

**THE  
REVELATION  
(or Apocalypse)  
OF JESUS CHRIST**

**An Introduction, with  
Summaries, Outlines,  
and Study Notes**

**George Booker  
Western Christadelphian Bible School  
July 28 — August 3, 1991**

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## INTRODUCTION

The summaries, outlines, and brief notes that follow should in no way be considered a complete exposition of the Revelation, or Apocalypse. At the most, they are pointers toward a more detailed personal study, which each of us is obligated to do for himself or herself. A number of "loose ends" remain in this exposition, but I do not apologize for that: Each student should be left with many things to think about, and that is all to the good!

I have read almost everything that Bro. John Thomas wrote, including *Eureka* completely through twice. I have also read extensively other writings on Revelation (including those of Bre. Harry Whittaker, Alfred Norris, Peter Watkins, and Norm Fadelle). Most importantly, I believe, I have tried to compare Scripture with Scripture and think for myself.

I admit there are many things about Revelation which I do not understand. Some of what I think I do understand I have attempted to communicate here. But everything here is by its very nature only suggestion; I do not wish to be — or appear — dogmatic in the least.

Bro. Thomas was a truly remarkable Bible student, to whom we all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. But so many things have happened in the world over the last century! To expound the Book of Revelation in a Last Days context, he probably should have contrived somehow to be born 100 years later! If, however, he had been born in 1905 rather than 1805 (after someone else had "discovered the Truth" and perhaps expounded Revelation along the continuous-historical lines common in the 18th and 19th centuries), then his exposition of that Book from a twentieth-century perspective would probably have met with considerable opposition. We treat our dead "prophets" much more respectfully than our living ones! But it has always been so (Matt. 23:29-31; Luke 11:47,48).

I must say this also for the record: No matter how my comments or writings might be taken by anyone, it is not my wish to criticize or belittle those who hold other opinions. I trust those who hold other opinions will respect my right to express my ideas — so long as they are not inconsistent with the First Principles of the Faith — just as I respect their rights to hold and express their ideas. A proper appreciation of Biblical fellowship should teach us that true unity of faith is achieved just as much by diversity in non-essentials (such as much of our interpretations of Last Days prophecy) as it is by unanimity in essentials.

George Booker

# HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE APOCALYPSE

1. Pray to God for wisdom (James 1:5, Matt 7:7) believing 2Tim 3:16.
2. Read every chapter in the book for yourself, thoroughly; it is essential that you familiarize yourself with the contents
3. Allow the book to explain itself; several definitions are given, and similar descriptions recur, implying the same or similar happenings
4. Use clear, simple passages to aid in unravelling the meaning of less clear, more complex passages
5. Be consistent in your interpretation; you can't force two different meanings on a symbol or time period, in the same context
6. Remember that any conclusions must be in harmony with known basic principles of God's truth as revealed in the rest of the Bible
7. Follow up the O.T. & N.T. cross references, which can be especially enlightening, with due regard for context
8. By all means consult other books and commentaries for their suggestions and conclusions, but make sure that your research is objective and critical
9. And by all means discuss your own conclusions with others, and attend Bible classes and/or seminars like this one; but remember that your ideas must find solid support in Scripture and you should be willing to change if something better is demonstrated -- after all, you are looking for Truth

(Norm Fadelle, Study Notes)

## PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

1. The Book of Revelation is understandable, because God gave it as revealed Scripture, not concealed
2. There is nothing in Revelation that God did not set up the groundwork and background for in the rest of the Bible
3. The meaning of any symbolism can be, indeed, must be, found in O.T. and N.T. source passages
4. The text should be allowed to interpret itself, and this should take precedent over other contending interpretations



5. Any interpretation should be consistent with what has already been understood or determined to be
6. Any interpretation must be in harmony with well-established principles of God's Truth
7. There can be more than one "application" of a passage, as long as it has valid Biblical support
8. Reference to History as confirmation to an interpretation is allowable, and ultimately necessary to prove the accuracy of any interpretation involving the future
9. However, unless there is a plain directive from Scripture to look at any particular date or event, Historical evidence must be regarded as assumptive & speculative
10. Any interpretation that involves future events is necessarily unconfirmable until such events take place; but that does not mean that one has a totally uncertain interpretation, since the Return of Christ, a future event, is very certain!
11. God has placed more importance, and consequently has given more details, on the coming of Christ (both first & second) than any other Biblical event. Therefore we can expect the Revelation to have a great amount of detail about events in and around the 2nd coming of Christ
12. Without ignoring prophetic patterns and applications to past ages, the Revelation is particularly relevant to the faithful living in "the last days" and contains information that can/will have a direct impact on the 20th century
13. No one can work out an exact timetable of what God said He would do, even though "God reveals His secret to His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7). However, a general framework is both reasonable and possible
14. The book is not necessarily in chronological order; it will be apparent that some events are concurrent, and may even include "gaps" of time, ie, whole periods are skipped

(Norm Fadelle, Study Notes)

## **THE "CERTAIN", THE "PROBABLE", AND THE "POSSIBLE" IN THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY**

**THE CERTAIN.** A fulfillment of prophecy can only be regarded as certain, for our finite and imperfect minds, when the fulfillment has already come about, or when its terms are absolutely incapable of any meaning save one: both factors would make our assurance doubly sure. Thus, we know that 2 Samuel 7.12-16 and its counterpart in 1 Chronicles 17.11-14 were in part fulfilled in Solomon, because David so understood it in part (2 Chronicles 28.6) as did Solomon himself (2 Chronicles 6.9-11). We know that it



was not entirely fulfilled in Solomon because David clearly looked beyond Solomon's time (2 Samuel 7.19), and because the New Testament tells us explicitly that it referred to Jesus (Acts 13.33; Hebrews 1.5). Again, we know that the Bible promises the literal return of the Jews to the land of Israel, and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth, and many other such things plainly taught in Scripture because the terms of these prophecies do not admit of any other faithful interpretation.

**THE PROBABLE.** A fulfilment can be regarded as probable when the events we see in history are seen to correspond closely with the terms of a prophecy. Thus, it is hard to see that we could be mistaken in regarding the presence of some millions of Jews in the Holy Land today as, in part at least, a fulfilment of the prophecies of their return. It is probable, too, that this heralds the near return of the Lord. Some prophecies about the return of Israel to the land contain such apparently plain indications that they must suffer great afflictions before the final deliverance from their enemies (Ezekiel 36-39; Zechariah 14), that we consider it probable that they will in fact suffer in this way.

**THE POSSIBLE.** Things "possible" may have all degrees of likelihood from high probability to being highly unlikely, and the decision we come to in any particular case is bound to be in some degree subjective. We can hardly expect absolute unanimity, even among those sharing the same doctrinal foundation. Thus, to take an example already referred to, it is possible to regard the "sun, moon and stars" of Revelation 6.12-13 as referring to the nation of Israel; it is also possible to doubt this, since the symbols are certainly not invariably used in this sense in Scripture. Which conclusion we come to (if we come to a precise conclusion at all) is not, however, of the first importance, since other passages state in plain terms what may or may not here be intended by the symbols. Indeed, it is not at all unlikely that we are sometimes moved to understand symbols in a particular way because we have already concluded on what are quite different grounds that certain things are true: in that event it is not the symbols which are teaching us, but we who are reading (right or wrong) our own meaning into them. This fault is more common than we sometimes realize, and we should be on our guard against it.

Within the category of 'possible', too, must be put all detailed predictions of things yet future which are not most categorically defined in Scripture itself — unless, indeed, our predictions are so outrageous as not to be thought possible at all. And in view of the fact that the New Testament often provides us with interpretations of Old Testament prophecies which we should not have thought of for ourselves (such as those of Hosea 11.1 in Matthew 2.15; and of Jeremiah 31.15 in Matthew 2.18), we need to be very careful before we pronounce an interpretation impossible. Even so, since it required the guidance of the Holy Spirit to enable New Testament writers to offer such interpretations to us, we might feel that our own feet should remain firmly on the ground when we are disposed to adventure our own understanding of Scripture's prophecies.

