. The great city. That is, mystical Babylon (see on chs. 17:5, 18; 18:10).

Divided into three parts. Mystical Babylon of the last days is composed of the papacy, apostate Protestantism, and modern spiritism (see on vs. 13, 14). At the voice of God (chs. 16:17; 17:17) this threefold union of apostate religious organizations loses its cohesion, unity, and power to act. Compare Hab. 3:3-16.

Cities of the nations. Continuing the figure of an earthquake shattering a literal city, John now refers to the political organizations of earth—represented in vs. 13, 14 as "the kings of the earth"—by a similar figure. For the appropriateness of a "city" to represent the apostate religious organizations of earth, and "cities" their political allies, see on chs. 11:8; 17:18.

Fell. The political forces of earth also lose the state of unity of purpose to which they were gathered under the sixth plague (see on vs. 14, 16; ch. 17:13, 17). There is a terrible awakening among them as God's voice delivers His waiting people from their foes (see GC 636, 637, 654). Now, the erstwhile components of the universal religio-political combine of ch. 16:13, 14 begin to fight among themselves, and the "ten kings" of ch. 17:12-16 take revenge upon mystical Babylon (see on ch. 17:17). Filled with fury, the hosts of earth turn upon their leaders and upon one another the weapons with which they had purposed to slay the saints (see EW 290; GC 656). There is strife and bloodshed everywhere (see on ch. 14:20).

When Christ appears, the clash of arms and the tumult of earthly battle are stilled as the armies of heaven descend. "In the mad strife of their own fierce passions, and by the awful outpouring of God's unmingled wrath, fall the inhabitants of the earth,—priests, rulers, and people, rich and poor, high and low" (GC 657). For a more complete account of this battle see on chs. 17:14; 19:11-21; cf. EW 282, 290; GC 656, 657. Compare the remarkably similar descriptions in Joshua 10:7-14; Judges 7:19-23; 1 Sam. 14:19, 20; 2 Chron. 20:22-24; Isa. 19:2; 34:8-10; 51:21-23; 63:1-6; Jer. 25:12-15, 29-38; Eze. 38:14-23; Haggai 2:22; Zech. 14:13.

Great Babylon. See on chs. 14:8; 17:1, 5.

Came in remembrance. See on ch. 18:5. This is a common Biblical expression denoting the arrival of the hour when divine judgment is to be meted out (Ps. 109:14; Eze. 21:23, 24; cf. Jer. 31:34).

To give unto her. Compare the words of the prophets concerning the literal city of Babylon (Isa. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15, 16).

The cup. A common Biblical expression denoting suffering and judgments meted out (see Ps. 11:6; 75:8; Isa. 51:17, 22, 23; Jer. 25:15-17, 28; 49:12; Matt. 26:39). For the nature of the cup now given mystical Babylon to drink see on Rev. 17:16; 18:5-8; cf. on ch. 14:10.

Wine. See on ch. 14:10; cf. ch. 17:2.

Fierceness. Or, "fury" (see on v. 1).

His wrath. See on chs. 14:10; 16:1.

20. Every island. The convulsions of earth here described result from the earthquake of v. 18. Compare ch. 6:14.

The mountains. Compare ch. 6:14.

21. Great hail. Or, "great hailstones."

For comment on the plague of hail on the land of Egypt see on Ex. 9:18-32. For hail as a weapon of divine retribution see Joshua 10:11; Eze. 13:11, 13, and as a divine judgment in the last great day of God's wrath see Isa. 28:17, 18; 30:30; Eze. 38:22; Rev. 11:19.

A talent. Variously estimated as weighing from about 58 to 80 lbs. (128 to 176 kg.; see "Talent," *SDA Bible Dictionary*).

Blasphemed God. For the third time those upon whom the plagues fall curse God, thus revealing their utter contempt for Him, even in the midst of His most grievous judgments (see on vs. 1, 9, 11).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 EW 64, 120, 124; TM 432; 5T 212
2 GC 445, 449
2-6 GC 628
5 TM 432
8, 9 GC 628
9-11 EW 282, 289
13, 14 EW 262; GC 561; 5T 451
14 EW 87; GC 556, 624; ML 308
15 COL 319; DA 635
16 6T 406
17 FE 363; GC 613, 636; PP 509; 1T 184; 7T 235
18 GC 637; PP 110
19 FE 363
19-21 GC 637
20, 21 PP 110
21 PP 509

CHAPTER 17

3, 4 A woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, with a golden cup in her hand, sitteth upon the beast, 5 which is great Babylon, the mother of all abominations. 9 The interpretation of the seven heads, 12 and the ten horns. 14 The victory of the Lamb. 16 The punishment of the whore.

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

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

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

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

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

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

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

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

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1. One of the seven angels. See on ch. 1:11; cf. ch. 21:9. The identification of this angel as one of the seven plague-bearing angels of chs. 15 and 16 implies that the information about to be imparted to John is related to the seven last plagues. This relationship is confirmed by the fact that the announced topic of this chapter—"the judgment of the great whore"—takes place under the seventh plague (see ch. 16:19).

Vials. See on chs. 15:7; 16:1.

Talked with me. The Greek word translated "with" (*meta*) may be understood as implying an intimate relationship between John and the angel. Possibly the angel addressed John before taking him off in vision. See on ch. 1:2, 10.

Come hither. Or, "Here!" The expression has the force of an imperative. See on v. 3.

I will shew unto thee. See on chs. 1:2; 4:1.

Judgment. Gr. *krima,* "sentence," "decision," "verdict," "decree," here of the heavenly assize with respect to "the great whore," in view of her criminal course of action (see on vs. 4-6; cf. on ch. 18:10). Note that the angel does not show John the execution of the sentence, or he would have used the word *krisis,* which word is translated "judgment" in ch. 18:10. He simply tells him of it. *Krisis* may indicate either the act of investigating a case or the act of carrying out the sentence. See on chs. 16:19; 18:5; 19:2; cf. Isa. 23:11.

Chapter 17 consists of two distinct parts: (1) the symbolic vision of vs. 3-6, which John saw, and (2) what he was told (v. 7) in explanation of it as recorded in vs. 8-18. Part one sets forth the crimes of Babylon, and thus constitutes Heaven's bill of indictment, a declaration of why the divine sentence is to be pronounced upon her (see on v. 6). Part two sets forth the sentence itself and the means by which it is to be executed. Babylon's criminal career reaches a climax under the sixth plague (see on ch. 16:12-16), whereas the sentence decreed is executed under the seventh (see on chs. 16:17-19; 17:13-17; 18:4, 8; 19:2). Accordingly, part one is concerned most particularly with events under the sixth plague, and part two with those under the seventh. Thus ch. 17 is a delineation of the final crisis, when Satan puts forth his supreme effort to annihilate God's people (cf. ch. 12:17) and when all the powers of earth are arrayed against them (cf. GC 634). God permits Satan and the human agencies allied with him to carry forward to the verge of success their plot to annihilate the saints. But at the moment the blow is to be struck God intervenes to deliver His people. The hosts of evil, arrested in the very act of attempting to slay the saints, stand without excuse before the bar of divine justice (see Dan. 12:1; cf. EW 282-285; GC 635, 636; LS 117). Little wonder that John was filled with amazement as he beheld the climax of the great drama of the mystery of iniquity (see on ch. 17:6).

Whore. Gr. *pornē,* "prostitute," "harlot." *Pornē* probably goes back to a word meaning "to sell" or "to export for sale" such things as slaves. In Greece prostitutes were usually purchased slaves. The OT prophets often compare apostate Israel, which repeatedly went "a whoring" after heathen gods (Eze. 23:30; cf. Isa. 23:17; see on Eze. 16:15), with an adulterous woman. Concerning mystical Babylon as a harlot see on Rev. 17:5 (cf. vs. 2, 4; ch. 19:2). For OT passages whose thought or

wording is similar to that of Rev. 17 see on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13.

Sitteth upon many waters. That is, exercises despotic power over many "peoples" and "nations" (see v. 15). The form of the verb in Greek presents the "great whore" as in power at the time and as continuing to exercise power. As the ancient city of Babylon was situated upon the literal waters of the Euphrates (see on Jer. 50:12, 38) and dwelt figuratively "upon many waters," or peoples (Jer. 51: 12, 13; cf. Isa. 8:7, 8; 14:6; Jer. 50:23), so modern Babylon is represented as sitting upon, or oppressing, the peoples of earth (cf. on Rev. 16:12).

2. Kings of the earth. That is, the political powers of earth (see on v. 12), which place their authority and resources at the disposal of the "great whore" (v. 1; see on v. 13) and through which she designs to realize her ambition to slay all of God's people (see on vs. 6, 14) and to rule over the "inhabitants of the earth" (cf. v. 8). The "kings of the earth" are her accomplices in crime.

Committed fornication. Gr. *porneuō*, the related verb form of *pornē* (see on v. 1). This expression is equivalent to "gone a whoring" in the OT (cf. Eze. 23:30; Hosea 4:12). Used figuratively, as here, it refers to an illicit alliance of professed Christians with some master other than Christ, in this instance to a religio-political compact between an apostate church (see on Rev. 17:5) and the nations of earth. Compare Isa. 23:15, 17.

Inhabitants. As a result of the course followed by their leaders, the inhabitants of the earth are deceived (cf. on v. 8) into cooperating with the policy of the "great whore" (cf. ch. 13:8).

Made drunk. That is, completely intoxicated. The normal powers of reason and judgment have been stupefied and the spiritual perception benumbed. Compare Jer. 51:7; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10; Rev. 13:3, 4, 7, 18; 14:8; 18:3, 23; 19:20. It may be noted that here the intoxication of the inhabitants of earth is mentioned following reference to the illicit alliance between Babylon and the kings of the earth. Apparently Babylon acts through the kings of the earth to gain control of those inhabitants of earth who have not already voluntarily submitted to her. Rulers and subjects are alike deceived (GC 624).

With the wine. That is, by drinking the wine. This "wine" is Satan's deceptive policy of uniting all the world under his control, together with the falsehoods and "miracles" by which he advances his policy (cf. chs. 13:13, 14; 18:23; 19:20).

Of her fornication. Or, "[which is] her prostitution." The alliance between apostate Christianity and the political powers of earth is the means by which Satan proposes to unite the world under his leadership.

3. Carried me away. The sensation of motion was doubtless designed to aid John in making the mental transition from his own time and place to those of the vision (cf. Eze. 3:12-14; 8:3; 40:2, 3; Rev. 21:10).

In the spirit. Literally, "in spirit" (see on ch. 1:10; cf. chs. 4:2; 21:10). The absence of the definite article in Greek stresses the quality, or nature, of the experience.

The wilderness. Gr. *erēmos*, "a desolate place" (see on ch. 12:6). The related verb used in ch. 17:16 means "to desolate," "to lay waste," "to strip bare," "to abandon." A "wilderness" was an uninhabited region where life could be sustained only amid difficulty and danger. Food, shelter, and possibly even water would be difficult to obtain, and there would be danger from wild animals and perhaps from brigands. Accordingly, some consider that when used figuratively, as here, a "wilderness" would be a situation fraught with difficulty and danger, apparently for God's people (see vs. 6, 14). Absence of the definite article before the word "wilderness," in the Greek, clearly makes the term qualitative and descriptive. In other words, it specifies a condition rather than a particular location.

In view of the fact that ch. 17 appears to deal most particularly with the time of the seven last plagues (see on v. 1), some hold that the "wilderness" situation here referred to is descriptive of the experience of God's people at that time. The situation here depicted is similar to, but not to be identified with, that of the "wilderness" of ch. 12:6, 13-16.

Woman. The OT prophets repeatedly

represent an apostate people as a licentious woman (cf. Eze. 16:15-58; 23:2-21; Hosea 2:5; 3:1; etc.). This "woman"—the "great whore" (Rev. 17:1), or mystical "Babylon the great" (v. 5)—is guilty of "the blood . . . of all that were slain upon the earth" (ch. 18:24), apparently throughout history. Mystical Babylon constitutes the organized religious opposition to God's people, probably from the beginning of time, but here, particularly, at its very close (see on ch. 17:5).

Sit. The form of the verb denotes continuing action. In v. 1 the "great whore" is represented as being in direct control of men as individuals, religiously, and here as directing the policies of civil government (see on v. 18). It has ever been characteristic of apostate Christianity to attempt a union of church and state, in order to consolidate religious control over public policy (cf. Vol. IV, p. 837). Compare the declaration of our Lord that His "kingdom" is not "of this world" (John 18:36).

Scarlet. Or, "crimson," a brilliant color certain to attract attention. In Isa. 1:18 scarlet is the color of sin. Compare the "great red dragon" of Rev. 12:3.

Beast. In Bible prophecy beasts commonly represent political powers (Dan. 7:3-7, 17; 8:3, 5, 20, 21; cf. Rev. 12:3; 13:1). The color of this beast may intimate that it is the epitome of evil, as the names of blasphemy with which it is covered indicate that it stands in opposition to God. Accordingly, the beast itself may be identified as Satan working through those political agencies, in all ages, that have submitted to his control.

In certain respects this beast resembles the great red dragon of ch. 12:3, and in others the leopardlike beast of ch. 13:1, 2 (see respective comments). The context makes the latter relationship appear to be closer. The chief difference between the beast of ch. 13 and that of ch. 17 is that in the former, which is identified with the papacy, no distinction is made between the religious and the political aspects of papal power, whereas in the latter the two are distinct—the beast representing political power and the woman, religious power.

Full. Apostasy and opposition to God are complete.

Names of blasphemy. Or, "blasphemous names" (see on Mark 2:7; 7:22). In Rev. 13:1 (see comment there) the names are on the seven heads; here, they are scattered over the entire beast. These names indicate the character of the beast—it presumes to usurp the prerogatives of Deity. That it is "full" of blasphemous names indicates that it is wholly devoted to this objective. Compare Isa. 14:13, 14; Jer. 50:29, 31; Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36, 37.

Seven heads. See on vs. 9-11. For seven-headed beasts in ancient mythology see on Isa. 27:1.

Ten horns. See on vs. 12-14, 17.

4. The woman. See on v. 3.

Purple and scarlet. Compare Eze. 27:7; Rev. 18:7, 12, 16, 17, 19. These were the colors of royalty (see on Matt. 27:28), to which this "woman" laid claim (cf. Rev. 18:7). Scarlet may also be considered the color of sin and of a prostitute (see on ch. 17:3). This prostitute, this apostate religious organization, depicted in all her seductiveness, is gaudily dressed and vulgarly bedecked. She stands forth in striking contrast with the "bride" of the Lamb, whom John saw arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (see ch. 19:7, 8; cf. 1T 136; Ed 248). See on Luke 16:19.

Abominations and filthiness of her fornication. Or, "unclean acts, *even* the filthiness which is her fornication." The gold of the cup deceives men with respect to the nature of the contents. See on v. 2.

5. Forehead. The character reflected by the name "Babylon" is the woman's considered choice. This may be implied by the fact that the name appears on her forehead. Compare on ch. 13:16.

Was a name written. Rather, "a name stands written," that is, it had been written there in the past and remains there. The name reflects character.

Mystery. This word is descriptive of the title, not part of it; hence the appropriateness of the term "mystical Babylon" (see on ch. 1:20).

Babylon the great. Although, in one sense, mystical Babylon may be considered as representative of apostate religious systems throughout history, "Babylon the great" in the book of Revelation designates, in a special sense, the united apostate re-

ligions at the close of time (see on chs. 14:8; 16:13, 14; 18:24). In ch. 17:18 mystical Babylon is called "that great city" (cf. chs. 16:19; 18:18). Here, doubtless, Babylon is referred to as "great" in view of the fact that this chapter deals most particularly with Satan's great final effort to secure the allegiance of the human race through religion. "Babylon the great" is the name by which Inspiration refers to the great threefold religious union of the papacy, apostate Protestantism, and spiritism (see on ch. 16:13, 18, 19; cf. on chs. 14:8; 18:2; cf. GC 588; Dan. 4:30; Zech. 10:2, 3; 11:3-9). The term "Babylon" refers to the organizations themselves and to their leaders, not so much to the members as such. The latter are referred to as "many waters" (Rev. 17:1, 15) and as the "inhabitants of the earth" (v. 2; cf. v. 8).

Mother of harlots. As already noted, "Babylon the great" includes apostate Protestantism at the time here envisioned. The daughters of this "mother" thus represent the various religious bodies that constitute apostate Protestantism.

Abominations. See on v. 4.

6. Drunken. See on v. 2. Literally, "continuing in a state of intoxication." In a general sense Babylon may be said to be "drunken" with the blood of the martyrs of all ages (cf. ch. 18:24), but in a more immediate sense with that of martyrs and prospective martyrs in the closing scenes of earth's history. God holds Babylon accountable for the blood of those whose death she has decreed but whom she is prevented from slaying (see GC 628). Babylon is utterly intoxicated with her past success at persecuting the saints (see on Dan. 7:25; Matt. 24:21; cf. Rev. 6:9-11; 18:24), and with the prospect that soon she will have the satisfaction of completing the gory task (see on chs. 16:6; 17:14; cf. GC 628).

Blood. See on ch. 16:6.

Saints. Literally, "holy ones" (see on Acts 9:13; Rom. 1:7).

And with the blood. Or, "that is, with the blood."

Martyrs. Gr. *martures,* literally, "witnesses" (see on ch. 2:13). Compare Isa. 47:6; Jer. 51:49; see on Rev. 18:24.

Of Jesus. Meaning, probably, "who bore witness concerning Jesus," first by their words and then by their martyrdom. They had been slain because they persisted in witnessing for Jesus and His truth, and had been loyal to His name at the cost of their lives.

When I saw her. It is not clear whether this refers to all that John had seen in vs. 3-6, or only to her conduct in v. 6, the climax of her criminal career. The angel's reply to John's amazement (v. 7) may imply the former.

I wondered with great admiration. Literally, "I was amazed with great amazement," the Greek being a reflection of a typically Hebrew idiomatic expression. The angel had called John to witness the sentence to be pronounced on Babylon, the religious prostitute (v. 1), and the apostle probably expected to see a picture of complete ruin and degradation. But, instead, he sees a woman garbed in costly and gorgeous attire, in a state of intoxication, and sitting upon a fearsome beast. An angel had already told John something about this evil "woman" (see chs. 14:8; 16:18, 19), but now he is given a more complete and startling account of her crimes. What John sees fills him with utter astonishment, far beyond anything he expresses elsewhere in the Revelation.

The crimes of mystical Babylon, as set forth in the angel's indictment, may be enumerated as follows (cf. on ch. 18:4):

1. *Seduction.* By seducing the kings of the earth into illicit union with her, in order to further her own sinister designs (see on v. 2; ch. 18:3).

2. *Oppressive despotism.* By sitting upon "many waters"—oppressing the peoples of earth (see on ch. 17:1).

3. *Contributing to human delinquency.* By making the people of earth—except for the saints—drunk with the wine of her political policy, thus causing them to become her accomplices in her evil plot (see on v. 2). By her "fornication" she "did corrupt the earth" (ch. 19:2).

4. *Drunkenness.* By being "drunken with the blood of the saints," who had offended her by refusing to drink of her evil potion of error or to submit to her ambition to rule the earth.

5. *Murder and attempted murder.* By

plotting the murder of Christ's bride, the "woman" of ch. 12 (see on chs. 17:6, 14; 18:24).

7. I will tell thee. In the Greek the pronoun is emphatic: "I myself will tell thee." The remainder of the chapter is the angel's interpretation of the "mystery," or the symbolism of the vision of vs. 3-6. The "beast" is explained in vs. 8-17, the "woman" in v. 18.

8. The beast that thou sawest. That is, the beast of v. 3. John was not shown the beast in either its "was" or its "is not" state, but in its revived state following the "is not" period. However, the angel briefly recounts the past career of this fearful creature by way of identifying the beast as John saw it (see on vs. 8-11).

In the introduction to the vision (vs. 1, 2) and in the vision itself (vs. 3-6) John's attention was directed almost exclusively to the woman, and the beast is mentioned almost incidentally. In the Greek of vs. 1-6, according to Nestle's text, 102 words are devoted to the woman and only 12 to the beast. But in the explanation (vs. 7-18) the angel dwells almost altogether on the beast, together with its heads and horns. In the Greek of vs. 7-18 only 36 words are devoted to the woman and 243 to the beast. This noteworthy difference between the vision and its explanation may suggest that although the announced topic of the vision is the divine sentence pronounced upon mystical Babylon, and although she proves to be the leading character in events depicted by the vision, her brief triumph and sudden fall can be understood only by a careful study of the contribution made by the beast, both to her momentary success and also to her eventual defeat.

Was, and is not. At some time in the past the beast had been active, but then disappeared. This expression is repeated at the close of v. 8 and again in v. 11. Some identify the "was" period of the beast with that of pagan Rome, the "is not" period with the brief interval between the end of pagan persecution and the beginning of papal persecution and the "yet is" period with that of papal Rome. Others equate the "was" period with that represented by the beast and its seven heads, the "is not" period with the interval between the wounding of the seventh head and the revival of the beast as "the eighth," and the "yet is" period with the revival of the beast when it becomes "the eighth." Those who hold the former view thus equate the "was" period of the beast with that of the dragon of ch. 12, whereas those who hold the latter view would include also the leopardlike beast of ch. 13. The present tense, "is not," stresses time sequence.

Shall ascend. Or, "is about to ascend." The angel still speaks of the career of the beast prior to its rising from the "bottomless pit." At the time John saw this beast in vision it had already ascended "out of the bottomless pit."

When the expression "was, and is not" is repeated at the close of v. 8, the words "yet is"—preferably, "is to be"—appear in place of the words "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit," used earlier in the verse (see below on "yet is"). Accordingly, the beast "yet is" when it ascends "out of the bottomless pit." The comparable words in this threefold sequence as given in v. 11 are, "even he is the eighth." Therefore, when the beast ascends "out of the bottomless pit" and "yet is," it exists as "the eighth," literally, "an eighth." In v. 8 the beast goes "into perdition" after ascending out of "the bottomless pit" and existing for an unspecified period of time as "the eighth."

When the beast exists again as "the eighth," "they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast." A remarkably similar statement is made in ch. 13:3, 8 (cf. v. 4), of the world's attitude toward the beast of that chapter when its deadly wound is healed: "All the world wondered after the beast. . . . And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." If ch. 13 here refers to the same event as ch. 17:8, it follows that the statement "his deadly wound was healed" (ch. 13:3) is equivalent to the expression "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (ch. 17:8; cf. ch. 20:3, 7). Similarly, the words "did live" (ch. 13:14)

would then be equivalent to the expressions "yet is" and "he is the eighth" (ch. 17:8, 11); the wounding of the head (ch. 13:3), the going "into captivity," and "the wound by a sword" (ch. 13:10, 14) would have their counterpart in the implied descent of the "beast" into the "bottomless pit" (ch. 17:8); and "death" (ch. 13:3) would be equivalent to the "bottomless pit" phase of the experience of the beast. The similarities here noted tend to identify the seventh head of the beast as the papal head (see on ch. 17:9, 10). However, this similarity does not necessarily prove identity. For the relationship of the beast of ch. 17 to that of ch. 13 see on ch. 17:3.

Bottomless pit. Gr. *abussos,* literally, "abyss," implying vast, measureless space (see on Mark 5:10; Rev. 9:1). In the LXX it generally refers either to the depths of the sea or to subterranean waters. In the LXX of Ps. 71:20 and in Rom. 10:7 it is used of the underworld, or place of the dead, commonly called Hades (see on Matt. 11:23; cf. on 2 Sam. 12:23; Prov. 15:11; Isa. 14:9). Descent into the "abyss" would thus be a fitting term to represent the death of a beast that appeared to have been slain.

Perdition. Gr. *apōleia,* "utter destruction," "annihilation" (see on John 17:12). This indicates the utter end of the beast (cf. Rev. 17:11; see on chs. 19:20; 20:10).

They that dwell. That is, those upon whom the "whore . . . sitteth" (v. 1) and who "have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (v. 2). Compare ch. 13:3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 14; see on ch. 17: 1, 2.

Wonder. Gr. *thaumazō,* "to be amazed," "to marvel" (see on v. 6). The people of earth are surprised beyond measure to behold the beast, which they had seen go away into the "bottomless pit" (v. 8), return and take up its former activities. They first "wonder" and then worship (see ch. 13:3, 4, 8, 12, 14), that is, yield their willing support to the beast in the pursuit of its blasphemous schemes. Concerning the relationship of the beast of ch. 17 to that of ch. 13 see on ch. 17:3.

Not written. That is, not listed with those whom God accepts as candidates for His kingdom.

Book of life. See on Phil. 4:3.

From the foundation. The Greek may be understood as implying that the names appearing in the book of life have been written there ever since "the foundation of the world," or simply that the book itself has been in existence since that time. Here the latter meaning is intended. Compare on ch. 13:8.

Yet is. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "is to be" or "is to come." See above on "was, and is not" and "shall ascend."

9. The mind which hath wisdom. Compare ch. 13:18. The angel thus introduces his explanation of "the beast that was, and is not, and yet is" of ch. 17:8. What John had been shown was a "mystery" (cf. v. 7; see on v. 5) in the sense that reality had been concealed in symbolic language, and it would require "wisdom" to understand the figurative in terms of the literal. Although this statement of the angel probably refers most particularly to the enigma of v. 8, and thus especially to the explanation in vs. 9, 10, it is also true of the entire vision, and thus of the explanation of vs. 10-18 as a whole.

Seven heads. These apparently represent seven major political powers through which Satan has sought to destroy the people and work of God on earth (see on vs. 2, 3, 6, 10). Whether or not Inspiration intended these heads to be identified with seven specific nations of history is not clear, since in the Revelation the number "seven" often has a symbolic rather than a literal numerical value (see on ch. 1:11). Accordingly, some have understood the seven heads to represent all political opposition to the people and cause of God on earth throughout history, without specifying seven particular nations.

Others assume that the powers represented by the seven heads must be seven specific nations already referred to in the various prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. They identify the first four heads with the four great world empires of Dan. 2 and 7, the fifth with the little horn of chs. 7 and 8 and the leopardlike beast of Rev. 13, the sixth with the power represented in ch. 11:7, and the seventh with the two-horned beast of ch. 13:11. According to this pattern of interpretation the

powers represented by the first five heads would be Babylon, Persia, Greece, the Roman Empire, and the papacy. The sixth and seventh heads might be revolutionary France and the United States, or the United States and a world organization, or the United States and a restored papacy.

Still others consider that the seven heads represent major persecuting powers since God first had a chosen people and an organized work on earth, and accordingly specify Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, the Roman Empire, and the papacy. Those who follow this pattern of interpretation call attention to the important role of Egypt and Assyria with respect to Israel in OT history and prophecy. Also, they point to the following circumstances when each of these seven powers, in turn, attempted either to annihilate God's people, or to subjugate them, or to obliterate their distinctive religious character: (1) Egypt at the Red Sea, Ex. 14:9-30; (2) Assyria under Sennacherib, Isa. 8:4-8; 36: 1-15; 37:3-37; (3) Babylon during the Captivity, Jer. 39:9, 10; 52:13-15; (4) Persia under Haman, Esther 3:8, 9; 7:4; 9:1-6; (5) Greece under Antiochus Epiphanes, 1 Macc. 1:20-64; 3:42; 4:14, 36-54; (6) Rome, in its persecution of both Jews and Christians, Dan. 8:9-12, 24, 25; Matt. 24:15, 21; Luke 21:20-24; Rev. 2:10, 13; and (7) the papacy throughout her history, Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24; 11:33, 35.

In view of the fact that Inspiration has not indicated whether the seven heads are to be understood as representing seven particular nations and has not specified any point of time from which they are to be reckoned, this commentary considers that evidence is insufficient to warrant a dogmatic identification of them. Revelation 17 is concerned with the beast during its "yet is" period, when it is "the eighth" (see on vs. 8, 11), and the interpretation of the basic message of the chapter is fortunately not contingent upon the identification of the seven heads.

Mountains. A common prophetic symbol designating political or religio-political powers (see Isa. 2:2, 3; Jer. 17:3; 31:23; 51:24, 25; Eze. 17:22, 23; etc.). This symbol may also be an allusion to the city of Rome with its seven hills. Classical writers often refer to Rome as the City of Seven Hills (Horace *Carmen Saeculare* 7; Virgil *Aeneid* vi. 782-784; *Georgics* ii. 534, 535; Martial *Epigrams* iv. 64. 11, 12; Cicero *Letters to Atticus* vi. 5; Propertius *Elegies* iii. 11; etc.). In the early Christian centuries Christians commonly referred to Rome as "Babylon" (see on 1 Peter 5:13; Rev. 14:8), probably to avoid being considered as subversives when they spoke and wrote concerning Rome's anti-Christian activities and the impending judgments of God upon her. In view of the historical relationship of ancient Babylon to the people of God in OT times, the appellation "Babylon" as applied to Rome in its relations with Christianity was particularly appropriate.

The woman sitteth. Here the angel refers to the "woman" as sitting upon the seven "heads," whereas in v. 3 she is spoken of simply as seated upon the "beast" (see comment there). Thus, to be seated upon the seven heads is apparently the same as being seated upon the beast. Accordingly, there is no sharp distinction between the beast and its heads. Probably no difference is intended.

10. And there are seven kings. Or, "and seven kings are they." These "kings" are not in addition to the "heads" and the "mountains," but, presumably, identified with them. How much distinction, if any, is intended between the "kings" and the "mountains" is not clear.

Five are fallen. The point of time at which it may be stated that five of the heads have "fallen," that one "is," and that the other has "not yet come" is not clearly indicated. Generally speaking, Adventist expositors hold one or another of three different views with respect to the point of time indicated here: (1) According to the pattern of interpretation making the seven heads representative of all powers that oppose God's people and work on earth, irrespective of number, this statement would simply mean that a majority of the powers so represented had already passed off the stage of history. (2) Those who enumerate the first five heads as Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the papacy consider that these five had all fallen at the time the deadly wound was finally administered

to the papal head of the beast in 1798 (see on ch. 13:3, 4). (3) Those who enumerate the first five heads as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece consider that the point indicated by v. 10 is the time of John, when the vision was given. See on v. 9.

One is. According to the second view, France or the United States, after 1798, and according to the third view, the Roman Empire in John's day (see above on "five are fallen").

The other. According to the first view, the minority of political powers yet to play their part; according to the second, the United States or some world organization such as the League of Nations or the United Nations; according to the third, the papacy (see above on "five are fallen"). It may be noted that if the events foretold in ch. 17 are, in part, identical with those of ch. 13 (see on ch. 17:3, 8), it follows that the papal head is the one here designated "the other."

A short space. Gr. *oligos,* used 34 times in the NT in the sense of "few," "little," "small," to specify quantity, and 8 times in the sense of "short," to specify time (see on ch. 12:12). The clause may be translated either, "It is necessary that he remain little," or, "It is necessary that he continue briefly," possibly in the sense of a "limited time" in contrast with an unlimited time. In ch. 12:12 *oligos* refers to the "short time" allotted to Satan after his defeat at the cross (cf. DA 758, 761; GC 503). Perhaps the angel here reassures John that Satan, and more particularly the power (or powers) represented by the seventh head, can never fully attain their objectives; or that their tenure has been strictly limited. Some here understand *oligos* literally, as indicating a short period of time.

11. The beast that was. See on v. 8.

Even he is the eighth. Literally, "also himself is an eighth." This is the beast in its revived state, in the "yet is" period following its ascent out of the "bottomless pit" (see on vs. 8, 10). Some consider the eighth power to be the papacy alone; others suggest that it represents Satan. Those who take the latter view point out that at the time here indicated Satan attempts to impersonate Christ (see on 2 Thess. 2:8).

Of the seven. Literally, "out of the seven." The beast itself—"the eighth"—was, it would seem, the same beast to which the seven heads had been attached (cf. ch. 13:11, 12). Absence in the Greek of the definite article before the word "eighth" suggests that the beast itself was the real authority back of the seven heads, and that it is therefore more than merely another head, the eighth in a series. It is their summation and climax—the beast itself. In the Greek the word for "eighth" is masculine and hence cannot refer to a head, the word for which is feminine.

Perdition. See on v. 8.

12. Ten horns. Compare Dan. 7:24; Rev. 12:3; 13:1; see on Dan. 7:7; Rev. 12:3.

No kingdom as yet. According to some, the number "ten" specifies ten particular "kings," or nations. Others consider "ten" to be a round number, and as such to refer to all the powers of the category spoken of as "horns," irrespective of their precise arithmetical number. Such usage is common elsewhere in Scripture (see on ch. 12:3). Some take these ten horns to represent the same ten powers specified in Daniel and earlier in the Revelation. Others, on the basis that these ten "receive power as kings one hour with the beast," consider that they cannot, therefore, be identified with the various nations that arose during the breakup of the Roman Empire.

Hour. Gr. *hōra,* "season," "daytime" (in contrast with nighttime), "a day," "an hour [a twelfth of the daylight hours]," and a definite point of "time." In Matt. 14:15 *hōra* is translated "time," meaning daytime. Other instances of such translation are Matt. 18:1; John 16:2, 4, 25; 1 John 2:18; Rev. 14:15. *Hōra* is translated "day" in Mark 6:35, "instant" in Luke 2:38, "season" in 2 Cor. 7:8 and Philemon 15, "short time" in 1 Thess. 2:17, "high time" in Rom. 13:11, and "eventide" in Mark 11:11. Obviously, the meaning of *hōra* in any particular instance must be determined by the context.

Some have taken the "one hour" of ch. 17:12 as prophetic time, according to which it would represent a period of about two weeks of literal time. However, the context seems to imply otherwise. It is generally

recognized that ch. 18 gives a more detailed explanation of events described in ch. 17:12-17. But the period of time designated as "one day" in ch. 18:8 is also called "one hour" in vs. 10, 17, 19, the obvious intent of Inspiration being to indicate a brief period of time without specifying its exact length. Accordingly, it seems preferable to take the expression "one hour" in ch. 17:12 in the same sense, as indicating a brief but unspecified period of "time."

Periods of time mentioned in prophetic passages of Scripture do not always designate what is commonly known as prophetic time. For instance, the 7 years of famine predicted by Joseph were literal years (Gen. 41:25-31), as is also true of the 40 years of wandering foretold in Num. 14:34. The same might be said of the 400 years of Gen. 15:13, the 70 years of Jer. 25:12; 29:10, and the 1,000 years of Rev. 20:4.

The brief "hour" of ch. 17:12 witnesses the climax of satanic planning for the unification of the world through a compact between the apostate religious organizations of earth, as represented by the woman, and the political powers of earth, as represented by the beast (see on chs. 16:13, 14; 17:3). It was apparently during this brief "hour" that John saw the "woman" seated upon the "beast," at the apex of her career, and "drunken" with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (vs. 3-6).

13. Mind. Gr. *gnōmē,* "opinion," "intention," "purpose," "resolve," "decree." In v. 17 *gnōmē* is translated "will." The "mind" of the nations of earth is diametrically opposed to that of God. The nations of earth, represented by the ten horns, here purpose to unite with the "beast" (see on v. 3) in forcing the inhabitants of earth to drink the "wine" of Babylon (see on v. 2), that is, to unite the world under her control and to obliterate all who refuse to cooperate (see on v. 14). See EW 34, 36, 282; GC 615, 624, 626; PK 512, 587; 5T 213. Compare on Rev. 16:12-16.

And shall give. Literally, "that is, they shall give." See below on "strength."

Power. Gr. *dunamis,* "[potential] capability," meaning the ability to carry out a resolve. It is through the agency of its ten horns that the beast sets out to achieve its objective.

Strength. Gr. *exousia,* "authority" (see on Mark 2:10; Rom. 13:1). The statement reads literally, "These have one purpose, that is, they shall give their capacity and authority to the beast." This unanimous consent of the nations is achieved through the agency of the three evil "spirits" (see on Rev. 16:13, 14). Now that probation has closed, God permits a worldwide religio-political union, whose objective is the annihilation of His people. Such a plan He has held in check ever since the days of Babel (see on Gen. 11:4-8; Dan. 2:43; Rev. 14:8), but now He withdraws His restraining hand (Rev. 17:17; cf. on 2 Chron. 18:18). "There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. . . . In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah" (EGW Supplementary Material on Rev. 17:13, 14).

14. Make war. That is, join battle. With the world united (see on chs. 16:12-16; 17:13) under the leadership of the "beast" of vs. 3, 8, 11, the final stage of the agelong warfare against Christ and His people now begins. This stage of the conflict, termed "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (ch. 16:14), is described more fully in ch. 19:11-21 (see comment there). Under the sixth plague preparations are made for the battle (see on ch. 16:12-16), which is fought under the seventh.

The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

Overcome them. God's faithful people, who have suffered so long at the hands of their enemies (see chs. 6:9-11; 12:13-17; 13:7, 15), are delivered when He who is "Lord of lords, and King of kings" lays bare His mighty arm and comes forth to champion their cause (see on chs. 11:15, 17; 18:20; 19:2, 11-21). Christ intervenes at the moment the forces of evil launch their attack on the saints, at the opening of the seventh plague (see GC 635, 636; see on ch. 16:17).

Lord of lords. The title "Lord of lords, and Kings of kings" is used in Scripture

of Christ as He returns to earth to vanquish the hosts of evil and to deliver His loyal people (see 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 19:16; cf. Matt. 25:31; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; GC 427, 428, 613, 614).

With. Gr. *meta* (see on v. 1), here meaning, "in company with."

Called. Literally, "invited," that is, in the NT, to obtain eternal salvation (see on Matt. 22:3, 14).

Chosen. Or, "selected." Not all who are "called" qualify to be "chosen." For the distinction between "called" and "chosen" see on Matt. 22:14; cf. on John 1:12.

Faithful. Or, "worthy of trust," "reliable." Those who have been "chosen" must remain "faithful," even "unto death" (ch. 2:10) if necessary, in order to be counted "with him," that is, with Christ. Addition here of the word "faithful" implies that it is not sufficient to be "called" and "chosen." In other words, those who once enter into the experience of grace through faith in Christ must "remain" in grace if they are to be eligible to enter the kingdom of glory (see on John 3:18-20; Eph. 1:4, 5; cf. on 1 Cor. 3:15; cf. Eze. 3:20; 18:24; 33:12).

15. He saith unto me. See on ch. 17:1.

Waters. See on v. 1. For other instances of waters as a symbol for human beings see on Isa. 8:7; Dan. 7:2.

Sitteth. Or, "is sitting." Here the angel again refers to what John saw in vs. 3-6, within the time period specified by vs. 11-13 (see comment there).

16. The ten horns. See on v. 12.

Upon the beast. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "and the beast." The horns *and* the beast participate in executing the divine sentence upon Babylon. Concerning the identity of the beast see on v. 3.

Shall hate. This represents a change of attitude on the part of the "beast" and the "horns." Some apply this attitude on the part of the ten horns to the attitude of some of the nations of Western Europe toward the papacy since Reformation times; others consider that the fulfillment of this prediction is yet future. Heretofore the horns had given their support to the policies advocated by the "woman" (see on vs. 3, 9, 13), particularly to the plot to slay the saints (see on v. 14). But when Christ overcomes them (v. 14) they turn on her, realizing that she has deceived them (see on v. 2). See GC 654-656.

The whore. See on v. 1.

Desolate. Gr. *erēmoō*, "to desolate," "to lay waste" (cf. on v. 3). The form of the word in Greek implies that "the whore" will ever remain "desolate" (see on ch. 18:21). For a more complete description of the harlot's desolate state see ch. 18:22, 23.

Naked. That is, deprived of her gorgeous attire (vs. 3, 4), and thus left in embarrassment and shame. See GC 655, 656; cf. Eze. 23:29; Rev. 16:15.

Flesh. Literally, "flesh pieces," which stresses the action of devouring and the completeness of the act. As a beast of prey rends and tears its victim in the process of devouring it, so "the whore" is to be violently, pitilessly destroyed by the very powers that had so recently supported her (see above on "shall hate").

Burn her. Literally, "burn her up completely." Compare ch. 18:8, which reads: "she shall be utterly burned with fire." A figurative woman would, of course, be burned figuratively. See on Rev. 18:8, 9; cf. Eze. 28:17-19.

17. God hath put. The "ten horns" and the "beast" (see on v. 16) are authorized by God to execute the divine "judgment," or "sentence," passed upon "Babylon" for her crimes (see on Rev. 17:1; cf. on 1 Sam. 16:14; 2 Chron. 18:18; 2 Thess. 2:11). Accordingly, Rev. 17:16, 17 constitutes the climax of the chapter, presenting, as it does, "the judgment of [or, "sentence upon"] the great whore," the topic announced by the angel in v. 1. All else is preparatory to, and explanatory of, this account of the fate of "Babylon the great." Verses 2-6 provide a catalogue of her crimes (see on v. 6), and thus an explanation of *why* the sentence has been pronounced upon her, whereas vs. 8-18 set forth the means by which, or *how,* the sentence will be executed (see on v. 1). This sentence will be meted out to Babylon under the seventh plague (see ch. 16:19; cf. on chs. 16:19; 18:5, 21; 19:2).

Hearts. Or, "minds."

Fulfil his will. That is, to carry out the "purpose," or "decree" (see on v. 13) of the heavenly assize concerning "the great whore" (see on chs. 16:19; 17:1).

To agree. See on v. 13.

Give their kingdom. See on v. 13.

Words of God. That is, His "will" as expressed in the sentence against mystical Babylon (see Rev. 16:17, 19; 17:1).

Fulfilled. That is, until the sentence be fully executed. The united apostate religious organizations of the world (see on ch. 16:13), together with their leaders, are first to fall (cf. GC 656), as the political side of the universal religio-political coalition (see on chs. 16:13; 17:5) becomes an instrument in the hands of God to execute the sentence against the religious side of the union (cf. Isa. 10:5; 13:4-9; 14:4, 6; 28:17-22; 47:11-15; Jer. 25:14, 34-38; 50:9-15, 29-31; 51:49; Ezc. 26:3; Dan. 11:45; Zech. 11:10; see on Rev. 19:2).

18. The woman. See on v. 3.

That great city. Literal Babylon was *the* "great city" of ancient times (see Additional Note on Dan. 4). From the days of Babel the city of Babylon has been representative of organized opposition to the purposes of God on earth (see on Gen. 11:4-6; Rev. 14:8). A city is a highly organized and integrated association of human beings. Hence, how appropriate is "Babylon the great" as a prophetic symbol for the organized, universal, apostate religious organization.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 GC 536
4-6 GC 382
6 GC 59
14 AA 371; COL 421; PK 721; 5T 223
15 GC 440
18 GC 382; PP 167

CHAPTER 18

2 *Babylon is fallen.* 4 *The people of God commanded to depart out of her.* 9 *The kings of the earth,* 11 *with the merchants and mariners, lament over her.* 20 *The saints rejoice for the judgments of God upon her.*

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her

torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

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1. After these things. This refers to the sequence in which chs. 17 and 18 were revealed to John, not necessarily to the sequence of events therein recorded. John does not mean that the events of ch. 18 take place subsequently to all of those referred to in ch. 17. See on ch. 4:1.

Another angel. That is, another than the angel of ch. 17. This angel unites with the third angel of ch. 14:9-11 in the proclamation of God's final message to the world (EW 277), and his message is a repetition of that of the second angel of ch. 14:8 (GC 603).

From heaven. The angel is represented as having come forth from the presence of God on a special mission, and in the act of descending to earth, at the time John saw him.

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority" (see on ch. 17:13). This angel comes forth from the throne room of the universe, commissioned to proclaim God's last message of mercy and to warn the inhabitants of earth of the imminent fate awaiting "Babylon the great."

Lightened. Or, "illuminated." Despite satanic efforts to shroud the earth in darkness, God now sets it ablaze with the glorious light of saving truth (see on John 1:4, 5, 9).

Glory. Gr. *doxa* (see on John 1:14; Rom. 3:23). The "glory" may be thought of as representing the character of God (cf. Ex. 33:18, 19; 34:6, 7), here particularly as revealed in the plan of salvation.