Since we will be meeting events which certainly lie in the future — even though the time interval may not be large — it follows that detailed interpretations are bound to be speculative in some degree, even when they are offered at all. It might even be that no detailed interpretation is possible. But this is not in itself to be regarded as any weakness in the expository basis: it may simply be that information is inadequate for any assurance as to the meaning until the events have actually occurred.

To this it cannot properly be objected that a prophecy which one can only understand when it has happened is of little use. For in the first place its general tenor may be plain even when the detail is not; and in the second place it can be very valuable and reassuring to know that we have reached a certain point in the fulfilment of God's purpose, and can look forward now to the next stage.

(A.D. Norris, *Apocalypse for Everyman*, pp. 131-133).

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# THE STUDY OF PROPHECY

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GEORGE BOOKER

THERE ARE many with an intense interest in the study of prophecy, and everything possible should be done to encourage them. However, as the years pass and divergent interpretations become more frequent, it seems that the entire subject has become a stumbling-block for some. There seem to be more and more who are hindered rather than helped by the uncertainty of conflicting opinions. Is this because we sometimes lose sight of the true purpose of Bible prophecy, to prepare us for the coming of Christ? An open policy in regard to non-essentials is a good thing, certainly better than a strict adherence to tradition, come what may. But let each writer or speaker be careful to point out that in such areas his predictions are his alone and are not infallible. Let each conjecture be "salted with (a grain of) salt"; thereby the failures will be less likely to produce cynicism or reflect unfavourably on the indisputable truths.

There are probably many in the Brotherhood who would say, "I have no head for prophecy". To them we would reply, "Perhaps not, but have you a heart for Christ? Surely if you love Christ, you will love his appearing although you think you have no capacity for prophetic exercises". An affectionate wife may have no head for her husband's business affairs, but she has a heart for his return from the office each evening. His appointment book may baffle her, but she knows his footstep and recognises his voice. The saint who feels lost in the Apocalyptic realm should not take pride in his ignorance, of course. But neither should he be unduly discouraged. If only he has affection for his Lord and Master, and a firm resolve to keep his commandments, even the novice may entertain the most fervent desire to see him. The paramount hope of each of us is to be accepted by Christ when he comes, not to guess correctly what will happen before he arrives.

Paul said to the Thessalonian brethren by

way of commendation, "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). Evidently, these new brethren had quite an imperfect knowledge of prophecy, since they were perplexed about the "simple" matter of resurrection in the Divine timetable (4:13). Yet at the same time, they were in perfect possession of the greatest hope of the ecclesia—even the coming of the Son. Let us by all means study prophecy, and even disagree if we must; but let us not lose sight of our objective. Let us emphasise the unencumbered hope of the true believer, the return of the Bridegroom. This simple desire, not the names and the numbers, is the spirit and essence of all Bible prophecy.

Robert Roberts succinctly expressed this thought: "The signs of the times—the events and movements among the nations that indicate the near approach of the Lord... are very interesting and challenge research while we are waiting; but let him appear, and that instant we shall cease all care about the drying of the Turco-Euphrates, the increasing aggrandisement of Russia, etc." (*My Days and My Ways*, p. 221).

At some point in the near future, all our personal appraisals of current events will become suddenly meaningless; we will stand before Christ awaiting his direction—to the right or to the left. If our present study of God's Word, whether prophecy or otherwise, has not prepared us, and helped us to prepare others, for that awesome day, then it will have been time wasted. Prophecy is devalued in its fulfilment, but faith and hope and love abide forever. If our lives have manifested these qualities, it will hardly matter that we may have been wrong in some of our political expectations. We now know only in part, but then by the Father's grace we shall know even as also we are known.

(G. Booker, *Testimony*, July 1978)



## Observations by Bro. Thomas Williams on the Scholarship of Bro. John Thomas

Dr. Thomas's writings hold a unique place in the literature of the truth. It is not, however, my purpose to pronounce a eulogy on his work, but as he is depreciated by some, I wish to say that to those who have an enlightened appreciation of the truth, they will ever occupy a foremost place as the work of one who was an expositor of the first order, an historical student of great industry in the line in which he worked, and from the knowledge of the past, coupled with the light of prophecy, he could largely forecast the future.

That Dr. Thomas, however, has made mistakes it would be vain to conceal. If he had not erred he would have been above ordinary mortals, and in fixing the coming of Christ in 1868, or thereabouts, he certainly erred. Had he been alive he would have changed his mind

and corrected what has proved wrong, in accordance with his own saying, "that a wise man will change his mind but a fool never." Dr. Thomas was a thoughtful and careful writer, as his writings very well show, but his fault lay in an over confidence in dealing with the periods which relate to the future. He had the experience of clearing up difficulties which had baffled other chronologists, and his chronological tables are marvels of masterly treatment and patient research. It is one thing, however, to write positively of the past, but hazardous to write confidently of the future, and this should have inspired him with cautiousness.

*Thomas Williams  
From The Christadelphian  
Advocate July, 1896*

### "DO WE KNOW MEN LIKE THIS?"

When God's Son did appear in Israel, many Jews — including most of the really "religious" Jews — were still unprepared. The circumstances of the Lord's coming were dramatically different from what they had expected. And the Messiah who appeared was radically different from the "Messiah" they had come to expect. And so they actually hated him and rejected him, bringing condemnation upon themselves.

Why were the people of Israel not prepared? What went wrong? Let Paul explain:

**"For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him" (Acts 13:27).**

"They knew him not!" They did not recognize the One for whom they and their forefathers had been looking for hundreds of years. And this, despite the fact they they *did* read the Old Testament Scriptures about him "every sabbath day".

They would have read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 time after time, but they gained nothing from their reading. Because their minds were filled with their own ideas about the coming Deliverer, they were not open to receive the truths revealed in those Bible passages. They could not receive the teaching that their Saviour would be despised and suffer — they read but they did not understand; and, ironically, they became the very people who despised him and caused him to suffer. And so they fulfilled these scriptures to their own confusion.

These "religious" Jews read their Bibles as a solemn duty, a ritual performed most regularly and carefully. Probably the mere physical exercise of reading the words made them feel good. But, sadly, it was all a deception and a snare. They did not read to gain instruction: they thought they knew all the answers already. And because they regarded themselves as a holy people, full of wisdom and knowledge, they were altogether unaware of how unreceptive they were. Those truths they did not like, the truths which would have prepared them to receive their Messiah when he appeared, were automatically rejected.

***Do we know men like this?*** Is it just possible that we, today, are shutting our minds to unpleasant or difficult truths when we read our Bibles? We should face the possibility that our mental picture of the coming Christ, and our ideas about the events related to his appearing, may be shaped at least in part by human prejudice. And it is just possible that our prejudiced acceptance of certain traditions, and our prejudiced rejection of certain Bible teachings, may be as dangerous to our spiritual well-being as the similar prejudices of earlier generation in Israel were to theirs.

How can we *know* if this is true of us? The only proper answer is this: *Those who truly love Christ's appearing (as distinct from those who love to talk about it, and those who love to have others think they love it) will always read their Bibles with open minds, and will always be willing to be taught further from its pages, especially as regards its prophecies of the Messiah's Coming!*



How amazing that some of those who, in other settings, readily approve of the principle that the Bible must be the ultimate authority, seem to forget that this principle also applies to the Bible's prophecies about the Last Days.

Past Bible students have sounded out similar warnings against a "comfortable", "traditional" reading of the Bible:

*"All writers and speakers must be unceremoniously tried by this [the Word of God]; for, God hath said, that 'if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them'. It matters not who the sinner may be; pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, minister, or their*

*admirers; or, even one of the saints of God, or an angel himself; nothing he may say, or write, must be received unless in strict conformity to this word; and of this the people must judge for themselves upon their own responsibility; and in the face of their eternal weal [well-being], or rejection from the Kingdom of God. To this Book [the Bible], then, we appeal for light — for information concerning the things which shall be hereafter"*  
(John Thomas, *Elpis Israel*, 1847, p. 170).