2. Cried mightily. In order that all might hear. The message of ch. 18 is to be pro-

claimed during the time of the loud cry of the third angel (GC 603, 604, 614, 615, 653), and thus merits the most careful study.

Babylon the great. See on chs. 14:8; 17:5.

Is fallen. See on ch. 14:8. Her spiritual fall is now to be demonstrated and confirmed, and she is now to be punished. Compare Isa. 13:21, 22; 21:9; Jer. 51:8.

Devils. Literally, "demons" (see on Mark 1:23). "Babylon the great" is now wholly demon possessed (see on Rev. 17:5, 6, 14; cf. on Matt. 12:43-45). Perhaps, in a special sense, reference is here made to modern spiritism (see on Rev. 13:13; 16:13, 14; cf. EW 273, 274; GC 558, 588, 624).

Foul spirit. Literally, "unclean spirit" (see on Mark 1:23).

Unclean and hateful bird. Metaphor is graphically added to metaphor to intensify the description of Babylon's utter perversion and apostasy. In literary form ch. 18 reflects the structure of ancient Hebrew poetry (see Vol. III, p. 23).

3. All nations. See on ch. 17:2.

Wine of the wrath. See on ch. 14:8.

Kings of the earth. See on chs. 16:14; 17:2, 10, 12.

Committed fornication. See on ch. 17:2.

Merchants. Gr. *emporoi,* literally, "ones on a journey," and thus "travelers," or "merchants." The highly figurative language of ch. 18 leaves it uncertain whether these "merchants" are literal or figurative. Either is possible. If figurative, these "merchants" would represent those who advocate the teachings and policies of "Babylon the great" (cf. Isa. 47:11-15), the goods she has for display and sale to the people of the world, to deceive them (see on Rev. 18:11).

Abundance. Gr. *dunamis,* "power," here, probably in the sense of "influence." Compare on ch. 5:12.

Delicacies. Gr. *strēnos,* "wantonness," "idle luxury" (cf. on v. 7).

4. Another voice. That is, as the Greek implies, another angelic voice.

Come out of her. Almost till the very close of time, apparently, some—perhaps many—of God's people have not heard the call to come out of mystical Babylon. Compare God's call to His people in ancient times to flee from literal Babylon (see Isa. 48:20; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45). As God's people formerly came out of literal Babylon in order that they might return to Jerusalem, so His people today are called out of mystical Babylon in order that they may be accounted worthy to enter the New Jerusalem. Presumably, all who are truly His people will hear His voice and heed His call (see on Matt. 7:21-27; cf. John 10:4, 5). This "voice" repeats the call of the second angel of Rev. 14:8 (see GC 390, 603; EW 277). The immediate reasons for this imperative call are stated in the last part of the verse.

Partakers. This is the first of two reasons given for hastening out of mystical Babylon. Those who partake of the sins of Babylon obviously have a share of responsibility for them (cf. Jer. 51:6).

Her sins. In a general sense, all the sins she leads men to commit, but more specifically, the sins delineated in ch. 17:2-6 (see on v. 6). In ch. 18 Babylon is arraigned before the bar of divine justice on five counts: (1) pride and arrogance, (2) materialism and luxury, (3) adultery, (4) deception, and (5) persecution (see vs. 2, 3, 5, 7, 23, 24).

Her plagues. That is, the punishment about to be meted out to her in compliance with the "judgment," or "sentence," of ch. 17:1 (see on chs. 16:19; 17:1, 17). The nature of these "plagues" is set forth briefly in chs. 16:19; 17:16; 18:8, 21. Most of ch. 18 consists of a graphic but highly figurative and indirect description of these "plagues." Whereas the first five of the seven last plagues are poured out primarily upon those who collaborate with Babylon—the rulers and the inhabitants of earth (ch. 17:1, 2, 8, 12)—the punishment of Babylon, the united apostate religious organizations of earth, takes place under the seventh plague (see on chs. 16:19; 17:1, 5, 16). The sixth plague prepares the way for that punishment.

5. Her sins. See on Rev. 18:4; cf. Jer. 50:14.

Reached. Gr. *kollaō,* literally, "to glue together," "to fasten firmly together." The sins of Babylon are depicted as a mountainous mass reaching upward, compact and glued together.

Unto heaven. As the figurative mountain

pierces the sky, so the criminal career of "Babylon the great" (see on ch. 17:6) arises before God, calling for retribution (Rev. 16:19; cf. Gen. 11:4, 5; 18:20, 21; Ezra 9:6; Jer. 51:9; Dan. 5:26, 27; Jonah 1:2). Perhaps there is an allusion here to the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4).

Remembered. God's long-suffering is about to end and His judgment upon mystical Babylon about to be executed (see on ch. 16:19). As applied to God, the word "remembered" commonly denotes that He is on the point of rewarding men for a particular course of action, whether good or evil (see Gen. 8:1; Ex. 2:24; Ps. 105:42; etc.).

Her iniquities. That is, her wicked acts and their consequent results, most particularly, the specific crimes charged against her in chs. 17 and 18 (see on chs. 17:6; 18:6, 7).

6. Reward her. Literally, "give her to the limit." The harlot, that is, the apostate organization "Babylon the great" (see on chs. 14:8; 17:5), is to be repaid in full for her evil deeds. In absolute justice, Heaven does not withhold any part of the payment due. The reward to be meted out to Babylon is briefly described in ch. 17:16, 17, and at greater length in ch. 18. Compare Jer. 51:6.

As she rewarded you. Literally, "according to her deeds." Her reward will be paid in kind. The punishment will fit the crime, that is, be appropriate to it. Compare Isa. 47:3; Jer. 50:15, 29; 51:24.

Double unto her double. Literally, "double to her the double." Mete to her a double measure (cf. Isa. 40:2; Jer. 16:18; 17:18).

Her works. Her treatment of others is to be the norm, or standard, by which God will deal with her.

The cup. See on chs. 14:10; 17:4.

Fill. Literally, "mix." In the same cup in which she had mixed an evil potion for others to drink, God will now mix a terrible mixture and compel her to drink it (Rev. 14:8; 17:4; cf. Jer. 50:15, 29).

7. How much. Measure for measure, the punishment will fit the crime. Her suffering and mourning will be in proportion to her former boasting and dissipation.

Glorified herself, and lived deliciously. The first part of v. 7 reads literally, "so many things have glorified her and made her wanton." So many things have contributed to her pride and wantonness. Arrogant self-confidence has made her confident of the ultimate success of her plot to obliterate God's remnant people and to reign supreme over the earth. She is proud of her wealth, popularity, and power. Compare Isa. 47:6-10; Eze. 28:2, 4, 5, 16.

Torment. See on chs. 17:16; 18:4.

Sorrow. Or, "mourning," that is, as a result of the "plagues" (v. 4) that "torture" her. Compare the lamentation of the "kings" and "merchants" (vs. 9, 11).

Saith in her heart. Or, "is saying in her mind," that is, at the time the angel of v. 4 delivers his message of warning, prior to the close of probation, and later, during the sixth plague (see on ch. 17:1). Inordinate conceit has spawned utter confidence in her evil scheme to rule the world. The attempt to deceive others has resulted in absolute self-deception. Not only has she made others "drunk," she herself is in a state of intoxication (see on ch. 17:2, 6).

I sit a queen. Note the present tense (see above on "saith in her heart"). The true church is represented in Scripture as a "chaste virgin" (see on 2 Cor. 11:2), Christ's bride (see on Eph. 5:23-32; cf. on Rev. 12:1; 19:7, 8). The great harlot impersonates Christ's bride before the inhabitants of earth, over whom she claims dominion in His name. But she is a counterfeit "queen" (cf. Isa. 47:6-10). She is a harlot who has never had a legal husband, yet is able to boast of her conquests. Do not the "kings" and "great men" of the earth wait upon her (Rev. 18:9, 23)? Are they not captive to her will and dedicated instruments of her nefarious schemes (see on ch. 17:2)?

No widow. As a "widow" she would have no legal status, or claim upon the allegiance of the people of earth. Compare Isa. 47:8, 10.

Sorrow. What she least expects is certain to come upon her (see on Isa. 47:11).

8. Therefore. That is, because of her haughty boasting, proud self-exaltation, abandoned wantonness, unscrupulous lust for power and supremacy, and daring opposition to the revealed will of God.

Her plagues. See on v. 4.

One day. Some take this to be prophetic time, and thus to represent one literal year. Others consider that the angel here either stresses the suddenness and unexpectedness of the "plagues" upon mystical Babylon, particularly in view of her false sense of security (v. 7), or speaks of an indefinite period of time. In view of the fact that the same event is also said to take place in "one hour" (vs. 10, 17, 19), the second explanation appears preferable (see on Rev. 17:12; cf. Jer. 50:29, 31). Furthermore, the Greek form of the words here translated "day" and "hour" (Rev. 18:10) suggest a point —rather than a period—of time, and thus appear to stress suddenness and unexpectedness rather than duration. Compare Isa. 47:9, 11; Jer. 50:31; 51:8.

Death. The final result of "her plagues" is stated first (see on v. 21).

Mourning. See on v. 7.

Famine. There is a literal famine under the fourth plague (ch. 16:8, 9), experienced by the adherents of Babylon (cf. vs. 1, 2). However, the judgment of Babylon as an organization takes place under the seventh plague (vs. 18, 19), and the famine here referred to is doubtless figurative—as would naturally be the case with a figurative entity such as mystical Babylon, and in keeping with the highly poetic and figurative character of the entire chapter.

Utterly burned. Or, "burned up." The figurative woman Babylon would, of course, be "burned up" with figurative fire (cf. Eph. 6:16; 1 Peter 4:12; see on Rev. 17:16). Her fate is described by an altogether different figure in ch. 18:21. For a description of events here foretold see GC 653-657.

Fire. Compare Jer. 50:32; 51:24, 25, 37.

Strong. That is, fully able to carry out His will upon Babylon (cf. ch. 17:17).

Judgeth her. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "has judged." The judgment pronounced upon Babylon is so certain that the angel speaks of it as already accomplished. See on chs. 16:19; 17:1, 17; 19:2. What befalls her is not an accident, but a deliberate act of God.

9. Kings of the earth. See on chs. 16:14, 16; 17:2, 12-14.

Committed fornication. See on ch. 17:2.

Lived deliciously. See on v. 7.

Bewail her. Or, "mourn for her," "sob on account of her," in loud, unrestrained wailing. Anticipating their own impending fate, the hapless "kings" and "merchants" (v. 11) of earth join in a dirge of death for haughty Babylon, now in torment upon her blazing funeral pyre. The dramatic effect of vs. 9-20, which describe the inexorable doom of the great harlot, is heightened by their exotic Oriental literary form—poetic diffuseness highlighted by graphic imagery. The appeal of ch. 18 is primarily emotional, but that appeal is reinforced by incisive logic: For those who respond to God's call to flee from the wrath to come (v. 4) there is still respite from her impending doom.

The symbolism of the chapter is drawn almost entirely from the OT, as a comparison of the many cross references cited makes evident (see Additional Note at end of chapter). A careful study of these OT parallels in connection with the historical incidents there alluded to greatly clarifies the highly symbolic imagery of this chapter. In ch. 17:16 it is the kings of the earth (cf. on v. 12) who set Babylon afire. Here, they are pictured mourning the results of that deed, perhaps in the sad realization that they must soon share Babylon's fate (cf. Isa. 47:13-15).

Lament. Gr. *koptō,* literally, "to beat [one's breast]," "to cut [one's body]" in grief.

Smoke of her burning. Compare Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:32; see on Rev. 14:10, 11; 17:16; 18:6.

10. Afar off. Doubtless in the realization that, but recently, they had collaborated with Babylon (see v. 3), were involved in her "sins," and were, accordingly, destined to share in her "plagues" (v. 4). They realize that their own fate is inexorably bound up with hers. They had not heeded God's call to "come out of her" (v. 4), and must soon share her fate. Compare Eze. 27:33, 35.

Alas, alas. They had expected to "receive power" (see on ch. 17:12) permanently with their paramour, mystical Babylon. She had assured them that she was enthroned a "queen" forever and that, should they cast their lot with her, they too would enjoy endless dominion (see on ch. 17:2).

Realizing, too late, the futility of such a scheme, they now give way to utter remorse.

Great city. See on chs. 14:8; 17:5, 18; 18:7. In the Greek the ascription of former greatness and power to mystical Babylon is most emphatic. The emptiness of her claims is now fully apparent, for "strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (v. 8).

Babylon. See on ch. 17:5, 18.

One hour. See on chs. 17:12; 18:8.

Judgment. Gr. *krisis,* the "[act of] judging," or "[execution of] judgment," in contrast with *krima,* the "[sentence of] judgment" (see on ch. 17:1). Whereas ch. 17 deals primarily with the *sentence* against Babylon, ch. 18 is concerned with the *execution* of that sentence.

11. Merchants. According to one interpretation, these "merchants" are the literal commercial and business leaders of earth, whose financial and material support have contributed so much to the luxury, splendor, and success of Babylon the great (see on vs. 7, 12-15). According to another interpretation, these are figurative "merchants," representative of the peddlers of the spiritual merchandise of Babylon, those who have sold her doctrines and policies to the kings and peoples of earth (see on chs. 16:13, 14; 17:2, 4; see below on "merchandise"). In ch. 18:23 these "merchants" are said to be "the great men of the earth." Compare Isa. 23:2, 8, 17, 18; 47:13, 15.

Weep and mourn. See on v. 9.

No man buyeth. The kings and peoples of earth are disillusioned, and refuse to have anything to do with Babylon. Compare Isa. 23:14; Eze. 26:15-18.

Merchandise. Gr. *gomos,* the "lading," or "load," of a ship or a beast of burden, and thus "merchandise." According to the first interpretation mentioned above, this would be literal articles of manufacture and trade, and according to the second, or figurative interpretation, the doctrines and policies of mystical Babylon, elsewhere spoken of as her "wine" (see on ch. 17:2). The highly figurative character of ch. 18 (see on v. 9) tends to favor the latter interpretation (see above on "merchants"). With the destruction of Babylon there is an end to the flow of corrupt goods that have been sold and distributed in her name, and by which she has deceived the world.

12. Merchandise of gold. Attempts to classify the 28 items of trade listed in vs. 12, 13 and to draw some hidden meaning from them are without exegetical value. The highly diffuse and poetic character of ch. 18 suggests that the purpose of the list here given is to highlight the extensive commercial interests of Babylon, if the first interpretation mentioned in comment on v. 11 be accepted, or, according to the second, to stress the comprehensiveness of her corrupt doctrines and policies (see on chs. 16:13, 14; 17:2, 4). For a similar list of "merchandise" see Eze. 27:3-25, 33.

Thyine wood. Literally, "scented wood," that is, odoriferous wood used for incense.

Brass. Rather, "bronze" (see on Ex. 25:3).

13. Odours. Rather, "incense." Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the addition of *amōmon,* a "spice" extracted from a fragrant plant that grows in India, between the words "cinnamon" and "odours."

Ointments. Gr. *muron,* "myrrh" (see on Matt. 2:11).

Frankincense. See on Matt. 2:11.

Wine. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word.

Beasts. Gr. *ktēnē,* domesticated animals such as cattle and beasts of burden. Here probably cattle alone are meant.

Chariots. Gr. *rhedai,* a loan word from the Gallic, or Celtic, introduced into Asia Minor by the Gauls who became the Galatians. *Rhedai* really does not mean chariots, but four-wheeled travel coaches. The use of this word in Revelation suggests that the author had lived in Asia Minor and had acquired a term familiar in that area.

Slaves. Literally, "bodies" (cf. Rom. 8:11; etc.). As an item of trade, of course, this would mean "slaves."

And souls of men. Rather, "that is, human beings." In the Bible the word "soul" often means "human being," or "person" (see on Ps. 16:10; Matt. 10:28). Compare, "of men an hundred thousand" (1 Chron. 5:21), literally, "of the souls of men an hundred thousand"; "they traded the persons of men" (Eze. 27:13), literally, "they traded the souls of men." Some have considered "souls of men" here to be a ref-

erence to the spiritual nature of the human beings under consideration.

14. Fruits. Gr. *apōra,* "fruits," or more specifically, "the season of ripe fruits," in late summer or early autumn. Figuratively, here, reference may be to the time to which the great harlot looked forward when she could enjoy to the full the fruits of her lust (see on chs. 17:4, 6; 18:7).

Thy soul lusted after. Literally, "of the desire of thy soul," meaning, "of your desire." The word "soul" is often equivalent to the personal pronoun (see on Ps. 16:10; Matt. 10:28; Rev. 18:13).

Dainty and goodly. Literally, "the fat things and the splendid things," that is, everything that contributed to her life of luxury and wantonness (see on v. 7).

Find them no more at all. The finality of the fate that has overtaken Babylon is repeated in similar words six times in vs. 21-23. Babylon now descends into the "perdition" described in ch. 17:8, 11, never to rise again. Compare Jer. 51:26; Eze. 26:21; 27:36; 28:19.

15. Merchants. See on v. 11.

These things. See vs. 12, 13.

Made rich by her. Partnership with Babylon had been mutually beneficial (cf. Eze. 27:33).

Stand afar off. See on v. 10.

Weeping and wailing. See on v. 9.

16. Alas, alas. See on v. 10.

That great city. See on v. 10.

Clothed. See on ch. 17:4.

Fine linen. Compare on ch. 19:8.

Purple, and scarlet. See on ch. 17:4.

Decked. See on ch. 17:4.

17. One hour. See on chs. 17:12; 18:8.

So great riches. Or, "all this wealth" (see on vs. 7, 11-14).

Is come to nought. Literally, "has been made desolate" (see on ch. 17:16).

Shipmaster. Gr. *kubernētēs,* "helmsman," meaning the officer in charge of navigating a ship, whether or not he does the actual steering—not its owner (cf. Acts 27:11). In highly figurative language (see on Rev. 18:9) John proceeds to develop the picture suggested by the "merchants" and their trade (vs. 11-15).

All the company in ships. Or, "everyone sailing for a place," presumably to engage in trade. This may be taken in apposition with "shipmaster," the two expressions thus reading, "every ship's captain, that is, everyone sailing for a place." The picture is of a ship's captain taking his ship from one port to another to engage in trade.

Trade by sea. Literally, "work the sea," that is, obtain a living from the sea, in contrast with those who do so by working the land. This would include such occupations as shipbuilding, fishing, pearl diving, and gathering the shellfish from which purple dye was extracted (see on Luke 16: 19). Compare Eze. 26:17; 27:26-32.

Stood afar off. See on v. 10.

18. Cried. Or, "cried out," or "continued to shout." There was a veritable babel of voices as the persons mentioned in v. 17 kept shouting back and forth.

Smoke of her burning. See on v. 9.

What city. Ancient Babylon was unique (see Vol. IV, pp. 794-799). Compare Eze. 27:32.

This great city. See on chs. 14:8; 17:5, 18; 18:10.

19. Cast dust. A sign of extreme shame or grief, here the latter (see on v. 9). Compare Eze. 27:30; see on Joshua 7:6.

Cried. See on v. 18.

Weeping and wailing. See on v. 9.

Alas, alas. See on v. 10.

Made rich. See on v. 15.

All that had ships. See on v. 17.

By reason of her costliness. Literally, "from her expensiveness." Babylon's extravagant requirements brought wealth to those who traded in the goods in which she was interested.

One hour. See on chs. 17:12; 18:8.

Made desolate. See on ch. 17:16. Compare Isa. 13:19-22; 47:11; Jer. 50:13, 40; 51:26, 29; Eze. 26:17, 19.

20. Rejoice. Or, "keep on exulting." The summary desolation of Babylon brings victory and joy to all righteous beings throughout the universe. The anthem of victory over Babylon is recorded in ch. 19:1-6, and the feast celebrating the deliverance of God's people is alluded to in vs. 7-9.

Heaven. The inhabitants of heaven are first to rejoice in the triumph of Christ and His church.

Holy apostles. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "saints and apostles." The "apostles" would be the leaders

of NT times, whereas "saints" would refer to the general church membership.

Prophets. Perhaps prophets generally, though here, more likely, those of OT times (see on Eph. 2:20).

Avenged you. Literally, "judged your judgment," meaning "executed your sentence." She had decreed the death of God's people (see ch. 13:15; see on ch. 17:6), but now suffers the very fate to which she had consigned them. Compare the fate of Haman (Esther 7:10). For the means by which the divine sentence upon Babylon is to be executed see on Rev. 17:1, 16, 17. This event takes place under the seventh plague (ch. 16:19; cf. ch. 19:2).

21. A mighty angel. Literally, "one strong angel."

A great millstone. A millstone of such a size as was anciently turned by an animal, in contrast with small millstones that were turned by hand.

Cast it into the sea. Compare Jeremiah's illustration of the fate of ancient Babylon (Jer. 51:63, 64; see on Isa. 13:19; Rev. 14:8). For a Biblical explanation of the symbol of inundation see Isa. 8:7, 8; Jer. 50:9; 51:27, 42; Eze. 26:3, 4.

With violence. Literally, "with a rush," "with a shock." This word is used by classical Greek writers of the shock of battle and of a surging flood. In Acts 14:5 a cognate word is rendered "assault." With one tremendous throw the millstone is hurled into the depths of the sea. Thus, with finality (see on Rev. 18:14), will Babylon sink into oblivion, or "perdition" (ch. 17:8). Compare Jer. 51:42, 64; Eze. 26:3, 19; 27:32, 34.

Found no more at all. See on v. 14. John's description of the desolate state of ancient Babylon (vs. 21-23) must have been particularly impressive to the people of his day, in view of the fact that it was within their lifetime that the hapless city finally became an uninhabited waste (see on Isa. 13:19).

22. Voice. Or, "sound." Verses 22, 23 constitute a vivid and highly figurative description of the desolate state of Babylon (see on v. 19). Compare Isa. 24:8; Eze. 26:13.

Harpers. Gr. *kitharōdoi,* musician-singers who played the *kithara,* "cithara," as accompaniment to their songs, and thus "minstrels." The cithara was a stringed instrument with a wooden sounding box and closely resembled a lyre (see Vol. III, pp. 34-37).

Pipers. Rather, "flute players." See Vol. III, pp. 37, 38.

Heard no more at all. The arts and merrymaking have ceased. See on Rev. 18:14; cf. Eze. 26:13.

Craftsman. The artisans, mechanics, and skilled workmen have all gone. Manufacture has ceased.

23. Candle. Literally, "lamp" (see on ch. 1:12). The utter blackness of night vividly portrays the absence of all life.

Bridegroom. All social and family life have come to an end (cf. Jer. 25:10).

Thy merchants. See on v. 11.

Great men of the earth. Compare Isa. 23:8; Eze. 26:17; 27:8; Rev. 6:15.

Sorceries. That is, the deceptions practiced by Babylon to secure the allegiance of the inhabitants of earth. See chs. 13:14; 16:14; 19:20; see on ch. 17:2; cf. Isa. 47:9, 12, 13.

24. Blood. See on chs. 16:6; 17:6.

Prophets. See on v. 20.

All that were slain. Mystical Babylon represents apostate religion since the beginning of time (see on chs. 14:8; 17:5-13). However, chs. 13 to 18 are concerned most particularly with the culmination of apostasy at the end of time. Thus, in a general sense, "all that were slain" may properly include the martyrs of all time, but emphasis here is doubtless on those who lay down their lives in the closing struggle of the great controversy between good and evil, and probably also those whom Babylon purposes to slay but is prevented from slaying, by divine intervention (see on ch. 17:6; cf. Isa. 47:6; Jer. 51:47-49).

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 18

Mystical Babylon plays a major role in Rev. 14 to 19, particularly chs. 17; 18. In view of the fact that the imagery of the Revelation appears to be based largely on historical parallels in the OT (see p.

725), and especially since mystical Babylon is the figurative counterpart of the ancient literal city situated on the Euphrates (see on chs. 14:8; 17:5), a comparison of relevant OT passages may be expected to clarify, at least in part, the role attributed by Inspiration to mystical Babylon.

In large measure the imagery of the Revelation concerned with mystical Babylon is drawn from Isa. 13; 14; 47; Jer. 25; 50; 51; Eze. 26-28. For an analysis of the contribution of these OT passages to the subject under consideration see on Isa. 47:1; Jer. 25:12; 50:1; Eze. 26:13. In the following comparative table, the left-hand column consists of a composite, topical series of statements in the Revelation concerning mystical Babylon. The right-hand column lists the more significant OT passages dealing with ancient Babylon. Note the one exception—No. 5.

Mystical Babylon

Mystical Babylon in the Revelation	Old Testament Parallels
HER IDENTITY AND CHARACTER	
1. *Meaning of the name.* "Upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great" (17:5; cf. 17:7; see on 14:8; 17:5). "What city is like unto this great city!" (18:18; cf. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 16, 21; see on 17:18).	1. "Therefore is the name of it called Babel" (Gen. 11:9; cf. 10:9, 10; 11:1-9; see on 11:4-9). "Great Babylon" (Dan. 4:30; cf. Isa. 13:19; 14:4). "[His] look was more stout [literally, "greater"] than his fellows" (Dan. 7:20). Compare Isa. 23:8; Eze. 26:17; 27:32.
2. *An apostate organization.* "The great whore" "fornication" "a woman" "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (17:1, 2, 3, 5; cf. 14:8; 17:6, 7, 18; 18:4; 19:2).	2. "The lady of kingdoms" (Isa. 47:5). "The Babylonians . . . defiled her with their whoredom" (Eze. 23:17; cf. Isa. 23:15; Eze. 16:15, 38, 44; 23:2, 3; Nahum 3:4).
3. *Wholly corrupt in character.* "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" (18:2; cf. 14:8). "Her sins have reached unto heaven" (18:5).	3. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen" (Isa. 21:9; cf. Jer. 51:8). "Babylon . . . hath sinned against the Lord" (Jer. 50:14; cf. 50:24, 29, 31, 32; 51:6). "Her judgment reacheth unto heaven" (Jer. 51:9). "Full of doleful creatures" (Isa. 13:21).
4. *Marked by luxury and pride.* "She hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously" "was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls" (18:7, 16; cf. 17:4).	4. "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (Isa. 13:19). "Tender and delicate" "given to pleasures . . . dwellest carelessly" (Isa. 47:1, 8). "The golden city" (Isa. 14:4). "Abundant in treasures" (Jer. 51:13). Compare Eze. 27:7, 16, 25; 28:2, 5, 13, 17.
5. *Her counterpart.* "That great city, the holy Jerusalem" (21:10).	5. "The Lord . . . shall choose Jerusalem" (Zech. 2:12). "They shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord" (Jer. 3:17).
HER AMBITIONS AND OBJECTIVES	
6. *To rule the world.* "She saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (18:7). She reigns "over the kings of the earth" and lures them to "make war with the Lamb" (17:18, 14; cf. 12:17; 13:7; 18:6; 19:19).	6. "Thou [Babylon] saidst, I shall be a lady for ever." "Thou . . . sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children" (Isa. 47:7, 8; cf. v. 10). "The king of Babylon, . . . the oppressor." "He that ruled the nations in anger" (Isa. 14:4, 6).
7. *To annihilate the saints.* "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17:6). "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (18:24).	7. "Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall" (Jer. 51:49). "Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his [Israel's] bones" (Jer. 50:17). "Thou didst shew them no mercy" (Isa. 47:6). Compare Ezra 5:12; Isa. 14:4, 6; Jer. 50:11; 51:25; Dan. 7:21, 25; 8:24.
HER ACCOMPLICES	
8. *Demonic spirits.* "Babylon . . . is become the habitation of devils" (18:2). "Three unclean spirits" "the spirits of devils" (16:13, 14).	8. "The king of Babylon" "Lucifer" (Isa. 14:4, 12; see Eze. 28:12).
9. *The great powers of earth.* "A scarlet coloured beast" (17:3; cf. 19:19, 20). "The beast that was, and is not, and yet is" "even he is the eighth" "[when he] shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (17:8, 11). "Seven heads" "seven mountains" "seven kings" (17:9, 10; see Additional Note on Chapter 17).	9. "Like a lion . . . [with] eagle's wings" (Dan. 7:4). Compare Dan. 7:7, 19. "I am against thee [Babylon], O destroying mountain, . . . and will make thee a burnt mountain" (Jer. 51:25; see on Isa. 2:2).
10. *All nations.* "The ten horns . . . are ten kings, which . . . receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (17:12; cf. vs. 3, 7, 16). "The kings of the earth" (16:14; cf. 17:2; 18:3, 9).	10. "Ten horns" (Dan. 7:7; cf. v. 24). Compare Dan. 2:43. See on Rev. 17:12.

Mystical Babylon in the Revelation	Old Testament Parallels
"These have one mind" "[and] agree" (17:13, 17).	
11. *Other apostate religious organizations.* "Harlots" (17:5). "The false prophet" (19:20; 20:10). "An image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live" (13:14).	11. See No. 2.
12. *The leaders of earth.* "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth" (18:23; cf. vs. 3, 11, 15). "Every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea" (18:17; cf. v. 19).	12. "The astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators" "with whom thou [Babylon] hast laboured, even thy merchants" (Isa. 47:13, 15). "Tyre, . . . whose merchants are princes, . . . the honourable of the earth" (Isa. 23:8). "All the ships of the sea with their mariners" "thy rowers" "thy mariners, and thy pilots," "all thy company" (Eze. 27:9, 26, 27).
13. *The peoples of earth.* "All nations" (14:8; 18:3). "The inhabitants of the earth" (17:2; cf. v. 18). "They that dwell on the earth" (17:8).	13. "All the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (Isa. 23:17; cf. Jer. 51:49).
HER STRATEGY	
14. *Universal religio-political union.* "Sit upon a scarlet coloured beast" "the beast that carrieth her" "seven heads . . . on which the woman sitteth" (17:3, 7, 9). "The kings of the earth, . . . have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her" (18:9; cf. 17:2, 4; 18:3). "Receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These . . . shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (17:12, 13).	14. "[Tyre] shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth" (Isa. 23:17). See No. 2.
15. *Her policy and teachings.* "A golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication" (17:4). "She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (14:8; cf. 17:2; 18:3). "Did corrupt the earth with her fornication" (19:2).	15. "Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad" (Jer. 51:7).
16. *Satanic miracles: deception.* "The spirits of devils, working miracles" (16:14; cf. 13:13, 14; 19:20). "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived" (18:23). "Great wonders" "miracles" (13:13, 14). "Merchandise" (18:11).	16. "The multitude of thy [Babylon's] sorceries" "the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:9; cf. 47:12, 13). With a few exceptions the long list of Rev. 18:12, 13 is duplicated in Eze. 27.
17. *Absolute control of men's minds.* "Sitteth upon many waters" "[that is] peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (17:1, 15). "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder . . . when they behold the beast" (17:8; cf. 13:13, 14).	17. "Dwellest upon many waters" (Jer. 51:13; cf. Eze. 28:2). "All people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him" (Dan. 5:19).
HER FATE	
18. *God arraigns Babylon.* "It is done." "Great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath" (16:17, 19; cf. 18:5). "The judgment of the great whore" (17:1; cf. 19:2). "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (18:8).	18. "I have taken out of thine [Israel's] hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again: but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee" (Isa. 51:22, 23). "I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation . . . for their iniquity." "Ye [Babylon] shall certainly drink. . . . Should ye be utterly unpunished? . . . The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation" (Jer. 25:12, 28-30; cf. Jer. 50:18, 31). "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting" (Dan. 5:26, 27).
19. *Her accomplices turn against her.* "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdoms unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (17:17). "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (17:13). Gathered the kings of the earth "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (16:14). "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them" (17:14). "The ten horns" and "the beast [see on 17:16] . . . shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (17:16; cf. 18:19; 19:20). "Her plagues . . . death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire" (18:8).	19. "I will bring upon that land [Babylon] all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written" (Jer. 25:13). "Blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms." "For every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon" (Jer. 51:27, 29). "I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations" (Jer. 50:9). "The kingdoms of nations gathered together [against Babylon]: the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle" (Isa. 13:4). "I will kindle a fire in his cities" (Jer. 50:32). "The mighty men of Babylon . . . have burned her dwellingplaces" (Jer. 51:30).
20. *Her annihilation is absolute.* "A mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all" (18:21). "Divided into three	20. "The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof." "Bind a stone to it [a document foretelling Babylon's doom], and cast it into the midst of Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and

Mystical Babylon in the Revelation	Old Testament Parallels
parts" (16:19; cf. 13:2, 4, 11-15; 16:13; 19:20). "The voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, . . . shall be heard no more at all in thee" (18:22, 23). "Her plagues come in one day" "in one hour" (18:8, 10; cf. 18:17, 19).	shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her" (Jer. 51:42, 63, 64; cf. Eze. 26:3, 19; 27:32, 34). "Two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood" "[evil] shall . . . come upon thee [Babylon]; . . . mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly. . . . None shall save thee" (Isa. 47:9, 11, 15; cf. Jer. 50:32; 51:8, 13, 26, 29). "Thy kingdom is divided" (Dan. 5:28; cf. Zech. 10:3; 11:8). "Babylon is taken" "make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein." "It shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate." "So shall no man abide there" (Jer. 50:2, 3, 13, 40). "I will cause the noise of thy [Tyre's] songs to cease; and the sound of thy harps shall be no more heard" (Eze. 26:13; cf. 26:3, 19, 21; 27:32, 34, 36; 28:19).
21. *Her punishment is appropriate to her crimes.* "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her" (18:6, 7).	21. "I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands" (Jer. 25:14). "I will render unto Babylon . . . all their evil that they have done in Zion" (Jer. 51:24). "As she hath done, do unto her." "Recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her" (Jer. 50:15, 29).
22. *Her accomplices lament her.* "The kings of the earth . . . shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas" (18:9, 10). "The merchants of the earth" "shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas, alas." "They cast dust on their heads." "And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!" (18:11, 15, 16, 19, 18).	22. "Howl for her [Babylon]" (Jer. 51:8). "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee [Babylon] from these things that shall come upon thee. . . . The fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame. . . . Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants . . . : they shall wander every one to his quarter" (Isa. 47:13-15). "Every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues" (Jer. 50:13). Compare Eze. 26:16, 17; 27:29-32, 36; 28:19.
23. *Her accomplices are destroyed.* "The cities of the nations fell" (16:19). "The beast . . . shall . . . go into perdition" (17:8; cf. v. 11).	23. "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle" (Zech. 14:2; cf. Joel 3:2). "The Lord hath a controversy with the nations.
"These both [the beast and the false prophet] were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (19:20; cf. 20:10).	. . . And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth" (Jer. 25:31, 33). "At Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth" (Jer. 51:49).
24. *A song of victory over Babylon.* "He . . . hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (19:2; cf. 18:20). "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets" (18:20).	24. "This is the time of the Lord's vengeance [upon Babylon]; he will render unto her a recompence." "The Lord hath spoiled Babylon" (Jer. 51:6, 55; cf. Isa. 47:3; Jer. 50:15). "Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her" (Jer. 51:48; cf. Isa. 44:23; 49:13).

GOD'S WARNING TO HIS PEOPLE

25. *Come out of Babylon.* "Another angel" came "down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice" (18:1, 2). "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (18:4).	25. "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon" (Zech. 2:7). "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity." "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer. 51:6, 45; cf. Isa. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 COL 79; CS 52; CT 548; CW 141; EW 245; LS 327, 375; ML 59, 63; MM 185; TM 89; 5T 383, 729; 6T 401, 406; 7T 140; 9T 40, 46
1, 2 EW 277; GC 603; 6T 60
1-3 LS 412
1-5 TM 59
1-6 8T 118
1-24 Ev 230; EW 273-276; GC 390; LS 412
2 EW 274; PP 124, 458; SR 399; TM 265; 4T 13
2, 3 Ev 365
2-4 Ev 559; RC 51; 9T 110, 149
2-5 PK 188
3 GC 653; TM 62
3, 4 Ev 247
4 CH 291; EW 92, 266; FE 502; GC 383, 390; PK 715; PP 167
4, 5 EW 277; GC 604; SR 399
5 EW 274
5, 6 COL 179; FE 363
5-10 GC 653
6 EW 276
8 TM 62
13 EW 275; MH 338
15-17 GC 653

CHAPTER 19

1 God is praised in heaven for judging the great whore, and avenging the blood of his saints. 7 The marriage of the Lamb. 10 The angel will not be worshipped. 17 The fowls called to the great slaughter.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men, both* free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

1. After these things. That is, after witnessing the scenes of chs. 17 and 18 (see on ch. 18:1). Those of ch. 19 were presented to John immediately, without interruption. From v. 2 it is apparent that this song is sung after judgment has been executed upon the "great whore," an event that takes place under the seventh plague (see on chs. 16:19; 17:1), and thus after the scene described in chs. 17:16, 17; 18:4-23. According to TM 432 the singing of this song of praise to God follows immediately upon the completion of the work of the seventh plague-bearing angel. If the events of chs. 18 to 20 are recorded in chronological order, as appears to be the case, the anthem of ch. 19:1-7 is sung in close connection with events at the second coming of Christ, whether at that very time or just before or after cannot be determined with certainty. The context may be understood as assigning the anthem to a point of time immediately prior to the actual appearance of Christ (cf. v. 11).

A great voice. See on ch. 11:15.

Much people. The inhabitants of heaven, and possibly also men redeemed from this earth (cf. ch. 18:20). It may be that the anthem of ch. 19:1-7 is sung in response to the call of ch. 18:20.

Alleluia. Gr. *Allelouia,* a transliteration of the Heb. *halelu-Yah,* "praise ye Yahweh" (see on Ps. 104:35), from *halal,* "to shine," "to boast," "to celebrate," "to praise," and *Yah,* a shortened form of *Yahweh.* Like another Heb. word "amen," "hallelujah" has been adopted into the English language practically unchanged. The four occurrences of the word in Rev. 19 (vs. 1, 3, 4, 6) are the only instances of its use in the NT.

Verses 1-7 constitute an antiphonal choral arrangement composed of two anthems and two responses: (1) In vs. 1-3 a great voice in heaven leads out with the theme of the song, ascribing honor and justice to God for having punished Babylon. (2) In v. 4 the "beasts" and the "elders" respond in affirmation. (3) In v. 5 a voice from the throne summons all loyal subjects throughout the universe to a joint recognition of the truth of the theme. (4) In vs. 6, 7 the entire universe unites in acclaiming the right of God to universal sovereignty. This paean of praise stands in striking contrast with the dirge of death in ch. 18:10-19.

The motif of this antiphonal hymn of praise is similar to that of Ps. 24:7-10, which is likewise composed of two anthems and two responses. This responsive chorus was first used during the triumphal procession marking the return of the ark to Jerusalem (PP 708), and centuries later at the resurrection (EW 187) and the ascension (DA 833; EW 190, 191).

Salvation. Literally, "the salvation." In the Greek each of the virtues here ascribed to God is preceded by the definite article. This suggests the fullness, the sum total, of each attribute. The "salvation" of ch. 12:10 (see comment there) is specifically salvation from "the accuser of our brethren"; here, it is salvation from mystical Babylon (see on ch. 16:17). The one refers to what was accomplished at the first advent, the other, to what is to be accomplished at the second.

Glory. See on Matt. 6:13; Rom. 3:23.

Honour. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word.

Power. See on Matt. 6:13; 28:18.

The Lord. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the omission of this expression.

2. For. Verse 2 accounts for the ascription of praise in v. 1.

True. That is, genuine, real, dependable (see on ch. 15:3).

Righteous. Or, "just" (see on chs. 15:3; 16:1, 5). God will make no error in His acts of judgment. He will take all the facts into account.

Judgments. Literally, "[acts of] judging" (see on ch. 16:7), here, doubtless, the seven last plagues in general and the judgment of mystical Babylon in particular (see on chs. 17:1; 18:4, 10).

Hath judged. The Greek specifies a single, completed act.

Great whore. See on chs. 17:1, 5.

Did corrupt. Or, "was corrupting." Her criminal conduct covered a long period of time. See on ch. 17:2, 6.

Her fornication. See on ch. 17:2.

And hath avenged. Or, "in that he hath avenged." The judging is the avenging. See on ch. 18:6, 20.

Blood of his servants. See on chs. 6:9, 10; 16:6; 17:6.

3. Her smoke rose up. See on ch. 18:8, 9.

For ever and ever. See on ch. 14:11.

4. Elders. See on ch. 4:4.

Beasts. See on ch. 4:6-8.

Fell down. Compare ch. 4:10.

Sat on the throne. See on ch. 4:2.

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18.

5. Out of the throne. This was either the voice of God Himself or that of one speaking for Him (see on ch. 16:17).

Praise. Literally, "keep on praising." The response to this call is the chorus of voices of vs. 6, 7.

His servants. See on ch. 1:1.

And ye. Or, "even ye," "ye that fear," is equivalent to "ye his servants."

Fear. That is, in the sense of reverential awe (see on ch. 11:18).

Small and great. Compare ch. 11:18.

6. I heard. Compare on ch. 1:2.

As it were. Or, "what seemed to be."

Voice. See on ch. 14:2.

And as the voice. Rather, "even as the voice," in both instances where this expression occurs in v. 6.

Many waters. Compare ch. 14:2.

Alleluia. See on v. 1.

Omnipotent. Or, "Almighty" (see on 2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8).

Reigneth. Literally, "reigned," in the sense that He "began to reign." It is at the close of the investigative judgment, but before Christ leaves the most holy place, that He receives His kingdom and begins His reign as "King of kings" (EW 280; GC 428; cf. EW 55).

7. Be glad. The inward experience of the heart.

Rejoice. The outward expression that results from the inward emotion of gladness. It comes from a heart overflowing with happiness that Christ is now reigning as king (cf. ch. 18:20).

Honour. Literally, "glory." This is the climactic expression of gratitude and devotion.

Marriage. "The bride, the Lamb's wife" is "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (ch. 21:2, 9, 10). The New Jerusalem is to be the capital of the new earth, and as such is representative of "the kingdoms of this world," which are to "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (chs. 11:15; 21:1-5; GC 426). The New Jerusalem will contain the Garden of Eden, in which the tree of life has been preserved (see ch. 22:1, 2; cf. PP 62; GC 299, 646-648). The wedding here referred to consists of the reception by Christ of His kingdom, as represented by the New Jerusalem, and His coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords, in heaven at the close of His priestly ministry before the plagues are poured out (EW 55, 251, 280, 281; GC 427, 428; see on ch. 17:14). As in the parable of the Ten Virgins, the waiting saints are represented as guests invited to the wedding (ch. 19:9; GC 426, 427; cf. Matt. 25:1-10).

The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

Is come. Or, "has [finally] come," that is, the event has already taken place when this announcement is made (see above on "marriage"; cf. on v. 1).

Made herself ready. John continues his figurative account in terms of an ancient Oriental wedding. For comment on customs connected with such an occasion see on Matt. 22:1-13; 25:1-10; John 2:1-10.

8. To her was granted. John has set forth the New Jerusalem symbolically as the bride (see on v. 7). Continuing the figure, he speaks of the garments in which she is arrayed.

Fine linen. Here a figure for a righteous character (cf. chs. 3:5; 6:11; see on ch. 3:18; cf. on ch. 22:14).

Clean. Literally, "splendid," brilliant and shining like the light of a lamp. The same word is translated "gorgeous" in Luke 23:11, and "bright" in Rev. 22:16.

White. Literally, "pure."

Righteousness. Gr. *dikaiōmata,* "righteous deeds," not *dikaiosunē,* "righteous character" (see on Matt. 5:6; Rom. 3:20). Righteous deeds are the natural and inevitable result of a righteous character. *Dikaiōmata* applies particularly to the sanctified deeds of the Christian, his victorious life developed by the grace of the indwelling Christ (see on Gal. 2:20; James 2:17, 18, 20). For comment on the wedding garment in the parable of the Man Without a Wedding Garment see on Matt. 22:11. Compare on Matt. 5:48; see COL 315-317.