These words, written over 140 years ago, are powerful reminders of what must be the measure of our prophetic understanding and the direction of our lives: **for Christ is coming soon!**

(Extracted from *The Watchman*, July 1991)

## THE PROBLEM OF JOEL?

When did the prophet Joel speak and write? Understandably, on the answer to this question depends much of the interpretation of his book. And yet a brief review of Christadelphian expositors shows a remarkable diversity on this question. There are at least six views of the matter:

<u>Context</u>	<u>Primary Fulfillment</u>	<u>Secondary Fulfillment</u>	<u>Reference</u>
1. Jehoshaphat (860-850 BC)	A period of drought during his reign, and a series of devastating locust plagues towards the end of that period (ch. 1). Then, the impending invasion of the great Arab confederacy (ch. 2; 2 Chron. 20).	From 2:18 onwards. An invasion from the north, but with a distinctly Arab flavor: the 'nations round about' (3:11,12, RV). Cp. 3:4-8 with Psa. 83:6-8.	E. Whittaker & T. Benson ( <i>Testimony</i> , 46:387-392).
2. Jehoash (840-830 BC)	The 4 great Gentile oppressors of Israel — Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome — depicted by four phases of a locust plague. (No immediate fulfillment.)	The invasion of Gog, etc. (Ezek. 38), with emphasis on the composite character of the Northern Host (combining qualities of all four 'world' empires).	F. Pearce ( <i>Christadelphian</i> , 112:263,264).
3. Uzziah (810-800 BC)	Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and Rome. (No immediate fulfillment.)	Much the same as #2.	T. Sutton ( <i>Testimony</i> 5:407-409).
4a. Hezekiah (710-700 BC)	Sennacherib's invasion from the north.	The Northern Host in its role as "the latter-day Assyrian".	W.H. Boulton ( <i>Chdn.</i> 43:245-249); J. Doble ( <i>Shield</i> , 1977); J. Thomas ( <i>Eureka</i> , 1:44).
4b. Hezekiah (710-700 BC)	Sennacherib, as above.	Latter-day Arab invasion of Israel.	H.A. Whittaker, <i>Joel</i> , 3-7.
5a. Josiah (630-612 BC)	Four successive steps of the the Babylonian captivity.	The great Northern Army, synonymous with "Babylon" (?).	E.M. Spongberg, <i>Joel</i> , 7-12.
5b. Josiah (630-612 BC)	Babylonian invasion.	Arab invasion of Israel in the last days.	B. Chambers, unpublished article.
6. Jehoiakim, or Zedekiah (612-586 BC)	Babylonian invasion (as in #5).	The same as #5.	C. Parry, <i>Joel</i> , 3-7.

A seventh view is taken by Bro. Edgar Wille (*Christadelphian*, 104:317), who says: "There [is] no doubt that the original northern army (v. 20) was a terrible plague of locusts which brought Israel (i.e. Judah) to their knees *at some unspecified time in the past.*"

Such views of the historical context drastically affect the possible primary fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, as well as the potential secondary, or latter-day, fulfillment.

A final point: If so many can disagree as to the application of a prophecy of which the initial fulfillment is already *past*, then is it any wonder that they disagree on the *future* fulfillments of other prophecies? And if such disagreement has been tolerated on the interpretation of Joel without any noticeable undermining of the real foundations of the Truth, then why should it be thought intolerable that brethren disagree, for example, on the date and interpretation of Revelation?

(Extracted from G. Booker, *Testimony*, 49:250-252)

## EXAMPLES OF BIBLE PROPHECY WITH MORE THAN ONE FULFILLMENT

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Isaiah 2:10-22              | a. Earthquake in Uzziah's reign (Amos 1:1.2; Zechariah 14:5).<br>b. The Last Days: 2 Thessalonians 1:9 (cp. v. 19); Revelation 6:16 (cp. v. 19).                               |
| Isaiah 7:14                 | a. The birth of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz.<br>b. Matthew 1:23.   |
| Isaiah 34                   | a. Edom and other nations hostile to Israel in Isaiah's day.<br>b. The final judgment on the wicked: Revelation 14:11 (cp. v. 10).   |
| Jeremiah 50:51              | a. Destruction of Babylon, the great enemy in Jeremiah's time.<br>b. Destruction of "Babylon" in the Last Days (many quotations in Revelation 18; note the margin references). |
| Hosea 10:8<br>(and context) | a. Judgment on faithless Israel in Hosea's time.<br>b. Destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Luke 23:30).   |
| Micah 3:12                  | a. Threatened fulfilment about 700 B.C. (Jeremiah 26:18).<br>b. Literally fulfilled in first century A.D.  |
| Psalms 2                    | a. David beset by enemies early in his reign (2 Samuel 8).<br>b. Hostility to Christ, the Son of David (Acts 4:25-27; Revelation 19:15).                                       |

There are many more.

(H. Whittaker, *Jews, Arabs, and Bible Prophecy*, p. 24)



## ALMOST ALL OF REVELATION RELATED TO THE LAST DAYS

- a At a time when the saints have been told that the end is not far away (6.11), and men are recoiling in fear from the anticipated pouring out of God's wrath (6.15-17), the saints are reminded that they are secure in God's care whatever now may come (7.1-17), and whatever may befall them (8.3-4).
- b Under the symbolism of the Trumpets, God then proceeds to pour out severe and destructive, but not final, judgements on every sphere of human interest — earth, fresh waters which may be drunk, salt waters for navigation and fishing, and the heavenly providers of heat and light (8.1-12); followed by yet more severe judgements in the shape of the last three Trumpets, the "three Woes" (8.13, 9.12; 11.15).
- c In the course of the Sixth Trumpet, the Second Woe, the gospel is powerfully preached throughout the world (10.11; 11.3, 6; 14.7), to which men in general decline to respond by way of repentance, just as they did during the judgements (9.20, 21; 11.7) which precede this witness.
- d As a result, the world is now told that the door to fruitful repentance is to be closed (14.7, 15.5-8).
- e The last, inescapable, judgements are then poured out on the impenitent world, and finally, after the "battle of the great day of God Almighty" (16.1-16), the "kingdom of this world" is abolished, and replaced by "the kingdom of our God and of His Christ" (11.15-16, in anticipation; 16.17-20, in realization).

This summary shows clearly how much this Book concentrates on the last days. It needed but one chapter (6.1-11) to bring us within eyeshot of the end-times, but then it takes nine (7-15) to prepare the scene, by way of the preliminary judgements of the Trumpets, before the final outpourings which herald the coming of the kingdom, no less than two of which represent interludes (7, 15), designed to reassure the saints of their remembrance by God in the trials to come. We then have four more chapters (16.1-20.3) in which the last crisis is worked out in detail, and we are taken to the installation of the Lamb and His saints on the thrones of the kingdom. The nearer we approach to the culminating events, the larger the time-scale becomes, much as in turning the pages of an atlas designed for a particular region we move from a map of the universe on a minute scale, through progressively larger-scale and smaller-scope maps of the world, a continent, a country, and a state or county, until we reach the feature of particular interest.

(A.D. Norris, *Apocalypse for Everyman*, pp. 157,158)



## A MOSAIC OF OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

Next, attention must focus, *and must remain focussed*, on a big fact concerning Revelation which—to one's lasting surprise—has been almost completely ignored in the standard interpretation of the middle section of Revelation. This big (biggest!) fact about Revelation is that the entire book from beginning to end is a masterly mosaic of quotations from and allusions to the rest of the Bible. Approximately 500 of these have been catalogued in Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament. The present writer is certain that this hopelessly underestimates the true figure.

In the rest of Scripture the citation of or allusion to earlier parts of the Bible is normally taken as an inspired directive as to how such a passage should be interpreted. Jesus applied Isaiah 61 to his own work of redemption; therefore Isaiah 61 must be given an interpretation on these lines. In Romans 15 Paul quotes Isaiah 11:1, 10 applying the words to the gospel concerning Christ; therefore the conscientious exponent of the Word must follow where Paul has led. Peter and Paul both apply to Christ the two Isaiah prophecies of the stone of stumbling and the chief corner stone (Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6, 8; Romans 9:33); therefore the Holy Spirit intended these as prophecies of Jesus. One might go further and note Matthew's use of "Rachel weeping for her children" (Matthew 2:18; Jeremiah 31:15) and infer—though with what reluctance this is done by some!—that Jeremiah 31 should also be read as having definite Messianic content. Alas! instead, too many students of such Scriptures are over-ready to confess the ignorance of the inspired writer rather than their own. It is seriously to be doubted whether there is a single page of the New Testament without Old Testament links of this kind.