9. He. That is, the angel of v. 10.

Write. See on ch. 1:2, 11.

Blessed. Or, "happy" (see on Matt. 5:3).

Called. That is, invited to the marriage feast (see on Matt. 22:14; Rom. 8:28).

Supper. Gr. *deipnon,* the evening meal. The "marriage supper of the Lamb" takes place at the end of earth's long day. See on Matt. 22:1-14.

The Lamb. See on ch. 5:6.

These. That is, the words of the invitation.

True sayings. Literally, "genuine [ones]." The invitation is absolutely trustworthy; it can be depended upon.

10. Fell. A typical Oriental gesture of reverence and worship. Here it is an expression of profound joy and gratitude, for the marriage supper is a celebration of triumph over the forces of evil, which have sought to prevent this very event. This is the first occasion on which John responded thus to the message of the angel, and represents the depth of feeling it stirred in him.

Do it not. Compare Acts 10:26.

Fellowservant. Literally, "fellow slave," "fellow bondsman." What a privilege it is that devoted workers on earth may share the companionship of, and be co-workers with, heavenly angels!

Of thy brethren. That is, a fellow servant of thy brethren. Some have considered this designation as evidence that the speaker must be a member of the human family, such as Enoch, Elijah, Moses, or one of the saints raised with Christ at His resurrection. However, there is no direct evidence in Scripture that a translated human being ever acted in the role of an angel, as here, to reveal truth to his fellow men (cf. EW 231).

The testimony of Jesus. See on chs. 1:2; 12:17.

Spirit of prophecy. For the word "prophecy," compare the word "prophet" in Matt. 11:9. The Holy Spirit was sent to bear testimony to Jesus (John 15:26), and His witness is equivalent to that of Jesus in person. The Spirit of prophecy is one of the gifts of the Spirit (see on 1 Cor. 12:10; Eph. 4:11). For the manifestation of this gift among the people of God in the last days see Additional Note at end of chapter; see on ch. 12:17.

11. Opened. Literally, "standing open." Heaven was open when John's attention was first directed to it, and remained open. Compare chs. 4:1; 11:19; 15:5. Accompanied by the angel armies of heaven (ch. 19:14), Christ is seen descending from heaven as King of kings (v. 16) in power and majesty to deliver His faithful people from those who are bent upon their destruction (cf. GC 641). The scene described in vs. 11-21 is the climax of "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," often called the battle of Armageddon (see on ch. 16:12-19; cf. 6T 406).

Behold. Compare on ch. 21:5.

White horse. In Bible times horses were used almost exclusively in connection with warfare or government business. When used figuratively in the Bible, as here, the horse is usually a symbol of battle (cf. Ex. 15:21; Isa. 43:17; Jer. 8:6; Eze. 38:15; Zech. 10:3; Rev. 14:20; see on ch. 6:2). White typifies holiness of character (see on chs. 3:4; 6:2; 7:14). White horses have ever been the favorite of kings and military leaders. Christ has received the right to rule this earth as King of kings (see on ch. 19:1, 7), and now appears, figuratively, as a warrior, riding forth as a conqueror on a magnificent white charger to occupy His lawful domain and to escort His faithful people back to the "marriage supper" (v. 9; see on ch. 11:15). Compare Isa. 63:1-6.

Faithful and True. It should be remembered that Oriental names depict character (see on Acts 3:16), and that therefore the names here ascribed to Christ specifically represent Him in His role as champion of His beleaguered people on earth. Four statements are made concerning Christ's name in connection with the battle of Rev. 19:11-21:

1. Christ is called "Faithful and True" (v. 11) in that He now appears, according to His promise (John 14:1-3), to deliver His own. To them He has seemed to delay His coming (see on Rev. 16:15), but they "have waited for him," and He now appears for the purpose of effecting their salvation (Isa. 25:9; cf. Rev. 16:17).

2. The "name written, that no man knew, but he himself" (v. 12) represents the heretofore unknown role in which He now appears, as the avenger of His people (see on ch. 16:1). In the performance of

this "strange" work (Isa. 28:21) He acts in a role new to both men and angels.

3. But as the avenger and deliverer of His people He is still "The Word of God" (v. 13). He is "The Word of God" at work carrying out the will of the Father on earth, now in judgment, as formerly in mercy (see on John 1:1-3; Rev. 19:15).

4. The title "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (v. 16) applies in a special sense to Christ at this time (see on ch. 17:14). All power has been given into His hands (1 Cor. 15:25). Satan selfishly aspired to the exalted position that had been reserved for Christ as the Son of God (Isa. 14:12-14; Rev. 12:7-9; PP 36). But the latter, not counting equality with the Father a thing to be grasped, had voluntarily relinquished the full exercise of the attributes and prerogatives of Deity for a time (see Vol. V, p. 918; see on Phil. 2:6-8), and thereby demonstrated His worthiness to receive the honor and dignity implicit in the title "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

In righteousness. His cause is altogether just (see on chs. 15:3; 16:5). Throughout history earthly rulers have waged war for selfish ends and personal or national aggrandizement. Compare Isa. 11:1-5.

Doth judge and make war. He executes judgment by waging war. This war is against the political and military forces of earth, which had assembled to destroy His faithful servants (see on chs. 13:15; 16:13, 14, 16, 17).

12. His eyes. See on ch. 1:14. As Christ goes forth, the great champion of eternal justice, nothing escapes His notice.

Crowns. Gr. *diadēma* (see on ch. 12:3). In the Bible *diadēma* is never applied to the reward of the saints. It is always the crown of royalty. In addition to the many royal crowns that Christ receives as King of kings, He also wears the chaplet of victory, the *stephanos,* since He too overcame Satan (see on ch. 12:3; 14:14).

A name. See on v. 11; cf. on ch. 2:17.

13. Vesture. Gr. *himation* (see on Matt. 5:40), here perhaps a rider's coat, or the cloak of a military commander.

Dipped in blood. Figuratively, of course. The question arises as to whose blood stains the cloak of the rider. Some have suggested that it is a symbol of Christ's own blood shed on the cross, on the assumption that it cannot be that of the wicked, who, at this point in the narrative, have not yet been slain. However, Christ here appears, not in the role of "a Lamb as it had been slain" (ch. 5:6), but of a conquering warrior. The striking similarity between this passage and that of Isaiah (ch. 63:1-6) suggests that this passage is a fulfillment of the words of Isaiah.

His name. See on v. 11.

Word of God. See on John 1:1. In executing divine justice on those who persist in rebellion against the government of heaven, Christ is as truly the "Word of God" as when, at His first advent, He came to earth with the gracious offer of divine mercy. His coming on both occasions is an expression of the divine will.

14. Armies. That is, the angelic hosts that accompany Christ at His second advent (see Matt. 24:31; 25:31). See on Rev. 17:14; cf. Matt. 22:7.

15. Out of his mouth. The sword is obviously figurative. By the word of the Lord the earth and its inhabitants were brought into being (Ps. 33:6, 9), and now, by the word of His mouth, He terminates their existence (see Rev. 19:20, 21).

Sword. Gr. *rhomphaia* (see on ch. 1:16), the large weapon of assault used by soldiers of ancient times, in contrast with the *machaira,* the short stabbing sword used in defense (see on Luke 22:36). Compare Jer. 46:10.

Smite. Literally, "smite [once for all]."

Rule. Gr. *poimainō,* literally, "to shepherd" (see on Matt. 2:6). The expression "and shall rule them" may better be translated, "that is, shall rule them," for the smiting and the ruling refer to the same thing.

Rod of iron. See on Rev. 2:27; cf. Ps. 2:9; 110:1, 2, 5, 6. The ancient shepherd's rod had a double function. The crook on one end served to help and guide the sheep, while the heavy ferrule on the other end, a metal cap or ring to strengthen the rod, made it also a weapon of assault. This was used for the protection of the flock, to repel and kill wild animals that would scatter and destroy it. It is now time for the Good Shepherd to use the "rod of iron" against the nations for the deliverance of

His beleaguered flock on earth. His ruling, or smiting the nations, with a rod of iron results in their extermination, not their government during the millennium, as some hold (see Additional Notes on Chapter 20, Note 2).

Winepress. See on Isa. 63:3; Rev. 14:19, 20, where the same figure is developed further. Compare Lam. 1:15.

Of the fierceness and wrath. Rather, "which is the fury of the anger." See on ch. 16:1.

Almighty. See on ch. 1:8.

16. Vesture. See on v. 13.

And on his thigh. Preferably, "that is, upon his thigh." The name was seen inscribed on the part of his cloak that covered the thigh.

A name. See on v. 11.

King of kings. See on ch. 17:14; cf. on ch. 19:6.

17. Standing in the sun. Perhaps the blinding light of the sun is here descriptive of the glorious light of the divine presence (cf. 2 Thess. 2:8, 9; Rev. 6:15-17). Thus the angel who issues the challenge of ch. 19:17 would be standing next to Christ, as in ancient combat an armor-bearer would be near his lord.

Fowls. This invitation to the "fowls" warns the assembled hosts of the wicked as to the fate that impends for them (see on ch. 16:15-17). It is couched in the graphic Oriental phraseology of a challenge to personal combat (cf. 1 Sam. 17:44-46). To be devoured by the scavengers of the skies constituted one of the curses for disobedience pronounced by Moses in his valedictory address to the people of Israel (Deut. 28:26). John's phraseology in Rev. 19:17, 18 appears to be based on God's words to the heathen nations of earth as recorded in Eze. 39:17-22 (cf. Jer. 7:32, 33).

Supper. The gruesome alternative to eating at the marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 9) is to be eaten by the fowls of heaven at the "supper of the great God." Those who do not voluntarily accept God's gracious invitation to be present at the one must respond to His imperative summons to the other.

18. Flesh. Literally, "flesh pieces" (cf. on ch. 17:16).

Kings. The confederate nations of earth, acting in concert under the direct supervision of Satan in the guise of an angel of light (cf. on chs. 16:14, 16, 17; 17:12, 14).

Captains. The leaders in command of the military forces assembled to carry out Satan's will in the closing scenes of the great controversy.

Mighty men. Armed forces organized, trained, and equipped.

Flesh of horses. The remainder of v. 18 is a graphic word picture of the total destruction of all the forces of evil at the second coming of Christ (cf. chs. 6:15; 14:17-20; 16:21).

Free and bond. Compare ch. 13:16.

19. The beast. See on ch. 17:3, 8, 11.

Kings of the earth. See on chs. 16:14, 16; 17:12-14.

Their armies. Now assembled for battle and engaged in bitter conflict among themselves (see on ch. 16:17, 19).

Gathered together. See on ch. 16:14, 16.

War. Literally, "the war," that is, "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," often called the battle of Armageddon (see on ch. 16:14).

Him that sat. See on v. 11.

His army. Compare "they that are with him" (ch. 17:14; cf. on chs. 16:12; 19:14).

20. The beast. See on ch. 17:3, 8.

Taken. Or, "captured." The phase of the battle following Christ's appearance is short and dramatic, for at its very outset the "beast" and the "false prophet" are captured (see on ch. 16:17, 19).

False prophet. That is, apostate Protestantism, which is deluded by Satan and cooperates with him (see on chs. 13:11-17; 16:14). A "prophet" is one who speaks on behalf of another (see on Matt. 11:9). This "prophet" speaks on behalf of the first beast, in connection with the healing of its "deadly wound" (see on chs. 13:12; 17:8), to persuade the world to unite in allegiance to it.

Miracles . . . deceived. See on chs. 13:13, 14; 16:14; 17:2; 18:2, 3, 23.

Mark of the beast. See on ch. 13:16; cf. chs. 14:9; 16:1.

Image. See on chs. 13:14; 14:9.

A lake of fire. Or, "the lake which is fire." This phrase immediately turns the reader's mind to an identical phrase in ch. 20:10, which in turn seems to call for the conclu-

sion that these phrases refer to the same fiery event, namely, the destruction of the wicked at the end of the thousand years. But to do so presents a problem. The 19th chapter is most evidently discussing events in connection with the second coming of Christ. Hence to hold that the lake of fire mentioned in ch. 19:20 describes an event at the close of the millennium is to lift this verse out of its contextual sequence. It is always better, if possible, to find an explanation that allows any given statement to maintain its historical sequence in a passage of Scripture. As regards ch. 19:20, this is possible on the reasonable premise that there is a fiery judgment from God both at the beginning and at the close of the millennium. There is no inconsistency and certainly no contradiction in speaking of a lake of fire at the beginning and a lake of fire at the end of the millennium.

James White wrote thus on this point: "So, if you please, there are two lakes of fire, one at each end of the one thousand years" (RH Jan. 21, 1862).

21. The remnant. Or, "the rest," that is, all of earth's inhabitants except the redeemed (see Additional Notes on Chapter 20, Note 2).

Sword. See on v. 15.

Him that sat. See on v. 11.

All the fowls. See on v. 17.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON CHAPTER 19

In ch. 12:17 John speaks of "the testimony of Jesus" which is "the spirit of prophecy" as one of the identifying marks of the "remnant" (see comment there).

The word "prophecy" describes any inspired message communicated by God through a prophet (see on Matt. 11:9). Prophecy may be a prediction of future events, though more commonly it is not. The expression "spirit of prophecy" refers specifically to the "manifestation of the Spirit" in the form of a special gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires the recipient and enables him to speak authoritatively as a representative of God (1 Cor. 12:7-10) when "moved by the Holy Ghost" to do so (2 Peter 1:21). The context of the expression in Rev. 19:10 defines "the testimony of Jesus" and "the spirit of prophecy" in this sense. In view of the fact that the "remnant" of ch. 12:17 specifically refers to the church after the close of the 1260 prophetic days of vs. 6 and 14, that is, after 1798 (see on Dan. 7:25), ch. 12:17 stands as a clear prediction of the special manifestation of the "spirit," or "gift," of prophecy in the church in our day. Seventh-day Adventists believe the ministry of Ellen G. White meets the specifications of Rev. 12:17 in a unique way.

The Bible writers refer to more than 20 of their contemporaries who exercised the gift of prophecy, though their messages were not incorporated into the canon. Such were Nathan, Gad, Iddo, Agabus, and others (2 Sam. 7:2; 1 Chron. 29:29; 2 Chron. 9:29; Acts 11:27, 28; 21:10). It is evident, furthermore, that the gift of prophecy was not limited to men, either in OT or in NT times, for there were prophetesses such as Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Chron. 34:22), and the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9).

New Testament writers nowhere suggest that the gift of prophecy was to end with the apostolic church. On the contrary, Paul declares that, with the other gifts of the Spirit he lists in Eph. 4:11, it was to continue "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (v. 13). All of the other special gifts mentioned in v. 11 are still needed in the church, and men and women are still qualified by the Holy Spirit to fill these offices. Why should the office of prophet be considered an exception?

There have ever been counterfeit manifestations of the prophetic gift. Not only was this so in OT times (see 2 Chron. 18; Jer. 27-29), but our Lord warned that the Christian church would be troubled by false prophets, particularly as the time for His second advent should draw near (Matt. 24:11, 24). The deceptive power of these false prophets was to be so great that if it were possible they would "deceive the very

elect." The fact that Christ warned against a false manifestation of the prophetic gift prior to His second coming argues strongly that there would also be a genuine manifestation of this gift, as otherwise He could simply have warned against any and all prophets who might arise.

In harmony with Christ's warning John counsels the church to test those who claim to have been entrusted with spiritual gifts (1 John 4:1), to determine whether these gifts are genuine. The Scriptures specify certain standards by which those who profess to speak for God are to be measured: (1) The personal life of the prophet will be in harmony with the teachings of Scripture (Matt. 7:15-20). (2) His messages will likewise accord with Scripture. (3) His ministry will exalt Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of men (1 John 4:2). (4) His ministry will be confirmed by fulfilled predictions (Jer. 28:9; cf. 1 Sam. 3: 19). It is reasonable also to expect that the messages he bears will be of practical benefit to the church, that they will be timely and appropriate, that they will be free from human influence, and that when he is in open vision his experience will be similar to that of the Bible prophets. The life, ministry, and writings of Ellen G. White fully meet these various requirements.

Seventh-day Adventists do not consider the writings of Ellen G. White as either a substitute for or an addition to the Sacred Canon. For Adventists, the Bible stands unique and supreme as the test of Christian faith and practice (see EW 78), while the writings of Ellen G. White serve, in her own words, as "a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light" (EGW RH Jan. 20, 1903). The writings of the Spirit of prophecy do not present a new way of salvation, but are designed to lead men to understand and appreciate the Bible, and to avail themselves of the fount of salvation therein revealed.

Some have speculated that there are degrees of inspiration. Accordingly, they consider such prophets, for example, as Deborah, Nathan, and Agabus, as possessing a lower, or inferior, kind of inspiration than the canonical writers. On the same premises they would consider Ellen G. White as possessing a lower, or inferior, kind of inspiration. But the Bible says nothing about degrees of inspiration, nor does it lend any support to the idea. Adventists believe that all such speculation is not only idle but dangerous. How can finite minds hope to understand the mystery of how God, through the Spirit, uniquely illumines the minds of His chosen spokesmen?

For a discussion of certain questions raised regarding Mrs. White see F. D. Nichol, *Ellen G. White and Her Critics.*

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-6 TM 432
6 DA 48; GC 673
6, 7 DA 151; PK 721
6-9 COL 421
7, 8 8T 154
8 AA 591; AH 536; COL 310; CG 190; Ed 249; ML 272
8, 9 CT 341
9 AH 503; DA 151; EW 19; GC 427; ML 356; TM 19; 1T 69; 6T 412; 7T 54; 8T 153
10 EW 231; ML 41; PP 367
11 GC 641
14 AA 523; GC 641
16 DA 739; EW 179, 286; GC 641; MB 108; SR 410; 6T 406

CHAPTER 20

2 *Satan bound for a thousand years.* 6 *The first resurrection: they blessed that have part therein.* 7 *Satan let loose again.* 8 *Gog and Magog.* 10 *The devil cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.* 12 *The last and general resurrection.*

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and

Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are,* and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

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1. I saw. The events described in ch. 20 follow immediately upon those portrayed in ch. 19.

Come down. Literally, "coming down." John saw the angel not already on the earth, but in the act of descending.

Key. The fact that an angel carries the key shows that Heaven has complete control of events. The dragon will be unable to avoid being cast into the pit.

Bottomless pit. Gr. *abussos* (see on ch. 9:1). This is a symbolic vision. The bottomless pit is not some subterranean cavern or some yawning chasm elsewhere in the universe. John is describing the prophetic picture that unfolded before his wondering eyes. In vision he saw an actual pit, but the shutting up of the dragon in the pit was merely a symbolic way of showing that Satan's activities would be brought to a halt. This is made clear by the statement showing the purpose of his confinement, "that he should deceive the nations no more" (ch. 20:3).

How Satan's activities will be brought to a halt is clear from the context and from other scriptures, which show that the earth will be utterly depopulated at the second coming of Christ. According to ch. 19:19-21 the wicked are all destroyed in connection with the coming (see comment there). At the same time the righteous are "caught up . . . in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17). Paul's language shows that at His second coming Christ does not establish His kingdom on earth; else why would He remove the saints from the earth? Its establishment takes place after the close of the millennium, when the New Jerusalem comes down (Rev. 21:1-3). That Jesus removes the saints from the earth at His coming is further implied in John 14:1-3. In comforting His disciples in their sorrow concerning His departure, Jesus informed

them that He was going to His Father's house, where He would prepare dwellings for them. Then He would return and take them to be with Him. Compare John 13:36; 17:24. The dwellings are doubtless in the New Jerusalem, which is not transferred to this earth until the close of the millennium (see on Rev. 21:1-3).

The group that is caught up to meet the Lord in the air includes both the righteous dead, who are raised at the time of the advent, and the righteous living, who are "changed" (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17). The company of resurrected saints thus includes all the righteous who have ever lived upon the earth. There are but two main resurrections, the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29; Acts 24:15). At these resurrections, "all that are in the grave . . . shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29). Some have insisted that the phrase "dead in Christ" (1 Thess. 4:16) includes only the Christians who have died, and that the OT saints are not included. But the above scriptures show that all the righteous come forth in the resurrection of the just. The phrase "dead in Christ" need not exclude the OT saints, for they died with their hope fixed on a Messiah to come. Their resurrection is dependent upon the resurrection of Christ, for only "in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22). The resurrection of the righteous is further described as the "first resurrection" (Rev. 20:5, 6).

Much confusion has been brought into the millennial doctrine by those who fail to recognize that promises to ancient Israel were conditional on obedience. Many fanciful theories are advanced by those who attempt to fit a fulfillment of these ancient promises into the eschatological picture of the NT. This is more than the NT writers attempt. Inspired by the Spirit of God, they present a consistent picture of last-day events. They show how events that might have met a different fulfillment had the Jewish nation accepted their divine destiny, will be fulfilled with respect to the NT church. They show the true position of the Jew in NT times and accord no special place to the Jews as a nation. In one of His parables Jesus clearly revealed that when the Jewish nation rejected Christ "the kingdom of God" was taken from them "and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (see on Matt. 21:43). The Jew now stands in the same relationship to God as the Gentile (see on Rom. 11). For an extended discussion of the role of the Jews in Bible prophecy and of the conditional nature of the prophecies made concerning them see Vol. IV, pp. 25-38. A careful survey of all the evidence shows that the Jews as a nation play no special role in millennial events. As individuals, those who through the centuries of the Christian Era have accepted Jesus Christ are saved as members of the Christian church. Along with other saints they rise in the first resurrection and are translated. Those who persist in their rejection of the Messiah rise in the second resurrection (see on Rev. 20:5).

The removal of all the saints to heaven and the destruction of all the living wicked (see above) leave the earth totally depopulated. Furthermore, the fearful convulsions of nature connected with the seven last plagues (see on ch. 16:18-21) leave the earth a scene of utter desolation. Dead bodies lie strewn over its surface (see on ch. 19:17-21). It is not unreasonable to see in the *abussos* a symbol of the desolated earth to which Satan will be confined during the millennium. In the LXX of Gen. 1:2 *abussos* translates the Heb. *tehom,* "deep," the word that describes the surface of the earth as it appeared on the first day of creation, "without form, and void."