All these various echoes of the rest of Scripture to be encountered in Revelation, and especially in the middle section of it now about to be attempted, are to be regarded as so many hints as to what the various parts of the prophecy are about. Here is a lead to the interpretation of Revelation which is too valuable to leave ignored. Even with this guiding principle difficulties abound. But a patient attempt on these lines to integrate Revelation with the rest of Scripture instead of regarding it as something altogether separate and distinct, is bound to bring big results.

(H.A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach*, p. 65)

(Along these same lines, we may compare also Arthur Gibson's scholarly article and compilation, *701 Quotations in the Apocalypse*, published in *The Testimony*.)

The above observations lead to this thought: *If we can determine what patterns are to be found in most, or all, of the Old Testament prophets, then we may expect to find the same or similar patterns in Revelation.*

To Christadelphians, certain patterns in the Old Testament are superficially obvious:

1. The importance of the Abrahamic promises regarding the Land of Promise.
2. The importance of the Davidic promises regarding the throne of the Lord in Jerusalem.
3. Israel's return to its own Land in the Last Days.
4. The establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The amazing fact is that these patterns *are* dominant in the Apocalypse, but to a large extent the "continuous-historical" interpretations ignore them, i.e.:

(a) **Revelation 6:12-17**, an obvious prophecy about the establishment of the Kingdom of God (cp. v. 12 with Ezek. 38:19 and Joel 2:31; vv. 13,14 with Isa. 34:4; v. 15 with Psa. 2:2 and Isa. 2:10,19; and v. 16 with Hos. 10:8) is often interpreted as Constantine's overthrow of Roman paganism in the fourth century!

(b) **Rev. 6:13**, with its pointer to the "fig tree" (Jer. 24:1-10; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1; Joel 1:7; Matt. 21:9; 24:32,33; Luke 13:6-9; 21:29-31), is generally overlooked as having anything to do with Israel.

(c) **Rev. 9:1-11**: The great locust invasion is obviously borrowed from Joel's prophecy about Israel in the Last Days, yet it is usually interpreted on continuous-historical principles (CH) as being fulfilled by Mohammed and the Saracens in the 7th century!

(d) **Rev. 11:8**: The great city where the Lord was crucified is (again, according to CH) not Jerusalem, but Rome!

(e) **Rev. 11:11**: This resurrection from the dead supposedly (according to CH) took place in France about 1790!

(f) **Rev. 12:10**: "*Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*" The Kingdom of God? Or Constantine's elevation to power (c. AD 320)?

**Another clear pattern emerges from the most general look at the Old Testament prophets:**

1. **ISAIAH** pronounces Divine judgments upon ten Arab nations (chs. 13-23), led by the "Assyrian" (chs. 8; 10; 30; 31; 36-39) — also called the king of Babylon (14:4,25) — who threatens Jerusalem.

2. **JEREMIAH** is predominantly about the impending Babylonian captivity of Jerusalem. Great judgments are proclaimed against Babylon (chs. 50; 51), along with her allies Edom, Moab, Philistia, etc. (25:15-26; chs. 44-49).

3. **EZEKIEL** likewise speaks of an attack upon Jerusalem by Babylon, aided by its allies the Arab nations round about (ch. 25). Egypt is also condemned because it does not help Israel (chs. 29-32). Edom is especially to be judged for its hatred of Israel (chs. 35; 36).

4. **DANIEL** describes — as part of an image the head of which represents *Babylon* — a Last Days confederacy of *ten* kingdoms of *mixed*, or *mingled*, iron and clay (2:41,43). In Hebrew the word "mixed" is the same as *arab*.

5. **JOEL** describes, under the figure of a locust invasion of Israel, an attack upon the Land by a group of nations intent upon a "holy war" (3:9, AV mg.). The nations which are actually named are Tyre, Zidon, Philistia, Egypt, and Edom.

6. **AMOS** promises God's upraised hand in judgment upon Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab — for their violence against Israel.

7. **OBADIAH** singles out Edom for special vengeance from the Lord.

8. **MICAH** warns that the Assyrian, from the land of Nimrod (5:5,6), will tread down God's palaces, but that he will in turn be destroyed by God.

9. **ZEPHANIAH** pronounces judgments upon Philistia, Moab, Ammon, and the Assyrians.



10. **ZECHARIAH**, which is quoted often in Revelation, promises Divine judgments upon the Philistines (9:5,6), as well as Egypt (14:18,19) and the Canaanites (14:21).

In all the above, the initial fulfillments plainly are patterns for a Last Days fulfillment.

Here is one theme common to almost all the Old Testament prophets: Divine judgments in the Last Days upon Babylon/Assyria and its Arab allies (approximately *ten* in number: cp. Gen. 15:18-21; Psa. 83:6-8; Dan. 7:7 with Rev. 12:3; 13:1; etc.). *Given the tremendous extent to which Revelation is a mosaic of the Old Testament prophets, does this provide a key to the Last Days interpretation of Revelation?*

It is understandable that in 1860 (when the Ottoman Empire ruled over all the Middle East and there were no independent Arab nations) even as fine a Bible scholar as John Thomas would not have appreciated all the implications of this particular theme. But it is much less understandable if, in 1991, diligent and serious Bible students still cannot see the common threads which link these Old Testament prophets to the Apocalypse.

## THE DATE OF WRITING

Two possible dates are usually suggested: AD 95 in the reign of Domitian, and AD 66 in the reign of Nero. Revelation was written during a time of persecution (1:9; etc.), and these were the only significant persecutions during John's lifetime.

The AD 95 date rests almost completely on the testimony of the early Church "father" Irenaeus (c. AD 180) — a rather unreliable witness. Irenaeus wrote concerning John:

*εἰ δὲ εἶδει ἀναφανδὸν ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ κηρύττεσθαι τοῦνομα αὐτοῦ, δι' ἐκείνου ἂν ἐρρέθη τοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν ἑορακτός οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐωράθη, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς, πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Δομετιανοῦ ἀρχῆς*

"We will not, however, incur the risk of pronouncing positively as to the name of Antichrist; for if it were necessary that his name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who beheld the apocalyptic vision. For *it* was seen no very long time since, but almost in our day, towards the end of Domitian's reign."

But the Greek is ambiguous; it could read:

"...For *he* [i.e. the apostle John himself] was seen no very long time since..." —

thus saying nothing about when the Book of Revelation was written!

Several later "fathers" simply quote Irenaeus; their witnesses are therefore not really independent.

### Other external evidence for the early date:

The Syriac version has the following introduction:



"The Revelation which was made by God to John the Evangelist in the island of Patmos to which he was banished by Nero the Emperor."

### Internal evidence for the early date:

(1) Several letters which were undoubtedly written before AD 70 appear to quote extensively from Revelation:

#### *Hebrews*

1. The Word of God (4:12=Jesus, not the Bible; see v. 13)
2. is sharper than any two-edged sword (4:12).
3. A fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries (10:27 R.V.).
4. The city which hath the foundations (already described in Revelation) whose builder and maker is God (11:10 R.V.).
5. (The Mosaic tabernacle appointments were) the patterns of things in the heavens (8:23).
6. Ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (1:14: this word "minister" means specially "to minister as a priest").
7. That they without us should not be made perfect (11:40).

#### *Revelation*

1. The Word of God (=Jesus: 19:13)
2. with the sharp two-edged sword (1:16).
3. Satan (the Adversary) cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (20:10).
4. The wall of the city (the city of my God) had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (20:14).
5. The visions of Revelation all make reference to details of a *heavenly* tabernacle service similar to the tabernacle in the wilderness.
6. Another angel . . . having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar (8:3 and several other passages).
7. It was said unto them<sup>1</sup> that they should rest yet for a little season, until their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled (6:11).

The examples cited this far might perhaps be considered suggestive but hardly conclusive. It is when attention is given particularly to Hebrews 12:22-25, 28, 29 that there is seen to be a long series of correspondences with the heavenly visions of Revelation:

#### *Hebrews 12*

3. Mount Zion.
9. The heavenly Jerusalem, the city of
10. the living God.
11. An innumerable company of angels.
12. The general assembly.

#### *Revelation*

8. The Lamb on Mount Zion (14:1).
9. New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven (21:2).
10. The God of the living creatures (4:6). Cp. also, the angel having the seal of the living God (7:2).
11. The voice of many angels round about the throne . . . ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands<sup>2</sup> (5:11).
12. The hundred and forty and four thousand sealed out of the twelve tribes of Israel ("Israel is my first born") (ch. 7 and 14).

<sup>1</sup> A very strong case can be made for identifying these "souls under the altar" with the Old Testament saints of Hebrews 11 (see on the Fifth Seal).

<sup>2</sup> Literally innumerable, because the numeration system of the ancient Greeks could not take them further than a hundred millions.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 13. The church (ecclesia) of the firstborn. | 13. Twenty four elders (4:4, "the Levites instead of the firstborn of the children of Israel". Numbers 8:16). |
| 14. Written in heaven.                      | 14. Written in the Lamb's book of life (13:8; 21:27).   |
| 15. God the Judge of all.                   | 15. The dead standing before God . . . and were judged (20:12).   |
| 16. Spirits of                              | 16. ? <sup>3</sup>  |
| 17. just men made perfect.                  | 17. ? <sup>3</sup>  |
| 18. Jesus the mediator of a new covenant.   | 18. A Lamb as it had been slain (5:5, 6).   |
| 19. The blood of sprinkling.                | 19. Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood (5:9).  |
| 20. Him that spake from heaven.             | 20. The Apocalypse itself (when else has Jesus spoken <i>from heaven?</i> )                                   |
| 21. Let us serve God.                       | 21. They serve Him day and night in His temple (7:15).  |

#### 1 Peter

1. Which things angels desire to look into (1:12).
2. Your faith . . . much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried in the fire (1:7).
3. Ye *also*, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house (2:5).
4. A royal priesthood<sup>1</sup> (2:9).
5. Redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1:19).
6. Foreordained before the foundation of the world (1:20).
7. Let them commit the keeping of their souls to him (4:19).
8. As unto a faithful Creator (4:19; this unusual word means "the founder of a city").
9. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever (5:11).
10. Babylon (5:13).

#### Revelation

1. A strong angel proclaiming, Who is worthy to open the book . . . ? (5:2).
2. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire (3:18).
3. The city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (21:14).
4. Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests (5:10 and 1:6).
5. A Lamb as it had been slain . . . Thou art worthy . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood (5:6, 9).
6. Written in the Lamb's book of life from foundation of the world (13:8).
7. The souls under the altar (6:9).
8. The new Jerusalem coming down from God (21:2).
9. 1:6 is verbatim the same.
10. Babylon the Great (17:5).

#### REVELATION AND 2 PETER

It is to be expected that if 1 Peter has ample allusion to Revelation then the same characteristic will be at least equally marked in 2 Peter. To say that such is probably the case is a considerable understatement.

After plain reference to that almost unique Apocalypse of Christ's glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (1:16-18), Peter goes on to mention also "*the more sure word of prophecy* whereunto ye do well that ye take heed in

<sup>1</sup> This idea comes *here only* and in Exodus 19:5, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Exposition of these and other items not included in this list is really a separate study. Readers may find it profitable to follow the clue for themselves.



your hearts, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,<sup>1</sup> until the day dawn and the daystar arise." Is this a reference to another Apocalypse of Jesus Christ given to strengthen the Lord's people in the dark and difficult days? The reference to the Day-Star suggests it—compare "I am the bright and *morning star*"; Revelation 22:16. The phrase in the next verse which would rule out any reference to Revelation disappears in the Revised Version.

Certainly the rest of the Epistle turns itself into a kind of running commentary on Revelation.

*2 Peter*

1. Until the day dawn and the day star arise (1:19).
2. False prophets . . . swift destruction (2:1).
3. The Lord (Despot) that bought them (2:1).
4. Through covetousness . . . shall they make merchandise of you (2:3).
5. Angels . . . cast down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement<sup>2</sup> to be punished (2:4). The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished (2:9).
6. They walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness . . . having eyes full of an adulteress (R.V.m.) . . . they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness (2:10, 14, 18).
7. They speak great swelling words of vanity (2:18).
8. As natural brute beasts made to be taken and destroyed (2:12).
9. Following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor (2:15).
10. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (3:8).
11. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night (3:10).
12. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise (3:10).
13. We, according to *his* promise (in Revelation) look for new heavens and a new earth (3:13).

*Revelation*

1. I am the bright and morning star (22:16 and 2:28).
2. The false prophet . . . cast alive into a lake of fire (19:20).
3. O Lord (Despot), holy and true . . . (6:10).
4. The merchandise (of Babylon) . . . bodies and souls of men (18:13, 14).
5. An angel . . . with a great chain in his hand . . . and he bound the Devil and Satan a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit (20:1, 2).
6. They have committed fornication, and lived wantonly (R.V.) with her . . . the great whore . . . mother of harlots . . . the unclean things of her fornication (18:9 and 17:1, 2, 4, 5, etc.).
7. The deep things of Satan, as they speak (2:24).
8. The beast and the false prophet—another beast (13:11)—cast into the lake of fire (19:20)—and the dragon (20:10).
9. Them that hold the doctrine of Balaam (2:14).
10. Satan bound a thousand years (20:3).
11. Behold, I will come on thee as a thief (3:3 and 16:15).
12. Before whose face the earth and the heaven fled away: and there was no place found for them (20:11).
13. A new heaven and a new earth (21:1).

<sup>1</sup> This Greek word is used in LXX for "wilderness." Thus the "Light in a Wilderness" compares prophetic Scripture to the Shekinah Glory guiding Israel to the Land of Promise. Now consider Revelation 7:14-17 R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Here, surely, is an explanation why Peter uses such odd language in his allusion to Korah's rebellion—his mind is intent on the resemblance to the symbolic punishment meted out to "Satan" in Revelation.

(2) **Rev. 1:7:** "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" (quoting Zech. 12:10-14).

"Those who pierced him" = the *Jews* (Matt. 26:14,15,47; 27:2-12,24,25,59-66; John 18:39,40; 19:6,11,15; Acts 2:22,23,36; 3:13-15; 5:30; 7:52; 1 Thes. 2:14,15). Thus, the Book describes a "coming" in judgment upon the Jews in their own Land (twice?).

"The tribes of the earth (*ge* = Land) = the *Jewish* tribes (cp. 5:5; 7:4-8; 21:12; ct. "every tribe, tongue, nation, etc." in 5:9; 7:9; 13:7; 14:6). Again, a "coming" to the people of Israel, *in* Israel (twice?).

This theme verse is parallel with Jesus' Olivet prophecy — which also concentrates on Israel. The first fulfillment of Revelation, then, must be the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. (Compare the point of "The time is near....short....I am coming soon" ....1:1-3; 2:16; 3:11; 16:15; 22:6,7,12,20.)

(3) **Rev. 2:9 and 3:9** presume that there was a strong Judaizing element in the Church when John was writing. These were probably Christian brethren whose influence depended in large part on the existence of a Temple and a priesthood in Jerusalem, and whose influence would have been considerably reduced when Jerusalem fell.

(4) **Rev. 11:1,2,8** presumes the existence, at the time of writing, of the great Temple in Jerusalem (cp. Luke 21:20,21,24). This Temple was of course destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

And *why* is the dating of Revelation important? Because then the Book may be seen to have an *immediate* fulfillment (i.e. "things which must *shortly* come to pass"!), and because its *immediate* fulfillment then influences greatly what we may expect as its final fulfillment. In other words, the final fulfillment (in the Last Days) will also, like the initial one, involve:

- \* 3 1/2 *literal* years, not 1,260 years (as continuous-historical theories say).
- \* An attack by Gentile enemies upon *Jerusalem*.
- \* Severe trials on Jews living *in the Land of Israel*, not believers throughout the world.
- \* Witnessing, or preaching, by which many Jews are "sealed" with the mark of God.
- \* Judgments upon the enemies of God's people *in the Land of Israel*.