Chain. A symbol of restraint. No literal binding with a literal chain is here prefigured.

In his hand. Or, "upon his hand," perhaps indicating that the chain was hanging from the angel's hand.

2. Laid hold. Gr. *krateō,* "to seize," "to hold fast."

Dragon . . . Satan. This refers back to ch. 12:9, where the same list of names appears (see comment there).

Bound. The binding of the dragon is symbolic of the restrictions placed upon Satan's activities. The wicked will have been slain at the second coming of Christ. The righteous will have been transported to heaven. Satan and his evil angels will be

confined to the desolated earth; so there will be not even one member of the human race left alive on earth upon whom Satan can exercise his deceptive powers. It is in this that his binding will consist (see on v. 1).

Thousand years. Some commentators take this to be prophetic time, that is, 360,000 literal years, basing their interpretation on the fact that these verses are symbolic, and that therefore the time period must be symbolically interpreted. Others point out that this prophecy contains a mixture of literal elements, and that therefore it is not necessary to understand the expression symbolically. This commentary takes the position that the thousand years are literal.

3. Bottomless pit. See on v. 1.

Set a seal. Gr. *sphragizō,* "to seal." For the function of ancient seals see on ch. 7:2. The present seal may be compared with that placed on the tomb of Jesus (Matt. 27:66). The sealing symbolizes that Satan will be effectively restrained for the period indicated.

Deceive the nations. Satan's work of deception will be cut short by the depopulation of the earth. There will be no one whom he can deceive (see on v. 1).

Must. Gr. *dei,* "it is necessary." *Dei* suggests necessity based upon moral and ethical reasons. Here it is a necessity because God wills that it shall be so, as a part of His divine plan.

Loosed. This represents the reverse of the binding of the devil at the second coming of Christ. Satan is again to be in the position to deceive men, to work his will with them in opposition to God. It was the depopulation of the earth that terminated his deceptive work. His loosing will therefore be accomplished by a repopulation of the earth, an event brought about by the resurrection of the wicked at the close of the thousand years (see on v. 5). These newly resurrected ones will be subject to his deceptions as he plans his final test of strength with Jehovah.

A little season. Or, "a little time." How long this "little" time will be, we are not informed. It will be time enough for Satan to organize the resurrected wicked for an assault upon the New Jerusalem.

4. Thrones. Symbols of authority to exercise rule as a king (ch. 13:2), or as a judge (Matt. 19:28).

Sat. Or, "took their seats."

Judgment. Gr. *krima,* "sentence," "verdict," "a decision rendered." Here *krima* seems to mean the authority to pass sentence. The passage does not refer to a verdict in favor of the righteous. The saints sit upon thrones, which fact indicates that they are the ones who will pronounce sentence. The passage is doubtless an allusion to Dan. 7:22, where the prophet notes that "judgment was given to the saints of the most High." For "judgment" the LXX of Daniel reads *krisis,* "the act of judging," whereas Theodotion's Greek version reads *krima.*

The work of judgment referred to by the revelator is doubtless that spoken of by Paul: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3). The work of judgment will doubtless involve a careful investigation of the records of evil men, so that every man will be convinced of the justice of God in the destruction of the wicked (see DA 58). See GC 660, 661.

Souls. See on Rev. 6:9; cf. on Ps. 16:10.

Beheaded. Gr. *pelekizō,* literally, "to cut off with an ax," specifically, "to behead." The word comes from *pelekus,* "an ax." The ax was the usual instrument used in executions in ancient Rome. Later it was replaced by the sword.

Witness of Jesus. Or, "testimony of Jesus" (see on ch. 1:2, 9), here, the witness borne about Jesus.

Word of God. See on ch. 1:2, 9.

Which had not worshipped. In other words, they heeded the warning of the third angel (ch. 14:9-12) and refused to render obeisance to the power represented by the beast, even though threatened with boycott and death (see on ch. 13:15-17). Only two classes of saints are mentioned in this verse, martyrs and victors over the beast. This does not mean that they are the only ones to share in the millennial reign, for it has already been shown that all the righteous dead (not only the martyrs) come forth in the first resurrection (see on Rev. 20:1; cf. on Dan. 12:2). Per-

haps the martyrs and the victors over the beast are singled out because they represent those who have suffered most. See Additional Notes at end of chapter, Note 2.

Lived. The Greek may be translated either "lived" or "came to life." The context seems to favor the latter translation, otherwise the declaration, "This is the first resurrection" (v. 5) is without proper antecedent. However, the victors over the beast are alive in the time immediately preceding the coming of the Son of man, and the majority, if not all, will require no resurrection (see on v. 1). Hence, some suggest that "lived" should be given the ingressive idea, and "and" be understood as an explanatory term thus: "They began to live, that is, to reign with Christ."

Reigned. The question is raised, over whom will the saints reign if all the wicked have been destroyed? They are said to reign "with Christ." When the seventh angel sounds, "the kingdoms of this world . . . become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ" (ch. 11:15). Daniel speaks of the "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom" being "given to the people of the saints of the most High" (ch. 7:27). The saints have been under the oppressive rule of kings who had drunk of the wine of Babylon's fornication (see Rev. 18:3). Now the tables have been turned.

True, the wicked are dead (see on ch. 20:2), but they will return to life at the end of the millennial period (see on v. 5). They are shut up, as it were, later to receive their punishment. In the meantime the saints assist in the work of judgment that determines the punishment to be meted out. After the wicked return to life they go down in utter defeat, receive their punishment, and are annihilated (see on chs. 14:10; 20:9).

With Christ. The millennial reign is with Christ in heaven, not on earth as many Bible interpreters assert (see on v. 2; see Additional Notes at end of chapter, Note 2).

Thousand years. See on v. 2.

5. Rest of the dead. This obviously refers to the wicked dead, those who from the beginning of time have gone into Christless graves and those who have perished at the second coming of Christ. This is clear from the fact that all the righteous dead arose in the first resurrection. Therefore "the rest of the dead" must refer to the wicked dead (see on v. 2).

Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of the sentence, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," though it is generally held that the preponderance of evidence is in favor of retaining it. The doctrine of the second resurrection is not, however, dependent upon this statement. It is clearly implied in the chapter. If the nations are to join Satan in his assault upon the Holy City (v. 9), they must be brought back to life. The term "second resurrection" is derived from the observation that there are only two main resurrections (John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15) and that the resurrection of the righteous is called the "first resurrection" (see on Rev. 20:2, 4).

The passage, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," is parenthetical. The sentence that follows, "This is the first resurrection," is connected directly with the resurrection referred to in v. 4.

For a discussion of the textual aspects of the problem of v. 5 see Additional Notes at end of chapter, Note 1.

Lived not. Rather, "came not to life" (see on v. 4).

Were finished. The phrase may literally be translated, "until shall have been completed."

First resurrection. That is, the one mentioned in v. 4 (see comment there).

6. Blessed. Gr. *makarios* (see on Matt. 5:3).

Holy. Gr. *hagios* (see on Rom. 1:7).

Second death. This is, the death that comes to the wicked after their resurrection at the close of the 1000 years (v. 14; ch. 21:8). The first death is the death that comes to all (1 Cor. 15:22; Heb. 9:27). All, both the righteous and the wicked, are raised from this death (John 5:28, 29). The righteous come forth from their graves immortal (1 Cor. 15:52-55). The wicked are raised to receive their punishment and to die an eternal death (Rev. 20:9; 21:8). God destroys them, both body and soul, in hell (Matt. 10:28). This means annihila-

tion. The "second death" is the exact opposite of an endless life under torture, which some teach will be the fate of the wicked (see on Matt. 25:41).

Power. Gr. *exousia,* "authority." The second death will not touch the redeemed.

Priests. See on Rev. 1:6; cf. Isa. 61:6.

Of God. That is, in company with God. In the same way, "of Christ" means in company with Christ. Or, the expressions "of God" and "of Christ" may signify respectively, serving God and serving Christ.

Reign. See on v. 4; see Additional Notes at end of chapter, Note 2.

7. Loosed. The confinement resulted from the removal of the righteous to heaven and the slaying of the living wicked (see on v. 2). The loosing will be accomplished by the resurrection of the wicked, which will provide Satan with subjects upon whom to practice his deceptive guile.

Prison. The prison is the "bottomless pit," the earth desolated at the second coming of Christ, where Satan had been confined during the 1000 years (see on v. 1). Satan is to be free to organize the resurrected wicked. This will be his final attempt against God before his destruction.

8. Nations . . . Gog and Magog. These terms represent the hosts of the unsaved of all ages who come forth in the second resurrection. For a discussion of the names "Gog" and "Magog" and the application of these symbols in OT prophecy and in the present passage see on Eze. 38:1, 2.

To battle. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "for the battle." The definite article lays stress on a particular battle, the last conflict between God and those in rebellion against Him. See GC 663-665.

Sand of the sea. That is, beyond computation (cf. Gen. 22:17). This host is composed of all the unsaved from the foundation of the world.

9. Breadth of the earth. Compare a similar expression in Hab. 1:6. The wicked, under the leadership of Satan, march against the camp of the righteous.

Compassed. That is, "encircled."

Camp. Gr. *parembolē,* "camp," a compound of *para,* "beside," and *ballo,* "to put," "to place," "to cast." *Parembolē* is used of a soldiers' barracks or fort (Acts 21:34, 37), of armies in battle array (Heb. 11:34), of an encampment of people (Heb. 13:11, 13). Here *parembolē* describes the New Jerusalem.

And the beloved city. Or, "even the beloved city." The beloved city is the New Jerusalem (ch. 21:10). Some scholars distinguish between the camp and the city. This much seems clear, however, that the saints are inside the city during the siege (see EW 292, 293). The fact that the "beloved city" is being surrounded shows clearly that it has descended, although the actual descent is not described until ch. 21:1, 9, 10. One of the significant events following the close of the 1000 years is the descent of Christ, the saints, and the Holy City. The narrative is told with extreme brevity, but the sequence of events is clear when the entire context is examined.

Fire. This doubtless refers to literal fire as the means of destruction.

Devoured. Literally, "ate down." The form of the Greek verb denotes action completed. The wicked are annihilated. They suffer the "second death" (see on v. 6). There is no hint here of endless torture in an ever-burning hell (cf. Jude 7).

10. Lake of fire. See on ch. 19:20. Here the lake of fire is the surface of the earth turned into a sea of flames, which both consumes the wicked and purifies the earth.

Are. This word is supplied. The context suggests supplying the words "were cast." See on ch. 19:20.

Shall be tormented. The Greek verb is in the plural. The subject of the verb is the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. It should be noted that the beast and the false prophet are not literal but symbolic creatures.

For ever and ever. Literally, "unto the ages of the ages" (see on ch. 14:11).

11. Throne. A symbol of authority, in this case authority to carry out a judgment. The throne is "white," suggesting probably the purity and justness of the decisions arrived at. It is also described as "great," perhaps with reference to the momentous decisions arrived at.

Him that sat. The identity of the person seated on the throne is not stated, unless the phrase "before God" (v. 12) gives his identity. However, textual evidence attests

(cf. p. 10) the reading "before the throne" in place of "before God." Hence the identity remains uncertain.

The Scriptures present both Christ (Rom. 14:10) and the Father (Heb. 12:23) as sitting in judgment. In Rev. 4:2, 8, 9; 5:1, 7, 13; 6:16; 7:10, 15; 19:4; 21:5 it is the Father who is seated on the throne, as the divine judge. The two work in closest unity (see on John 10:30). The official acts of one become the official acts of the other. Here it is doubtless Christ who leads out (see GC 666).

Fled away. An indication of the absolute power of the One sitting upon the throne and of the transitory existence of this present world (Ps. 102:25, 26; 104:29, 30; Isa. 51:6; Mark 13:31; 2 Peter 3:10). The eternal order of things is to be of an entirely new kind (Rev. 21:1-5).

12. The dead. This obviously refers to those raised in the second resurrection (see on vs. 5, 7).

Small and great. Station in life has no weight in this meeting with God. Many of high position in the world escaped, while alive, the fitting reward for their evil deeds. In this final accounting with God there will be no evasion of full justice.

Before God. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "before the throne" (see on v. 11).

The books. Literally, "books." The Greek has no definite article. These are the books containing the record of the lives of men. No sentence passed upon any wicked person will be arbitrary, biased, or unfair. For a classification of these books see on Dan. 7:10.

Another book. That is, "one more book."

Book of life. See on Phil. 4:3; cf. on Luke 10:20.

According to their works. See on Rom. 2:6. The evidence that stands open for all to see and evaluate.

13. Sea . . . death . . . hell. These words set forth the universality of the second resurrection implied in v. 12. No man can avoid appearing in person before God on His throne. Death and hell are found together in chs. 1:18; 6:8. For a definition of "hell" see on Matt. 11:23.

14. Death and hell. Death and hell are here personified. Their being cast into the lake of fire represents an end of death and of the abode of the dead. Never will they have part in the new earth; they are mortal phenomena that belong only to this world. Death is the final enemy to be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26, 53-55).

Lake of fire. See on v. 10.

Second death. See on v. 6.

15. Whosoever. Only the names of the faithful will be retained in the book of life. The names of those who do not endure until the end will be blotted out (ch. 3:5). Many never had their names recorded there, for the book contains only the names of those who at some time in their lives professed faith in Christ (see on Luke 10:20).

Lake of fire. See on v. 10. Compare Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 21:8.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON CHAPTER 20

Note 1

Rev. 20:5 presents a certain textual problem. The clause, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," is not found in certain manuscripts. This has raised a question as to the genuineness of this passage. Following is an examination of the textual evidence that bears on this problem.

There are six principal uncial witnesses for the book of Revelation: (1) the Chester Beatty Papyri from the 3d century, designated P^{47}, our oldest substantial witness to the book, and a few papyrus fragments, (2) the Sinaiticus (designated ℵ) from the 4th century, (3) the Alexandrinus (designated *A*) from the 5th century, (4) the Ephraemi Rescriptus (designated *C*) from the 5th century, (5) the Porfirianus (designated *P*) from the 9th or 10th century, and (6) a Vatican manuscript sometimes designated *B*, but to be distinguished from the Codex Vaticanus of the 4th century consistently designated *B*. The book of Revelation has been lost from the Codex Vaticanus, so the deficiency has been supplied by substituting an 8th-century manuscript variously designated, Vatican gr. 2066, *046*, or *a* 1070.

Besides these uncial witnesses are a host of minuscule manuscripts of comparatively late date.

It should be noted that these ancient manuscripts are not all complete. Some of the leaves are entirely missing and others have become mutilated. Sometimes whole sections are missing. For example, as just noted, the whole of the book of Revelation has been lost from the Codex Vaticanus. The Chester Beatty Papyri of Revelation contain only the section from chs. 9:10 to 17:2, with certain lines missing in the extant leaves. The witness of these important uncials as far as ch. 20:5 is concerned is therefore unknown. The same is true of the witness of Ephraemi Rescriptus (*C*) and that of Porfirianus (*P*), for the entire twentieth chapter is missing from *C*, and the first nine verses of the chapter from *P*. This section of Revelation is also missing from certain minuscules.

The Peshitta version—early 5th century—never contained the books of 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude, or the Revelation, because the Syrian church did not recognize them as canonical. The text of the Revelation appearing in modern printed editions of the Peshitta since 1627 was borrowed from a later Syriac translation known as the Harkleian.

Therefore, the genuineness of the clause in question must be evaluated on the basis of the remaining witnesses, which are comparatively few in number. In fact, the ancient witnesses to the book of Revelation are much fewer in number than those of the Gospels, Acts, or Pauline epistles.

Of those manuscripts that contain this section of Revelation the clause, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished," is omitted in the Sinaiticus (ℵ), a number of minuscules, and the Syriac versions. It is found in the Alexandrinus (*A*) and in *046*, and in a large number of minuscules. The process whereby the genuineness of a reading is determined is too complex to be here discussed, but on the basis of the evidence available scholars generally accept, as genuine, the clause here under discussion. For this reason it appears in the majority of the translations. The fact that some translators place the passage in parentheses does not mean that they necessarily doubt the genuineness of the reading; they may simply regard it as parenthetical.

It is pointed out that the entire passage reads along coherently if the clause in question is omitted, especially if the last part of v. 4 is translated, "they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years," which translation the syntax of the Greek permits. However, such a consideration alone is not the basis for deciding the genuineness of a particular passage. An author must not be denied the privilege of introducing a parenthetical idea into an otherwise smoothly flowing line of thought.

There is no contextual problem in the disputed clause, for what is said in this clause is clearly implied in the context, especially when related scriptures are studied. The Bible speaks of two main resurrections—that of the just, and that of the unjust (see John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15). That of the just is clearly set forth as occurring in connection with the second coming of Christ (see 1 Thess. 4:13-17). In Rev. 20:4 the statement is made concerning certain classes that they "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This clause should be translated as noted above, "they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Thus translated, the clause "this is the first resurrection" (v. 5) connects logically with v. 4. When the author calls this the "first" resurrection, he clearly implies a "second." Since the wicked are all slain at the second coming of Christ (ch. 19:21), and since they are represented as attacking the city at the end of the millennium (ch. 20:8, 9), it follows that they must have been raised. Thus the second resurrection at the end of the thousand years is clearly implied in the context.

Note 2

The thousand-year period commonly called the millennium is mentioned in the Bible only in Rev. 20. The word "millennium," which means simply, "thousand years," is not a scriptural term, but the expression "thousand years" occurs six times in vs. 1-7. Commentators differ widely in their understanding of the millennium.

This Additional Note proposes to set

forth Bible reasons for the position held by Seventh-day Adventists and to show why Adventists regard as untenable certain other positions that have been advanced.

The Second Advent of Christ Precedes the Millennium.—That the second advent precedes the millennium is clear from the fact that the narrative of Rev. 19 and 20 is continuous. The second advent is symbolically portrayed in ch. 19:11-21, and the narrative is carried on without a break into ch. 20, which discusses the millennial period. The continuity of narrative is clearly demonstrated by the interrelation of events. The three great powers that will oppose the work of Christ and gather the kings of the earth to battle immediately prior to the advent are identified as the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (ch. 16:13). According to ch. 19:19, when "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies" assemble to make war with Christ at the time of His advent, the beast and the false prophet are taken and cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone (vs. 20, 21). The narrative of ch. 20 proceeds to show the fate of the third member of the trio, the dragon, who is seized and cast into the bottomless pit, where he remains for 1000 years.

Any definition or description of the millennium must be based on the framework of the millennial doctrine set forth in chs. 19 and 20, for this is the only Scripture passage that deals directly with this doctrine.

Christ's Enemies Slain at the Second Advent.—When the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20), "the remnant" (v. 21), or "the rest," of their followers are slain by the sword of Christ. These are the kings, captains, mighty men, and "all men, both free and bond" (v. 18). The same classes are mentioned under the sixth seal, as seeking to hide from the face of the Lamb (ch. 6:14-17) when the heavens depart as a scroll and every mountain and island is moved. Obviously these scriptures depict the same earth-shattering event, the second advent of Christ.

How many are involved in the death of "the remnant" (ch. 19:21)? According to ch. 13:8 there will be only two classes on earth at the time of the advent: "all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him [the beast], whose names are not written in the book of life." It is evident, therefore, that when "the remnant" are "slain with the sword" (ch. 19:21), there are no survivors except those who have withstood the beast, namely, those who are written in the book of life (ch. 13:8). Before mentioning that this group enters upon its millennial reign (ch. 20:4), John relates how the third great enemy, the dragon, will begin to receive his retribution (vs. 1-3).

The Righteous Dead Raised at the Second Advent.—The Bible sets forth two resurrections, that of the just and that of the unjust, separated by a period of 1000 years (see on Rev. 20:1, 4, 5). There cannot be one general resurrection, for there is a resurrection to which apparently not all attain (Phil. 3:11; cf. Luke 14:14; 20:35). The just are elsewhere described as "they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23). Some hold that Rev. 20:4 describes only the Christian martyrs. However, a comparison with other scriptures shows that all the righteous, including the OT saints (see on Rom. 4:3; 1 Cor. 15:18) and the living righteous, immortalized at that time (1 Cor. 15:51-54), ascend to be with Christ at the second advent (see on 1 Thess. 4:16, 17).

There is no valid scriptural basis for separating the "blessed and holy" ones, who have withstood the persecution of the beast, from the immortal saints mentioned in 1 Thess. 4 and 1 Cor. 15.

The Unity of the Second Advent.—The various Biblical references to the second advent combine to portray as a single event the coming of Christ to gather up His saints and to destroy their persecutors. The main references may be summarized as follows:

1. *Matt. 24:29-31.* The coming of Christ will be visible, "in the clouds of heaven," "after the tribulation." Jesus will send His angels "with a great sound of a trumpet" to "gather together his elect."

2. *1 Cor. 15:23, 51-53.* They "that are Christ's at his coming"—both resurrected dead and living—receive immortality when "the trumpet shall sound."

3. *1 Thess. 4:15-17.* The Lord descends "with the trump of God" to resurrect and catch up "the dead in Christ," together with those who "are alive and remain" until the day of His coming. They are caught up "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," to "ever be with the Lord."

4. *2 Thess. 1:6-8.* The church's "rest" from persecution comes when Christ is "revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire" to punish those who "obey not the gospel."

5. *2 Thess. 2:1-3, 8.* The "gathering together unto him [Christ]," concerning which the Thessalonians were troubled, will not come until after the "falling away" and the revealing of "that Wicked [the Antichrist]" who will be destroyed "with the spirit of his [Christ's] mouth" and "the brightness of his coming."

6. *Rev. 1:7.* His coming will be "with clouds," and visible to "every eye."

7. *Rev. 14:14-20.* When Christ comes He will reap a double harvest—the righteous and the unrighteous.

8. *Rev. 19:11 to 20:6.* At His coming, symbolized as a warrior accompanied by the armies of heaven, Christ casts the persecuting "beast" and "false prophet" into the lake of fire, and slays the rest of His enemies with the sword "out of his mouth." An angel binds Satan. The faithful—resurrected dead and living—are rewarded; they reign "with Christ a thousand years."