## KEY WORDS AFFECTING THE GENERAL INTERPRETATION

### "Shortly/Quickly/Soon"

#### *Revelation 1:1*

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must *shortly* take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John.

#### *Revelation 2:16*

"Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you *quickly*, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth."



*Revelation 3:11*

"I am coming *quickly*; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown."

*Revelation 22:6*

And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must *shortly* take place.

*Revelation 22:7, 12, 20*

"And behold, I am coming *quickly*. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

"Behold, I am coming *quickly*, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

"He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming *quickly*." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

A cursory reading of the passages before us unavoidably leads even the casual reader to conclude that John expected the fulfillment of the prophecies within a very short period of time following his writing. The crucial word in the statement in the opening verse, for instance, is "shortly."

These expressions of temporal expectation are not the only internal indicators of time in Revelation. There are many others (e.g., Rev. 6:10, 11, 17; 7:14 [present participle]; 8:13; 10:6; 11:14, 17; etc.). However, these are strategically placed before and after the body of the dramatic-symbolic prophecies section and thus determine the time indications of those sections.

## "Near"

*Revelation 1:3*

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is *near*.

*Revelation 22:10*

And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is *near*."

All translations consulted on these verses concurred in either the translation "at hand" or "near." The crucial word in these passages is *ἐγγύς* (pronounced "engus"), which is an adverb of time formed from two words: *ἐν* ("in, at") and *γυῖον* ("limb, hand"). Hence the meaning is literally "at hand." The Arndt and Gingrich *Lexicon* offers one word, "near," as the meaning. Thayer expands on the idea of the word: "of Time; concerning things imminent and soon to come to pass." He lists Revelation 1:3 and 22:10 in his series of examples. The word is used frequently of chronologically near events, such as approaching summer (Matt. 24:32), the Passover (Matt. 26:18; John 2:13; 11:55), the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2), etc.

How was the prophecy fulfilled "soon"? How was it "near" in the days when John received it? The best answer is, as in the previous section, to see the Apocalypse's *initial* fulfillment in the events culminating in AD 70.

This, of course, leads to another question: *If this is a proper interpretation of the Book, then can there be any other interpretation which in any sense is also "soon" and "near"?* I believe the answer is: Yes! The explanation is ready-made, and easily grasped by most of us:

**"And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:29-32).**

The Olivet prophecy is readily seen to have two fulfillments (one in the first century and another in the near future). Likewise, the Apocalypse (which, not coincidentally, shares many points in common with the Olivet prophecy) may have two fulfillments. The second, or Last Days, fulfillment may rightly be spoken of as *"soon" or "near" in relation to the proper starting point.*

To paraphrase the quotation above:

***'When you see the rebirth of the nation of Israel in the Last Days, and especially when you see Jerusalem in Jewish hands again [cp. Luke 21:20-24], then know that the fulfillment of all things is, from that time, very near!***

## THE THEME VERSE OF THE APOCALYPSE

**"Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen" (Rev. 1:7).**

This verse is set apart from all other true prophetic portions of Revelation. In fact, the prophetic portion proper does not begin until ch. 6. So why is 1:7 where it is? It is suggested that this is a key verse, or a theme verse, for the whole of the Book. If this is true, then it may tell us much as to the main subject of the Book.

This is certainly true with regard to the first half of the verse, which quotes Daniel 7:13:

**"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, *coming with the clouds of heaven.* He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence."**

The Book is surely, as almost all would agree, about Christ's return to the earth.

Is this suggestion equally true with regard to the second half of the verse (which quotes Zechariah 12:10-14)?

**"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. *They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.* On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the**



plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives."

If it is, then we are being told that the events of the Apocalypse are designed by God to lead to the repentance of Israel. Zechariah 13:1, which follows immediately after 12:14, reads:

"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity."

In fact, much of the Book does appear to deal with judgments upon Israel, leading to the repentance of Israel (cp. 6:13 with 7:4-8, for example).

Thus, Revelation 1:7, properly seen with its Old Testament links, may have much to say about the scope and the setting of the Book.

## THE SEALS AND THE OLIVET PROPHECY

The parallels between Revelation 6-8, the first of these in particular, and the Lord Jesus' prophecy reported in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, have often been drawn, and the following table may help to bring to mind some of the relevant points:

Revelation	Matthew	Mark	Luke	Topic	Elsewhere in Revelation
6.1-2	24.14	13.10		Conquest (by the gospel)	19.11,19,21
6.3-4	24.6,7	13.7,8	21.9,10	War	
6.5-6	24.7	13.8	21.11	Famine	18.8
6.7-8	24.7AV		21.11	Pestilence	
6.9	11	24.12		Loss of faith	
6.11	24.14	13.10		Witness under persecution	7.13; 20.4; 11.3-10
6.12	24.7	13.8	21.11	Earthquake	8.5; 16.18
6.12	24.29	13.24	21.25	Signs in sun, moon and stars	8.12; 16.8
6.13	24.32	13.28	21.29	Parable of the fig tree	
6.14	24.35	13.31	21.33	Passing away of the heavens	16.20
6.16			(23.30)	Hiding in mountains and rocks	
6.17			21.36	Who shall be able to stand?	11.16
7.1	24.31	13.27		The four winds	
7.3			21.18,28	The servants of God sealed (?)	
7.14	24.9-21			Out of the great tribulation	
8.3			21.36	Prayers of the saints	5.8
8.5	24.27			Lightning	4.5; 11.19; 16.18

The parallels are unmistakable, and it is impossible not to suppose that the Seals and the Olivet Prophecy deal with related events.

(A.D. Norris, *Apocalypse for Everyman*, pp. 114,115)

# THE ARENA OF BIBLE HISTORY AND PROPHECY

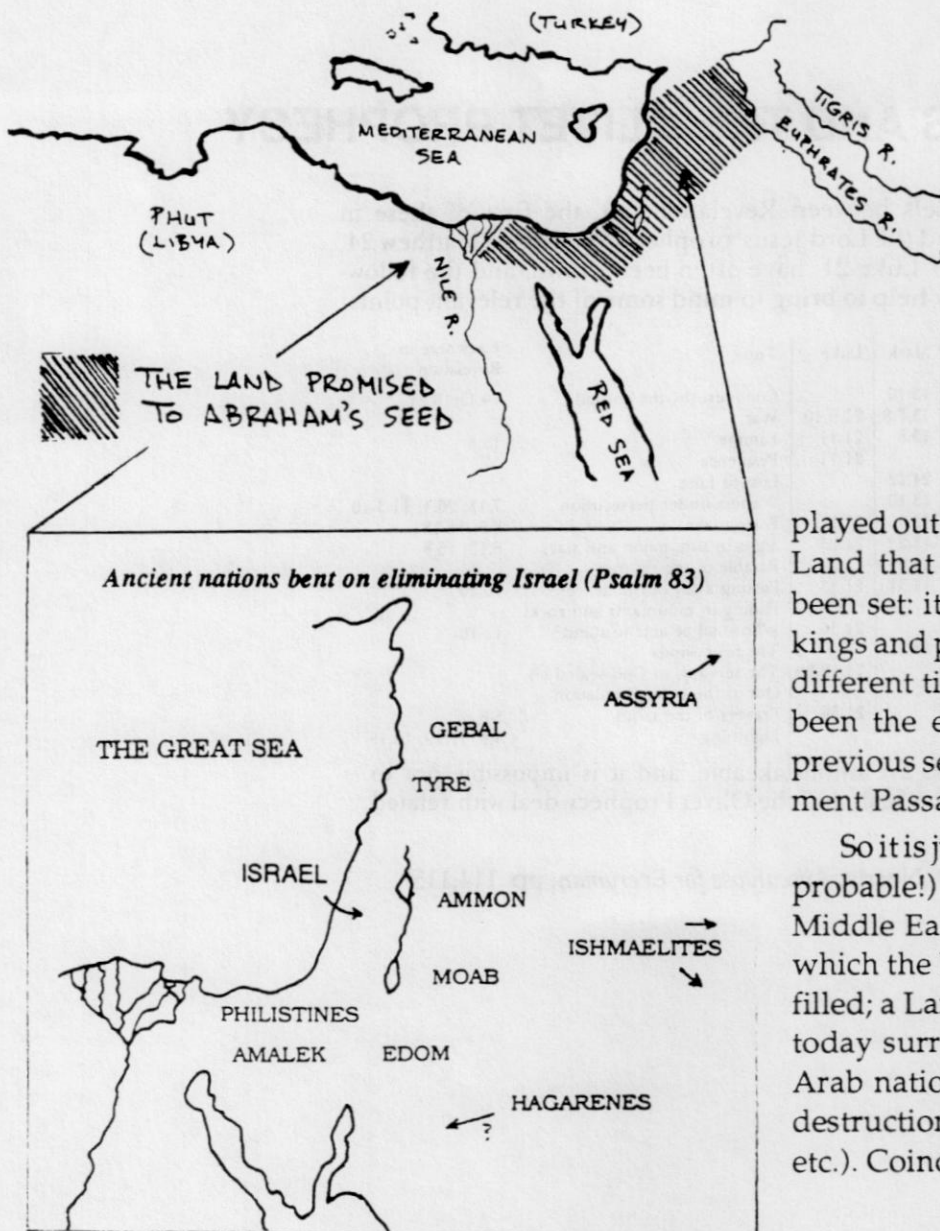
A significant aspect of the Abrahamic covenant is the promise of a special Land:

**"The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you" (Gen. 13:14,15,17).**

This Land is specifically defined:

**"In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:18).**

It was (and this may be of real consequence in the study of the Revelation) a land of *ten* peoples and therefore *ten kings* (vv. 19-21).



Elsewhere this Land is defined similarly — i.e. as basically stretching from the borders of Assyria/Babylon to the borders of Egypt (Exod. 23:23; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4; Psa. 72:8).

It was within this extended Land of Promise (the full territory of which the people of Israel have never yet attained) that much of Bible history has been

played out. It is within this same extended Land that much of Bible prophecy has been set: it is a Land, for example, of ten kings and peoples (slightly more or less at different times) who have almost always been the enemies of God's people (see previous section, "A Mosaic of Old Testament Passages").

So it is just possible (and perhaps quite probable!) that this same Land — the Middle East in general — is the arena in which the Book of Revelation is to be fulfilled; a Land, please note, where Israel is today surrounded by approximately ten Arab nations or kingdoms intent on her destruction (cp. Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:12,16; etc.). Coincidence? Or something more?



The ten nations of Psalm 83 occupy today the same area, generally, as the ten peoples of Genesis 15:19-21. Thus, the extended "Land of Promise" (Gen. 15:18) is a land, prophetically speaking, peopled by a (reborn) Israel and ten "kings". (Did Jesus refer to this when he prophesied of the coming to life of the "fig tree" "and all the trees" in Luke 21:29?) Does all this sound familiar?

The ten nations of Psalm 83, however, are different peoples than the ten nations of Genesis 15. Those of Psalm 83 are for the most part relatives and descendants of Abraham; those of Genesis 15 were the earlier occupants of Canaan and the Middle East. Is there some continuity or connection between these two groups of ten peoples?

Remember that "Arab" means "mixed"; a very similar word occurs — four times — in Daniel 2:41-43, regarding the (presumably *ten*) toes of the Great Image:

**"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. 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. 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."**

What evidently has happened is that, since the beginning, the (Arab) descendants of Abraham have intermarried with the Canaanitish peoples so as to create, over time, a mixed or mingled peoples. There are in fact Biblical cases of this very sort of intermingling:

**"And he [Ishmael] dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt" (Gen. 21:21).**

**"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah" (26:34,35).**

Other instances of the word *ereb* — signifying "mixed" or "mingled" — related to peoples are:

(a) **1 Kings 10:15:** "Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of *Arabia*, and of the governors of the country."

(b) **Jer. 25:20,24:** "And all the *mingled* people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the *mingled* people that dwell in the desert".

(c) **Jer. 50:37:** "A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the *mingled* people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed."

(d) **Ezek. 30:5:** "Ethiopia, and Libya, and Lydia, and all the *mingled* people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword."

(e) **Neh. 13:13:** "On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever...Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the *mixed* multitude." Compare also v. 23.

So the “mixed peoples” of the Middle East are the “Arabs” — with blood ties to the original Canaanitish peoples and the corrupted descendants of Abraham. Both these groups of peoples have had, historically, intense hatred for the children of Israel. Now, with the admixture of a unifying religion — Islam — these Arabs view the Jews as great “infidels”, who have no real claim to the Land of Palestine. Certainly the stage is set for a battle between Israel and the ten “kings of the Land”! And, as Daniel describes, it is in the days when these mixed/mingled (Arab) peoples trample down Israel, that the God of heaven will set up His everlasting Kingdom (Dan. 2:44)!

## MORE KEY WORDS

### “Earth/Land”

The Greek word *ge* may signify either “earth” (i.e. the globe as a whole) or “land” (i.e. a country or territory, in a more restricted sense). As such, *ge* reproduces in the Greek the same ambiguity found in the Hebrew *eretz* — most familiar to us, perhaps, in the phrase “*Eretz* Israel” (the *Land* of Israel).

In Revelation, does the word *ge* (used about 80 times) mean the whole world? Or does it mean some specific Land? While the Apocalypse surely speaks of events that ultimately have a great impact of the whole world, it is suggested that *much of its action* (like that of other Bible prophecies) *takes place in the more restricted arena of the Middle East* — as stated above, a Land where Israel confronts “ten kings” today! *If this suggestion can in any way be demonstrated, it has serious implications for the scope and setting of the interpretation of Revelation.*

Obviously, a number of occurrences of *ge* in Revelation are ambiguous on this point, or offer no evidence in the immediate context by which may be determined the extent of the territory involved. What follows is a brief survey of the other passages, the ones that may give us clues as to how *ge* should be read in Revelation:

**1:7:** “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”: As pointed out earlier, the tribes of the *ge* are clearly the tribes of *Israel* (Zech. 12:10-13:1).

**6:13:** “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”: The stars falling to the *ge* are compared to the *fig tree* (Biblical symbol of *Israel*) losing its fruit.

**7:1,2:** “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. 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”: This is a quotation from Ezekiel 7:2: “the four corners of the *Land* (of *Israel*)”.