These Scripture references agree in picturing the glorious return of the Lord as one single, visible event. They show that this one event will accomplish (1) the gathering up of the saints immortal from the earth to be with Him, obviously in the heavenly "mansions" in the place that Christ has gone to prepare for them (John 14:2, 3), and (2) the slaying of the persecutors of the last generation, with all the unrighteous, by the consuming glory of His coming.

Thus it is evident that when the millennium begins, all human beings have either been taken to heaven in immortality or have been left dead on the desolated earth. It is this depopulation of the earth that binds Satan (see on Rev. 20:1, 2). He is unable to reach the redeemed and powerless to deceive his own human subjects until they live again at the end of the "thousand years" (v. 5).

Mistaken Basis of Belief in Earthly Millennium.—Some hold that the millennium will be a period of righteousness, peace, and prosperity *on earth.* They arrive at this concept largely from applying to the millennium, either literally or figuratively, the prophecies of restoration and of the kingdom given to ancient Israel in the OT. The premillennialists belonging to this group apply these prophecies literally to either a churchly or a Jewish world kingdom in a future millennium after the second coming. The postmillennialists apply these same predictions to a future churchly golden age before the second advent. A third group, the amillennialists, reduce the OT portrayals of the kingdom offered to ancient Israel to mere allegories of the victories of the church in the gospel dispensation.

The fallacy of these three positions is twofold: (1) None of these positions fits the specifications laid down in Rev. 19:11 to 20:15, the primary Scripture passage dealing with the millennium. This passage shows plainly that there will be no living human being on the earth during that period (see above; cf. on ch. 20:1). Hence, the millennium cannot be a period of righteousness, peace, and prosperity on earth. (2) These positions are based on a false concept of the nature of OT prophecies.

For example, many premillennialists hold the view that these kingdom prophecies are literal and unalterable decrees that must yet be fulfilled to literal Israel, that is, to the Jews (for the term "Israel" as applied to Jews of any tribe see on Acts 1:6). This mistaken belief has resulted in a system known as futurism (see p. 129), which, instead of regarding the Christian church as the inheritor of the promises made to Israel, considers the Christian age a "parenthesis" in prophecy, that is, as filling up the gap until the ancient prophecies concerning Israel will in the future be literally fulfilled (cf. p. 129).

Interpreters of this school apply the greater part of the predictions of Revelation principally to the Jews, and believe that these predictions will be fulfilled in what they call the "end time." They expect

the OT kingdom prophecies given to Israel to be fulfilled during the millennium. They divide up sacred history into dispensations, or periods, in which the "church age" is regarded as an interim dispensation of grace between past and future Jewish ages of law. This division into dispensations logically requires a "pretribulation rapture" (see on 1 Thess. 4:17) in order to remove the Christian saints from the earth before the Jewish "tribulation period." These interpreters hold further that the surviving Jews will accept Christ when He appears in the clouds after the tribulation; then, with the surviving "nations" they will enter the millennium, and while still mortal, will live on a partly renovated earth. At this time, according to this view, the Jews will enjoy not only material prosperity and long life but also the restored Davidic kingdom, a restored temple and "commemorative" sacrificial system, the law, the Sabbath, political world dominion, enforcement of Christ's "rod-of-iron rule" over submissive but finally rebellious nations—all this in an earthly millennial kingdom, while the Christian saints are reigning with Christ in immortality.

Following are some of the principles of OT prophetic interpretation overlooked by those who reserve the OT kingdom prophecies for the Jews of a future age (see Vol. IV, pp. 25-38; see on Deut. 18:15).

1. *The promises to ancient Israel were conditional.* God said, "*If* ye will obey . . . , then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (Ex. 19:5; cf. Deut. 7; 8; 27-30; Jer. 18:6-10; see Vol. IV, p. 34).

2. *National Israel failed to meet the conditions, hence lost the kingdom and the promises.* When Christ, the Son of David, came, and the Jewish nation rejected her King, she lost the kingdom (see on Matt. 21:43; cf. on Rev. 20:1).

3. *The Christian church, "spiritual Israel," is now the inheritor of the promises.* The failure of literal Israel does not mean that "the word of God hath taken none effect" (Rom. 9:6). When national Israel was cut off, like dead branches, from the true stock of Abraham, the true Israel was then the faithful Jewish remnant that accepted the Messiah (see on Rom. 11:5), and to these Jewish Christians were added the Gentile Christians, grafted into the original stock. Thus the tree now includes the spiritual children of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 26-29), namely, the Christian church.

Paul says that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26), but he makes it abundantly clear that "all Israel" does not mean all the Jews (see comment there). He excludes the mere "children of the flesh" and includes only "the children of the promise" (Rom. 9:6-8). To these he joins those Gentiles that have the true, spiritual circumcision, which comes from Christ (Rom. 2: 26, 28, 29; Col. 2:11; see on Rom. 11:25, 26; Phil. 3:3). He says specifically that non-Jews saved by the grace of Christ are no longer strangers and foreigners to "the commonwealth of Israel" and "the covenants of promise," but are "fellowcitizens with the saints" (Eph. 2:8-22). In spiritual Israel "there is neither Jew nor Greek," but in Christ all are one (Gal. 3:28).

Paul applies to "all the seed," Jewish and Gentile Christians, the promise of the kingdom (see on Rom. 4:13, 16). Peter quotes, almost verbatim, the key passage (Ex. 19:5, 6) that promises Israel the status of a chosen people, a holy nation, a "kingdom of priests," and applies it to non-Jewish Christians. This shows that he regards the Christian church as heir of the special status formerly held by disobedient Israel (see on 1 Peter 2:5-10). John twice uses a phrase that seems to allude to this same Exodus passage: "a kingdom, priests," "a kingdom, and priests" (see on Rev. 1:6; 5:10), showing that he makes a similar application of that kingdom promise to the church—not only to the future church triumphant but also to the Christians of Asia Minor. For other examples of inspired NT applications of some of Israel's promises and prophecies to the church in apostolic times see Acts 2:16-21; 13:47; 15:13-17.

4. *Prophecies originally literal may be fulfilled spiritually to "spiritual Israel" in this age and transcendently in the world to come.* The NT applications show that prophecies given literally to ancient Israel may have a nonliteral fulfillment for the church under the new conditions in the Christian age and a final fulfillment, without the elements of mortality, in the eternal kingdom.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-3 GC 658
1-15 1T 67-71
2-4 EW 290
4 EW 52
4-6 GC 661
5 EW 52, 89
5, 6 EW 292
5-9 EW 53
6 EW 51; GC 544, 673; SR 429
7-9 EW 293; GC 664
9 EW 52, 54, 294; GC 672, 673
11 GC 665
11, 12 COL 318; CS 314; FE 261; GC 666; SR 422; 8T 28
12 GC 480, 486, 549; PP 326, 357; TM 224; 4T 453; 6T 310
12, 13 EW 52
13 4T 116
13, 14 GC 544
14 EW 295; PP 461

CHAPTER 21

1 *A new heaven and a new earth.* 10 *The heavenly Jerusalem, with a full description thereof.* 23 *She needeth no sun, the glory of God is her light.* 24 *The kings of the earth bring their riches unto her.*

AND I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

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1. **New.** Gr. *kainos,* "new" in quality as opposed to that which is worn or marred. Both occurrences of "new" in this verse are translations of *kainos. Neos,* also translated "new" in the NT (Matt. 9:17; 1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 3:10; etc.), refers to newness in point of time. By using the word *kainos,* John is probably emphasizing the fact that the new heavens and earth will be created from the purified elements of the old, and thus be new in quality, different. The new heavens and the new earth are, then, a re-creation, a forming anew of existing elements, and not a creation *ex nihilo.* Compare 2 Peter 3:13.

Were passed away. That is, in so far as their former, marred state is concerned. That which was perfect as it came from the hand of the Creator, which He pronounced as "very good" (Gen. 1:31), had become terribly marred by sin and could not be allowed to continue throughout eternity.

No more sea. The clause reads literally, "and the sea is not any longer," that is, the seas as we know them now will not exist in the new creation. Some have insisted that this "sea" is symbolic of peoples, nations, tongues (cf. ch. 17:15); but if so, the heavens and the earth would necessarily be symbolic also. Here John simply affirms that the heavens, the earth, and the seas will no longer exist as we know them now (cf. PP 44).

2. **Holy city.** Ancient Jerusalem contained the Temple, where God could manifest His presence to His people (1 Kings 8:10, 11; 2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:2, 3), even as He had done at the door of the tabernacle in the desert (Ex. 29:43-46; 40:34-38). The city was described as "holy" (Dan. 9:24; Matt. 27:53), but in the course of time the spiritual degradation of God's people became so great that Jesus pronounced the Temple a "den of thieves" (Matt. 21:13), and predicted the fall of the city (Matt. 22:7; Luke 21:20). Now God promises a new kind of Jerusalem, which John describes as the "new Jerusalem."

New. Gr. *kainos,* new in kind and quality (see on v. 1). Compare Gal. 4:26; Heb. 11:10; 12:22; 13:14.

Coming down. In vision John beheld the city as it descended (cf. PP 62).

From God. God is the author, the originator, the source.

Out of heaven. Its place of origin (cf. chs. 3:12; 21:10).

Prepared. The form of the word thus translated suggests that the preparation had been initiated in the past and brought to perfection, so that the city now stands fully prepared (cf. GC 645, 648).

Bride. The city is here represented as the bride (see on ch. 19:7).

Adorned. Gr. *kosmeō,* "to arrange," "to furnish," "to adorn." The English word "cosmetics" is derived from *kosmeō.* The form of the Greek verb suggests that the adorning had begun in the past and had by now been brought to completion.

Husband. That is, the Lamb, Christ (ch. 19:7).

3. Great voice. The speaker is not identified. It is presumably not God, for He is spoken of in the third person.

Tabernacle. Gr. *skēnē,* "tent," "booth," "tabernacle." The verb *skēnoō,* "to tent," "to dwell," appears in John 1:14: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (see comment there). This visible presence of God was made plain by the Shekinah in the days of the theocracy, and later by the personal appearance of Jesus Christ as a member of the human family, dwelling among men. The great voice from heaven now stresses the wonderful fact of a new creation and of God dwelling personally with His people.

With men. Later in the verse the phrase "with them" appears twice. Three times in this verse the apostle uses the preposition "with," thereby stressing the amazing fact of God keeping company with men throughout eternity, making His home with them.

Dwell. Gr. *skēnoō* (see above on "tabernacle"). With this verse compare Eze. 37:27. Ezekiel describes conditions as they might have been; John, conditions as they will be fulfilled.

4. All tears. Literally, "every tear." See on Rev. 7:17; cf. Isa. 25:8; 65:19.

Death. The clause reads literally, "the death shall be no longer." The definite article is of significance. John speaks of "the death"—the principle of death that came in as a result of sin. The definite article has, here, the force of a demonstrative. John says in effect, "this death, the one we know so well and fear so much, shall be destroyed." Compare the language of Paul: "Death is swallowed up in victory," literally, "The death was swallowed down in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54); "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death [literally, "the death"]" (v. 26).

Sorrow. Grief, such as accompanies bereavement. The causes for sorrow will be completely removed. Compare Isa. 35:10.

Crying. Gr. *kraugē,* "outcry," "clamor," "crying." No cause for crying will exist in that beautiful land of tomorrow.

Pain. Much of life's misery and anguish is the result of harassing pain. Pain will be completely banished in that beautiful world of tomorrow.

Former things. That is, conditions as we know them today will pass away. There will be nothing that bears the mark of the curse (ch. 22:3).

5. He that sat. Or, "the one sitting." He is not identified (cf. on ch. 20:11). In ch. 4:2 (see comment there) the Father is represented as seated on the throne, and the same may here be implied. Some point to Matt. 25:31 as evidence that the reference may be to Jesus Christ.

Behold. The speaker calls attention to something important about to be disclosed.

All things. Nothing of the curse is to remain (cf. ch. 22:3).

New. Gr. *kainoi* (see on v. 1).

Write. See on ch. 1:11. At different points in John's experience in vision the command to write is repeated (chs. 1:19; 2:1; 14:13; etc.).

True and faithful. That is, genuine and trustworthy. The words and promises of God are altogether trustworthy and may therefore be depended upon. (See ch. 22:6.)

6. It is done. Rather, "It has come to pass." Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "They have come to pass," or "They have occurred." Important textual evidence may also be cited for the reading "I have become the Alpha and the Omega . . ." What God had promised through His holy prophets and to which His righteous people have looked forward with eager anticipation, will finally become an accomplished fact. The preview given to John is a guarantee of the final accomplishment yet to be carried out.

Alpha and Omega. See on ch. 1:8.

Athirst. The true believer is not eager to amass the things of this world, to be rich in worldly goods. Rather, he is eager to drink deeply of the spiritual riches from God.

Fountain. Or, "spring." Compare John 4:14; Rev. 7:17; 22:17.

Of life. The passage may be translated, "out of the spring of that water which is life itself." This is the promise of immortality (1 Cor. 15:53).

Freely. That is, "gratuitously." The gift of immortality may be purchased "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1).

7. Overcometh. That is, according to

the Greek, continually conquers, or habitually conquers. The Christian lives the victorious life by the power of the Holy Spirit. He may make mistakes (see on 1 John 2:1), but his normal life presents a picture of spiritual growth (cf. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

All things. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "these things," that is, the promises given in the Revelation, particularly the things mentioned in this chapter.

His God . . . my son. Compare Gen. 17:7; 2 Sam. 7:14. The promise of intimate family connection is here set forth. The sinner saved by grace will be received into the family of God and be brought into a relation as close as if he had never sinned. The inhabitants of unfallen worlds cannot be closer to God and Christ than will be the redeemed sinner. See DA 25, 26.

8. But. A strong contrast is now presented.

Fearful. Gr. *deiloi,* "cowardly," "fearful." The word is always used in the evil sense of cowardice, or unwarranted timidity. Compare its use in Matt. 8:26; Mark 4:40; the related verb in John 14:27; and the related abstract noun in 2 Tim. 1:7. In each instance cowardice is the basic meaning. Owing to cowardice, moral faintheartedness, many fail to overcome in the Christian warfare; they give up in the time of trial. Compare Matt. 24:13.

Unbelieving. That is, those who lack faith, in the sense of not remaining faithful. They do not trust God to the end; they prove to be untrustworthy.

Abominable. Gr. *bdelussō,* "to make foul," "to turn away in disgust from," "to detest," related to the verb *bdeō,* "to stink." The noun *bdelugma* occurs in Luke 16:15; Rev. 17:4, 5; 21:27.

Murderers. These include the persecutors and murderers of God's faithful children throughout history.

Whoremongers. Gr. *pornoi,* "fornicators" (see 1 Cor. 5:9, 10; etc.). The feminine form is translated "harlots" in Matt. 21:31, 32; Luke 15:30. Compare on Eph. 5:3, 5.

Sorcerers. Gr. *pharmakoi,* "practicers of magical arts." Basically, the root refers to magic, enchantment, sorcery, and to the use of drugs to produce a stupefied condition. A modern counterpart of the ancient practice of sorcery is spiritism.

Idolaters. A reference to heathen peoples, as well as to Christians who practice heathenish rites. Compare on 1 Cor. 5:10; 6:9; 10:7.

Liars. Including those who preach false doctrines. See on Ex. 20:16; see PP 309.

Second death. See on ch. 20:6.

9. One of the seven angels. One of the plague-bearing angels had already shown John the judgment of the great harlot (see ch. 17:1). Now, one of them (possibly the same angel, as some suggest) directs John's attention to the New Jerusalem, the center and seat of the eternal kingdom. It is of interest to note that in the first instance it was a plague-bearing angel that presented mystical Babylon to the prophet, whereas now it is one of them who shows him the New Jerusalem. Historically, ancient Babylon and Jerusalem were traditional enemies, and figuratively they represent the two sides of the great controversy between evil and good. The one is represented as a fallen woman (ch. 17:5), the other as an honorable woman (chs. 19:7; 21:2).

The Lamb's wife. See on ch. 19:7; cf. ch. 21:2.

10. In the spirit. That is, in a trance, in vision (see on ch. 1:10). The carrying away was "in a vision" (cf. on Eze. 8:3; Dan. 8:2).

To a great. In vision John seemed to be deposited *upon* a "great," that is, a high mountain. From this vantage point he beheld the details of the city (cf. on Eze. 40:2).

Descending. Compare v. 2.

11. Glory of God. This probably refers to the abiding presence of God with His people throughout eternity. The glory that denotes His presence will never leave the New Jerusalem. Compare Ex. 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11.

Light. Gr. *phōstēr,* "a luminary," "a light-giving body." The word occurs in Phil. 2:15 in the clause, "among whom ye shine as lights [luminaries] in the world." The "light" of the city is the "glory" of God, mentioned in the preceding comment (see Rev. 21:23).

Jasper. Gr. *iaspis* (see on ch. 4:3). The

passage reads literally, "having the glory of God, her luminary, like a stone most precious, as jasper, flashing forth."

Clear as crystal. Gr. *krustallizō*, "to flash forth light," "to scintillate." The English term "crystal" is derived from *krustallizō*.

12. Wall great and high. Such walls were built around ancient cities for protection against enemies. John's imagery is borrowed in part from the description of the city Ezekiel saw (see on Eze. 48:35). The picture is that of an ancient city with walls and gates. These were terms with which the apostle was familiar, and Inspiration chose to reveal the glories of the eternal city to him in terms that he understood. Human language and human portrayals cannot adequately represent the grandeur of that celestial city. In pictorial prophecy the degree of identity between the picture and the actual calls for careful interpretation (see on Eze. 1:10; 40:1).

Twelve gates. Compare the city described by Ezekiel (ch. 48:31-34).

Twelve angels. The New Jerusalem is pictured as having angelic gatekeepers.

Twelve tribes. See Eze. 48:31-34. For the picture of spiritual Israel reckoned by tribes see on Rev. 7:4.

13. On the east three gates. Ezekiel's enumeration is in the order, north, east, south, west (Eze. 48:31-34). John's order is east, north, south, west. The difference is doubtless without significance.

14. Twelve foundations. The number "twelve" is given five times in vs. 12-14. For twelve as a significant number see on ch. 7:4.

Twelve apostles. The NT church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).

15. Reed. Compare Eze. 40:3; Rev. 11:1. Here the act of measuring and the stating of measurements are doubtless to give assurance of the adequacy and sufficiency of the heavenly home (cf. on John 14:2).

16. Foursquare. There is beauty inherent in right proportion, perfect balance, and congruity. For various foursquare items see Ex. 27:1; 28:16; 30:2; 39:9; 2 Chron. 3:8; Eze. 41:21; 43:16; 45:2; 48:20.

Twelve thousand furlongs. A furlong (*stadion*) is about 606 ft. 6 in., or 185 m. (see Vol. V. p. 50). Thus, 12,000 furlongs would be about 1,378.4 mi. (2,218 km.). The text does not state whether this is a measure of the circumference or of one side. If the former, the city would measure about 344.6 mi. (551.4 km.) to a side. For the custom of measuring a city by its circumference see *The Letter of Aristeas* 105. It should be noted that the English furlong is not identical with the *stadion*.

Equal. Various attempts have been made to explain the dimensions of the city. It is difficult to envision a city reaching upward of 12,000 (or 3,000) furlongs (see above on "twelve thousand furlongs"). Some, though not denying the reality of the city, believe that the measurements here, like those of the wall, are "the measure . . . of the angel" (see on v. 17). They hold that it is therefore scarcely possible that human dimensions can here be intended. Others point to a similarity between the size of the city here described and that envisioned by the Jews. This question is discussed thus in the Midrash: "Whence the length and breadth and height [of Jerusalem]? And it enlarged itself and increased ever upward. Eze. 41:7. It has been taught, R. Eli'ezer b. Ja'aqob has said: Jerusalem will ultimately rise up and mount up to the throne of glory, and will say to God: 'Too restricted is my space, recede from me that I may dwell!' Isa. 49:20" (*Pesiqtha* 143a, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3, p. 849).

Still others assign to the word here translated "equal" (*isos*) the meaning "proportion," and believe that although the length and breadth may well be equal, the height will be proportionate to the other dimensions. This is possible, although it is difficult to demonstrate such a definition from either Biblical or classical sources. Another interpretation permits *isos* to retain its normal meaning but observes that the word here translated height (*hupsos*) may mean not only "height" but also "the high part," "the top," "the summit," "the crown." If *hupsos* is understood in this sense, John means that the distance around the top of the wall is the same as that around the bottom.

Whatever uncertainty there may be as to the exact proportion or size of the city, it

is certain that the glories of that celestial city will far exceed the fondest imagination. None need be concerned, for there will be room enough for all who desire residence. In the Father's house there are "many mansions" (John 14:2).

17. Measured the wall. On the basis of the NT cubit, which was about 17½ in. (44.5 cm.) (see Vol. V, p. 50), 144 cu. would be about 210 ft. (64 m.). John does not say that this measurement represents the height of the wall. Some have conjectured that it may be that of its thickness.

Of the angel. In the Greek there is no definite article with "angel." The passage reads, "of a man, even of an angel." The meaning is somewhat obscure. Because of this, some urge we should refrain from dogmatically applying purely human standards of measurement to the New Jerusalem. Whatever the dimensions, we may rest assured that all is perfection. The saints will understand the significance of John's figures when they see the city.

18. Building. Gr. *endomēsis,* "a building in," from *dōmaō,* "to build." The word occurs only here in the NT. Josephus (*Antiquities* xv. 9. 6) uses it of a mole, a sea wall built out into the sea as an inset in the water. Here *endomēsis* may refer to an inset in the wall as though the wall were inlaid, or studded, with jasper.

Jasper. See on ch. 4:3.

Pure gold. The structure of the city appears to have the transparency of glass. Its flashing beauty doubtless changes with every ray of light that falls upon it.

19. Garnished. Gr. *kosmeō,* "to adorn" (cf. on v. 2).

Precious stones. Twelve kinds of precious stones are listed as being in the foundation. Not all of these can be identified by the modern jeweler, nor is much to be gained by making a comparison with the jewels of the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:17-20). Neither ancient sources nor modern scholars agree as to the identification of all the stones. Some of their suggestions are listed below under the respective stones.

Jasper. See on ch. 4:3.

Sapphire. Perhaps lapis lazuli, a transparent or translucent sky-blue stone of great hardness.

Chalcedony. The identification of this stone is uncertain. The RSV reads "agate." Some suggest a gem of greenish color.

Emerald. Believed to be a gem of bright-green color.

20. Sardonyx. Perhaps an onyx with red and brown layers against a white background.

Sardius. Believed to be a reddish-colored gem. The RSV reads "carnelian," a reddish variety of chalcedony.

Chrysolyte. Literally, "golden stone." A yellow-colored stone of uncertain identification.

Beryl. Believed to be a gem of sea-green color.

Topaz. Believed to be a more or less transparent yellow-colored stone used by the ancients for making both seals and gems. Some think the gold-colored chrysolite is meant.

Chrysoprasus. The modern chrysoprase is an apple-green, transparent gem. There is some uncertainty as to whether this is the stone here referred to.

Jacinth. Probably a purple-colored gem. Some identify the jacinth with the modern sapphire.

Amethyst. Thought to be a purple-colored gem.

21. One pearl. The size of the gems listed is beyond human comprehension.

22. Temple. Gr. *naos,* the word for the sanctuary as confined to the holy and most holy places, not including the outer courts and other buildings. For *hieron,* the word for the entire sacred enclosure, see on Luke 2:46; Rev. 3:12.

The earthly sanctuary was symbolic of the dwelling place of God. Because of their sin Adam and Eve were driven from Eden and the presence of God. When sin has been removed, the church will again be able to dwell in His presence, and no structure will be required to symbolize the dwelling of God.

23. No need. Light-giving bodies will not be imperative for the illumination of the city. The glorious effulgence of the presence of God will give more than sufficient light (cf. Isa. 60:19, 20). Material things are not indispensable in God's plan; in His presence they are put to shame (cf. Isa. 24:23). Created light cannot outshine

the uncreated glory of the divine presence.

24. Nations. A description of the redeemed from "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9; cf. Isa. 60:3, 5).

Kings. The picture is drawn from the OT (see Isa. 60:11).

25. No night. Doubtless because of the circumstances mentioned in v. 23 (cf. on Zech. 14:7).

26. Of the nations. Compare v. 24.

27. Any thing that defileth. Doubtless an allusion to Isa. 52:1. Much of the imagery in John's description of the Holy City is borrowed from the writings of ancient prophets who described the glories of the Jerusalem that might have been. John is describing the city that will be (see on Eze. 48:35).

Worketh abomination. See on v. 8.

Maketh a lie. See on v. 8.

Book of life. See on Phil. 4:3.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 AH 539; GC 674; PP 62; SR 430
1, 2 Ed 301
1-27 1T 67-71
2 AA 591; EW 18, 31, 291; GC 427, 663
3 AA 592; DA 26; Ed 302; MB 108
3, 4 GC 676; SR 431
4 AA 602; AH 543, 544; CG 568; Ed 302; EW 289; MB 17; MH 506, 508; ML 153, 348, 349, 355; SR 413; 8T 42, 45; 9T 287
6 Ed 83; EW 279; FE 363; 1T 484
6, 7 GC 540
8 2T 630; 4T 336
9, 10 EW 251; GC 426
10-14 EW 18, 291
11 GC 676; SR 431
11, 12 AA 591
18, 19 ML 357
21, 22 AA 592
22 GC 676; ML 365; SR 432
23 Ed 301; EW 170, 179, 286; ML 357
24 GC 676
27 AA 76; CH 103, 285; GC 474, 481; MB 24; ML 321; MM 144, 268; PK 84; PP 326; SL 31; Te 69; TM 149; 5T 278, 331, 384, 475

CHAPTER 22

1 *The river of the water of life.* 2 *The tree of life.* 5 *The light of the city of God is himself.* 9 *The angel will not be worshipped.* 18 *Nothing may be added to the word of God, nor taken therefrom.*

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them.* And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

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1. Pure river. The angel had shown John the exterior of the city (ch. 21:10), and now calls his attention to certain things in the interior. Compare Ezekiel's description of the river (see on Eze. 47:1).

Clear. Gr. *lampros,* "brilliant," "bright." Compare the use of the word in Luke 23: 11; Acts 10:30; Rev. 15:6; 19:8; 22:16.

Out of the throne. Compare on Eze. 47:1; Zech. 14:8.

2. Tree of life. Compare Ezekiel's "many trees" (see on Eze. 47:7, 12). For the tree in the original Garden of Eden see on Gen. 2:9. For its subsequent history see 8T 288, 289. The tree is a symbol of eternal life from the source of life. Compare Rev. 21:10 with PP 62; GC 645, 648; EGW Supplementary Material on Rev. 22:2.

Twelve . . . fruits. There will be a constant abundance, sufficient to fill all the life needs of the saved throughout eternity. Compare Eze. 47:12.

Healing. Gr. *therapeia,* "service," "healing," sometimes, collectively, "household attendants." There are only four occurrences of the word in the NT (cf. Matt. 24:45; Luke 9:11; 12:42). In classical Greek *therapeia* has the various meanings of "service," "nurture," "care." For the function of the tree of life in Eden restored see references above under "tree of life."

3. Curse. Gr. *katathēma,* "the thing [or "person"] cursed." The word is probably to be distinguished from *anathēma,* a curse pronounced as a sentence upon some thing or some person.

Throne. This suggests that God and Christ will reign in the city. This is possible because no accursed thing will be found there.

Shall serve. Gr. *latreuō,* "to serve," "to worship," "to minister." The word refers to normal, natural, spontaneous serving, and is distinguished from *leitourgeō,* the word that means official service, service in an appointed office (see Ex. 29:30, LXX).

4. See his face. An expression denoting intimate relations with another person, and mutual confidence. See Ps. 17:15; Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 3:2. Compare the experience of Moses (Ex. 33:20-23).

In their foreheads. Rather, "upon their foreheads." The divine name in the forehead is a symbol of ownership and authentication. The saints' entire consecration in a life of worship to God is here stressed (see chs. 7:3; 13:16).

5. No night. This verse draws a word picture emphasizing the insignificance of created luminaries in the presence of God. These will pale into nothingness in the presence of the glory of the divine person (see on ch. 21:23).

Giveth them light. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "will illuminate them." This condition represents a re-establishment and recommencement of harmonious relations, which relations had been severed by sin.

They shall reign. Compare ch. 5:10. This does not mean they will reign over one another, nor over other worlds. It is probably, rather, a figure of the felicity of the redeemed. No longer will they be under the oppressive hand of some persecuting power. They will enjoy the freedom and abundance of kings.

6. Faithful and true. A statement of the trustworthiness and genuineness of God's revelation; the prophecy as given by the angel is authentic.

Of the holy prophets. Textual evidence attests (cf. p. 10) the reading "of the spirits of the prophets." The "spirits of the prophets" may be regarded as a reference to the prophets' own spirits under the control of the Holy Spirit when they were in vision. The Holy Spirit illumined John's spirit as He had the spirits of the OT prophets (see ch. 1:10). The entire Revelation is a testimony to the control of John's spirit in vision by the Holy Spirit.

7. Quickly. The angel is quoting Jesus. The reference is to the second coming. See on ch. 1:1.

Blessed. Another of the seven beatitudes of Revelation (cf. chs. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14).

The sayings. That is, the various counsels and warnings of the book.

8. Saw. The passage reads literally, "I John, the one seeing these things and hearing."

Fell down to worship. Perhaps as an act of homage, which act the angel rejected. The grandeur of the vision must have completely overwhelmed the prophet and made him feel extremely humble. Moreover, the angel had been quoting Jesus Christ as if the Lord Himself were speaking.

9. Fellowservant. See on ch. 19:10.

Which keep the sayings. Compare ch. 19:10, where apparently the same group is described as "thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." "The sayings of this book" are the testimony of Jesus (see on ch. 1:2).

Worship God. See on ch. 14:7.

10. Seal not. This is opposite to the command given Daniel concerning his book (see on Dan. 12:4). The messages of the book of Revelation were not to be sealed, in view of the fact that "the time is at hand." This had not been true in Daniel's day. The words "seal not" are a negative statement that means, in substance, "Publish the sayings of the prophecy of this book far and wide."

The time is at hand. See on ch. 1:1, 3.

11. Unjust. The verse reads literally, "The one doing unrighteousness, let him do unrighteousness still; and the filthy one, let him be made filthy still; and the righteous one, let him do righteousness still; and the holy one, let him be made holy still." These words are especially applicable to the time when each person's future is irrevocably settled. Such a decree comes at the close of the investigative judgment (see on ch. 14:7). Some see a wider application in these statements by comparing them with the words of Christ in the parable of the Tares: "Let both grow together until the harvest" (Matt. 13:30). The free will of man is not to be interfered with. Men are to be permitted to live the life of their own choosing, so that their true character may become apparent. Each person of each age will be made manifest in respect to the class in which he belongs, at the second coming of Christ.

12. I come quickly. See on v. 7.

Reward. Gr. *misthos,* "hire," "wages," "that which is due." Compare the use of the word in Matt. 5:12, 46; 20:8; 2 Peter 2:13.

To give. Gr. *apodidōmi,* "to pay off," "to discharge what is due," "to recompense."

Work. Gr. *ergon,* "an act done." The singular number suggests that the word is used collectively of the acts that make up the life as a whole that a person has lived. The effects of the grace of Christ or of the rejection of that grace are also taken into account when the "work" of man is examined (see on Eze. 18:22, 24).

13. Alpha and Omega. These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, used as descriptive of the Lord as the Creator of all things and as the beginning and final revelation of God to men (cf. on ch. 1:8).

Beginning and the end. All created things owe their existence to Christ; all things find their end in relation to Him. Compare on Col. 1:16, 17.

First and the last. The working out of the plan of salvation from first to last is bound up in Christ Jesus. The three titles of this verse gather up the activities of Christ in relation to man's salvation (cf. on ch. 1:17).

14. Blessed. Another blessing upon the faithful (see on v. 7).

That do his commandments. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading "that wash their robes." A few manuscripts read "that washed their robes." Of the early uncials (see Vol. V, pp. 114-116) only the Sinaiticus and the Alexandrinus contain this section of Revelation, and both of these read "that wash their robes." Most of the minuscule manuscripts read "that do his commandments." The ancient versions are divided in their readings, as are the patristic quotations. The two clauses are very similar in the Greek, and it is easy to see how a scribe may have mistaken the one clause for the other, although it is impossible to know certainly which was the original reading. The following transliteration will show the similarity:

hoi poiountes tas entolas autou, "that keep his commandments."

hoi plunontes tas stolas autōn, "that wash their robes."

In actual fact both readings suit the context and are in harmony with John's teaching elsewhere. On the subject of keeping the commandments see Rev. 12:17; 14:12; cf. John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3-6. On the subject of washing robes see Rev. 7:14, where a company of saints is described as having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Our title to heaven is the righteousness of Christ imputed: our fitness for heaven, the righteousness of Christ imparted, represented by the washed robes. The outward evidence of the righteousness of Christ imparted is perfect compliance with the commandments of God. Hence the two ideas of washed robes and obedience to commandments are closely related.

In the light of the problems of translation here discussed, it would seem wise to build the foundations of the doctrine of obedience to God's commandments on those other passages of Scripture dealing with obedience on which no question of textual evidence has been raised. There are many such.

For a more complete study of this problem see *Problems in Bible Translation,* pp. 257-262.

The Greek word for "robes" is *stolai,* used of outer, flowing garments, marking a man of distinction. Compare the use of the word in Mark 12:38; 16:5; Luke 15:22; 20:46. The same Greek word is used in the LXX for the holy garments of Aaron and his descendants (Ex. 28:2; 29:21). Our English word "stole" is derived from *stolē.* "Stole" originally designated a long, loose garment reaching down to the feet; later, an ecclesiastical vestment of silk, worn around the neck and falling from the shoulders.

Right. Gr. *exousia,* "liberty," "privilege," "right." It is to be the saints' privilege and liberty to partake of the tree of life and to enjoy immortality with Jesus Christ (cf. on v. 2).

Enter in. This is a further privilege. The New Jerusalem is to be the capital of the new earth (see GC 676).

15. Dogs. A figure for a vile, shameless person (see on Phil. 3:2).

Sorcerers. For the category of sinners here enumerated see on ch. 21:8.

16. I Jesus. Jesus authenticates the revelations recorded in the Apocalypse. See on ch. 1:1.

Mine angel. See on ch. 1:1.

Root and the offspring of David. See on ch. 5:5.

The bright and morning star. The figure is probably taken from the prophecy of Balaam (Num. 24:17). Compare Peter's reference to Christ as the "day star" (2 Peter 1:19). The messages to the churches of all ages can have no greater authentication than that here given.

17. Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the one who energizes the Christian life of the believers, who gives them the strength to live the victorious life, to overcome the devil, and to go safely through the time of trouble.

Bride. Doubtless the same figure here as in ch. 21:9, 10 (see comment there).

Say. Or, "are saying," or "keep on saying."

Come. Most commentators consider this a response to the promise of Jesus in v. 12, "Behold, I come quickly." Christ is petitioned to fulfill His promise. This is a possible interpretation. It is possible also to understand the address as an appeal to the unbelieving world to accept the gospel.

Him that heareth. The singular number designates the individual. Men will be saved as individuals, not as churches or congregations. Salvation is strictly personal. In the NT the word translated "hear" (*akouō*) generally carries the thought of hearing effectively, that is, of hearing and obeying the message heard. Such is its meaning here. Only those who hear and accept the message are qualified to repeat the call. See on Matt. 7:24.

Let him. The singular suggests that each church member as an individual must add his cry of welcome, thus publicly displaying his eager longing for the second advent and his desire that others shall enjoy the blessings of Christ.

Athirst. That is, for the things of God (cf. ch. 21:6). See on Matt. 5:6.

Come. An exhortation for each needy one to take advantage of the promise of ch. 21:6.

Whosoever will. The offer is universal. No one is excluded from the possibilities of salvation. Christ is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). The false doctrine that certain ones are elected to be lost is denied by the revelator's statement (see on Rom. 8:29).

Water of life. Whosoever wishes to inherit immortality is invited to take of it. The living water is offered to all (see on ch. 21:6; cf. Isa. 55:1-3).

Freely. Or, "gratuitously."

18. I testify. The speaker is Jesus (see v. 20). His testimony must be accepted.

Every man. Man's relation to God and His message is a personal matter. One cannot accept another's responsibility in such things.

Heareth. Not a reference to the mere falling of the sound of the words of this book upon one's ear; rather, an allusion to one who hears and studies the import of the messages (see on ch. 1:3).

Of the prophecy. John is speaking of additions to the book of Revelation, though the same would apply to any book of the Sacred Canon.

Add. Compare Deut. 4:2; 12:32. Jesus is authenticating this book of the Revelation; He warns against deliberate changes in the message of the book. Josephus says concerning the 22 books constituting the Hebrew OT: "For, although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable" (*Against Apion* i. 8 [42]; Loeb ed., pp. 179, 180).

God shall add. In justice, God can do no other than to give to each his due, in harmony with his works.

19. Take away from. The one who takes away from the words of the Revelation is equally guilty with the one who adds to the words (see on v. 18).

Take away his part. The guilty one in this case will suffer three major losses: (1) the loss of immortality, and the consequent suffering of eternal death; (2) loss of any part in the corporate life of the city of the new earth; (3) loss of all the blessings and promises of the Revelation. A complete and staggering loss is here presented that nothing in this life can even remotely compensate for.

20. He which testifieth. That is, Christ. The specific reference is to the testimony in vs. 18, 19.

Surely. Gr. *nai*, a term of strong affirmation, like the Old English "verily."

Quickly. The Master reaffirms the surety and imminence of His second coming (see chs. 3:11; 22:7, 12; see on ch. 1:1).

Amen. Compare chs. 1:6, 7, 18; 3:14; 5:14; 7:12; 19:4. For the meaning of the term see on Matt. 5:18. This Amen is probably spoken by the apostle. If so it should be connected with what follows thus: "Amen, come, O Lord Jesus."

Come, Lord Jesus. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the reading, "come, Lord Jesus Christ." This exclamation is John's response to the testimony of Jesus, who assures the apostle that He is coming quickly (cf. on ch. 1:1). John was probably reminded of that night in the upper room, more than half a century before, when he heard Jesus declare, "I will come again" (John 14:3), and of that day a few weeks later, on the Mount of Olives, when he had

heard the angels say, "this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Now, while in holy vision, John is given one last assurance that his blessed Lord is to return, and that, quickly. This assurance comes from the lips of his Master Himself, the faithful and true witness. His heart thrills at the words, and with eager anticipation he looks forward to the day when in reality, not in vision, he will see his blessed Lord face to face.

21. The grace. This verse is a benediction, deep from the heart of the apostle, reaching out to all who read the words of his visions. The benediction is similar to that used by Paul in concluding his epistles (see Rom. 16:24; 1 Cor. 16:23; 2 Cor. 13: 14; etc.). The words form a fitting climax to the canon of Scripture, appearing as they do at the end of the collection of sacred books as we know them.

Christ. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word.

You all. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading "all the saints." Textual evidence may also be cited for the reading "the saints." The word "saints" occurs frequently throughout the Revelation (see chs. 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; etc.).

Amen. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this word.

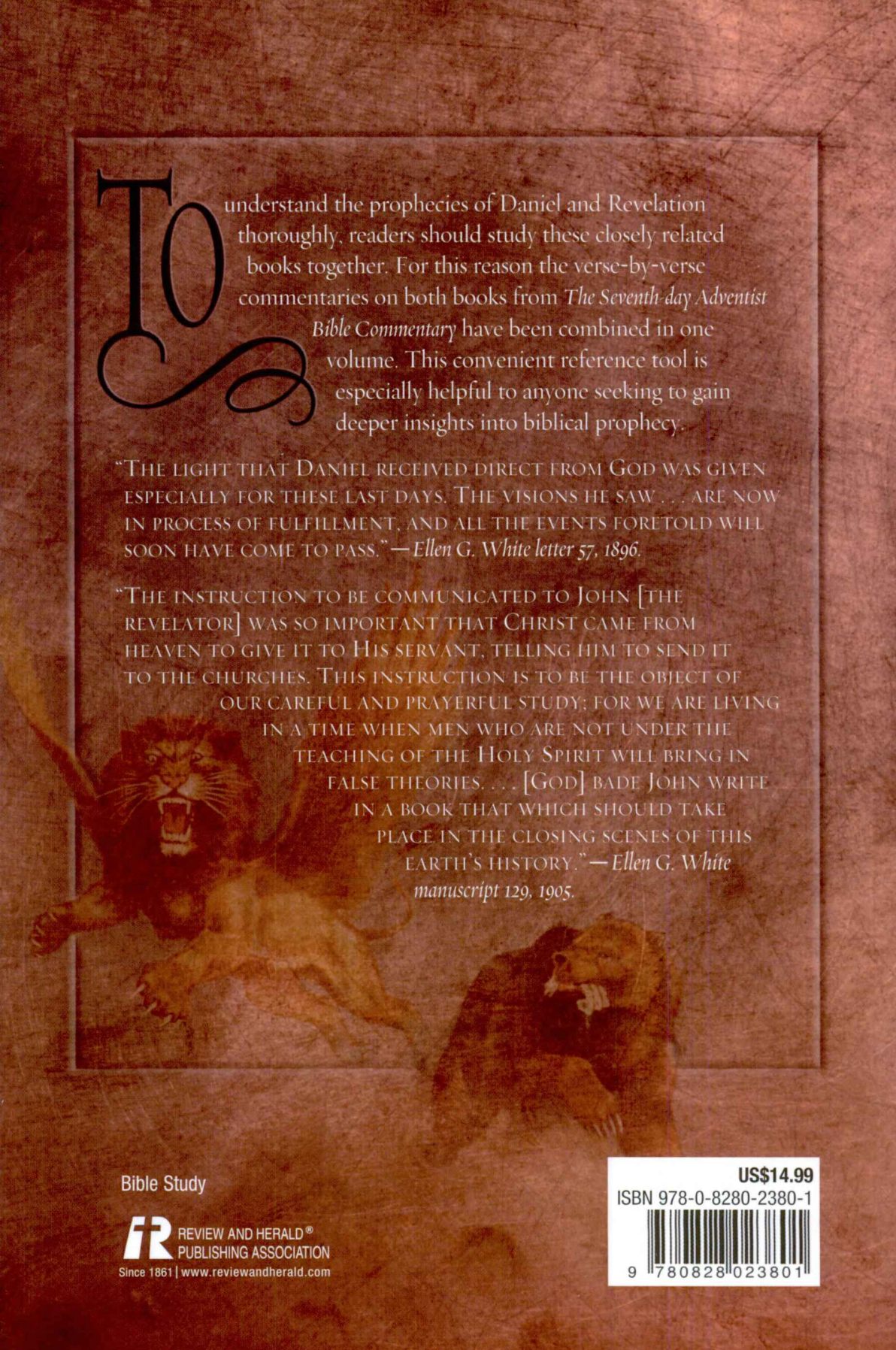
ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1 ML 357; PP 413
1, 2 Ed 302; EW 17, 289; LS 67; 1T 61
1-5 AA 592; EW 31
1-21 1T 67-71
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18, 19 GC 268
18-20 AA 583
20 CH 539; GC 302

To understand the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation thoroughly, readers should study these closely related books together. For this reason the verse-by-verse commentaries on both books from *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* have been combined in one volume. This convenient reference tool is especially helpful to anyone seeking to gain deeper insights into biblical prophecy.

"The light that Daniel received direct from God was given especially for these last days. The visions he saw . . . are now in process of fulfillment, and all the events foretold will soon have come to pass." —*Ellen G. White letter 57, 1896.*

"The instruction to be communicated to John [the revelator] was so important that Christ came from heaven to give it to His servant, telling him to send it to the churches. This instruction is to be the object of our careful and prayerful study; for we are living in a time when men who are not under the teaching of the Holy Spirit will bring in false theories. . . . [God] bade John write in a book that which should take place in the closing scenes of this earth's history." —*Ellen G. White manuscript 129, 1905.*



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