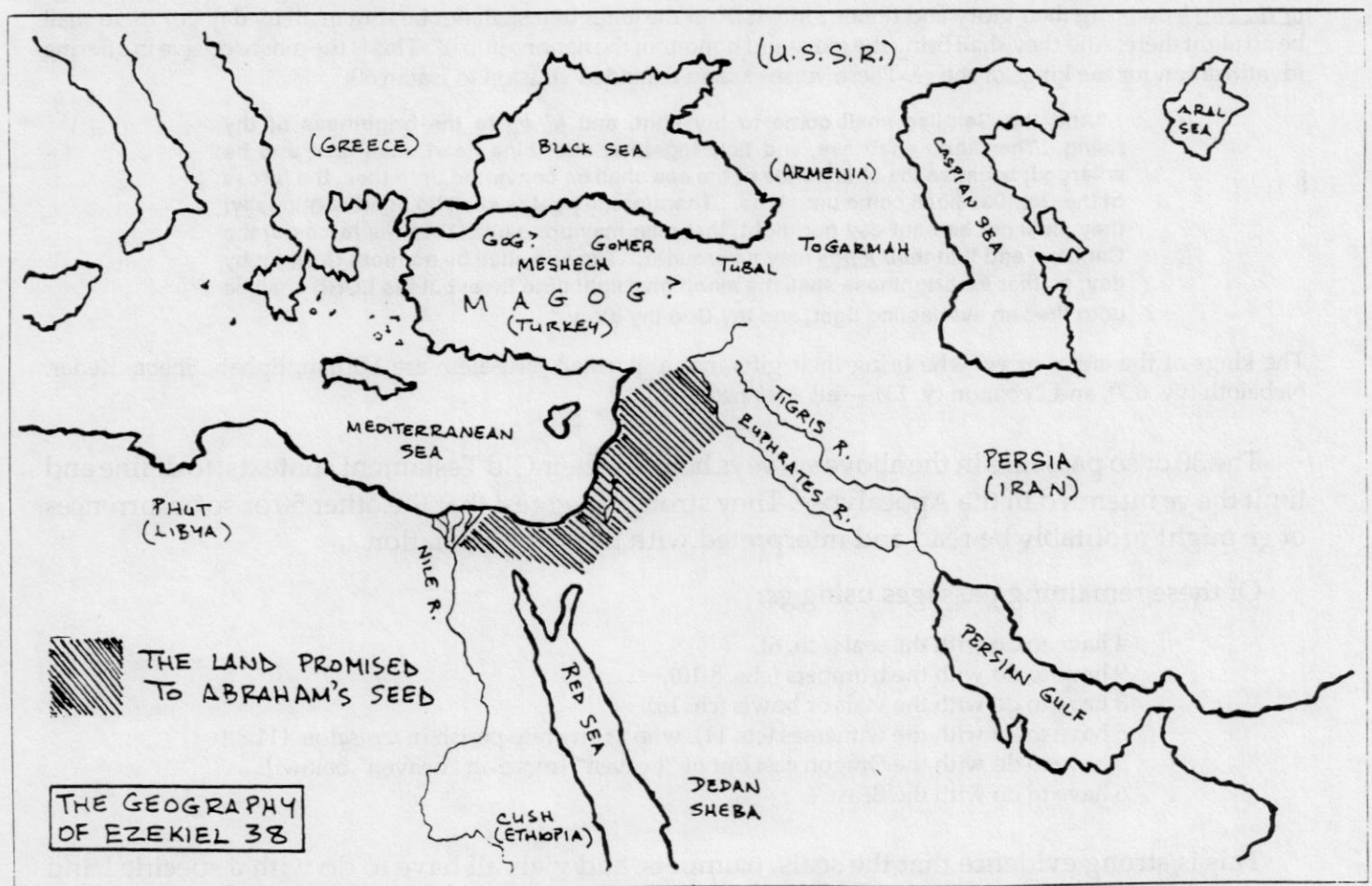
**7:3:** “Saying, Hurt not the *earth*, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads”: The servants which are sealed are out of the 12 tribes of *Israel* (vv. 4-8; cp. 14:3).



**9:3:** "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": This is a clear reference to Joel's prophecy, of a great "locust" invasion of *Israel*.

**14:15:** "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" (cp. vv. 16-19): The subsequent treading of the "winepress" caused blood to flow for 1,600 "stadia" (approx. 200 miles), which happens to be the distance from the north to the south of *Israel*!

**20:8,9:** "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the *earth*, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the *earth*, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them": Similar to 7:1,2. The four quarters, or corners, of the whole world? (Literally, of course, there is no such thing as four corners of the world!) Or the four corners of the *Land*? See how the geography of Ezekiel 38 and 39 ("Gog" and "Magog"! ) helps to limit and define the *Land* of Revelation: the allies of Gog are at the four corners of the *Land* promised to Abraham: Libya at the west corner, Ethiopia at the south corner, Persia at the east corner, and the others at the north corner.



**21:1:** "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": This quotes Isaiah 65:17,18, where "new heavens" = Jerusalem a rejoicing, and "new *earth*" = her people a joy.

## Kings of the "Earth"

Another set of passages in Revelation link *ge* with certain kings. Who are these "kings of the *ge*"? Are they kings (and rulers) of all nations in the world? Or are they some subset thereof? If we can use Scripture to determine their identity, then we will have a good idea as to the limits (if any) of the particular *ge* in which the events of Revelation are played out:

**6:15:** "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": This is a quotation from Psalm 2:2, where the "kings of the earth" were initially the kings of Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ammon, and Edom (2 Sam. 8), who opposed the rule of David in Jerusalem.

**16:14:** "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" (cp. 19:19): A quotation from Zech. 14:2,3 — where the only nations listed in the context are Egypt (vv. 18,19) and the Canaanites (v. 21).

**17:2:** "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" (cp. 18:3,9): Quoting Jer. 51:7, where the nations have drunk of the golden cup of Babylon. What nations? All the "mingled", or Arab, peoples (Jer. 25:17-25)!

**21:23-26:** "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. 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. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it": This is the most decisive in offering identification for the kings of the *ge*. These verses are an extended allusion to Isaiah 60:

"And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising....Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee....Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought....The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

The kings of the *eretz*, or *ge*, who bring their gifts into a glorified Jerusalem are Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nebaioth (vv. 6,7), and Lebanon (v. 13) — all *Arab* peoples!

The 30 or so passages in the above surveys help, by their Old Testament contexts, to define and limit the *ge* intended in the Apocalypse. They strongly suggest that the other 50 or so occurrences of *ge* might profitably be read and interpreted with the same limitation.

Of these remaining passages using *ge*:

- 4 have to do with the seals (ch. 6).
- 9 have to do with the trumpets (chs. 8-10).
- 3 have to do with the vials or bowls (ch. 16).
- 5 have to do with the witnesses (ch. 11), who at any rate perish in *Jerusalem* (11:8)!
- 5 have to do with the Dragon cast out of "heaven" [more on "heaven" below!].
- 6 have to do with the Beast.

This is strong evidence that the seals, trumpets, and vials all have to do with a specific Land — a Land occupied by Israel and ten antagonistic kings, the Land (perhaps) described in Genesis 15:18.

This particular Land is also the arena in which the witnesses and the Dragon and the Beast operate.



## "Heaven"

If "earth" defines a special Land in which many of the events of the Apocalypse occur, then it is possible that "heaven" may likewise describe a special locale *on the earth!*

A clue is to be found in Isaiah 65:17,18, quoted above:

**"For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."**

By the accepted rules of Hebrew poetry, the "new earth" parallels the people of Israel, and the "new heavens" parallels Jerusalem. Why Jerusalem? Because it was there that God decreed His Name would dwell for ever, and there that His Temple, or "holy (or heavenly) place", would be established.

"Heaven" (literally, in Hebrew and Greek, "that which is lifted up") is often taken in the Bible to be equivalent to the heavenly place in Jerusalem:

1 Kings 8:4,6,10,11,22,30,33-36,38,39,42-45: "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee *in this house*: Then hear thou *in heaven*, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray *toward this place* and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: Then hear thou *in heaven*, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance": Continuously, in this chapter, Solomon equates the holy place of his new Temple with Heaven itself.

2 Chron. 7:1,2: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, *the fire came down from heaven*, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house". Compare this with Lev. 9:24: "And *there came a fire out from before the LORD*, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces."

2 Chron. 6:20,21: "That thine eyes may be open upon *this house* day and night, upon *the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldst put thy name there*; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward *this place*. Harken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward *this place*: hear thou *from thy dwelling place, even from heaven*; and when thou hearest, forgive."

Psalms 11:4: "The LORD is in his *holy temple*, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men": Consider the parallelism again: temple = heaven!

Psalms 18:6: "In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. "

Psalms 20:2,6: "Send thee help *from the sanctuary*, and strengthen thee *out of Zion*....Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him *from his holy heaven* with the saving strength of his right hand."

Psalms 26:8: "LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth. "

Psalms 28:2: "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward *thy holy oracle*."

Psalms 96:5,6: "For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the *heavens*. Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his *sanctuary*."

Psalm 102:16,19,21: "When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory....For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth....To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem."

Heb. 9:7,8,12,24: "But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing....Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us....For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us": Here there is an explicit relationship between the most holy place of the tabernacle and heaven itself.

Ezekiel's prophecy is very much concerned with the Glory of God, manifested in His Temple at Jerusalem (ch. 1). Ezekiel sees that Glory departing from the Temple (9:3; 10:4,18,19; 11:23), because of the wickedness of the nation. But he later sees a vision of that same Glory returning, from the mount of Olives on the east of Jerusalem, into God's house again (cp. Zech. 14:4; Acts 1:10-12).

Quite a number of prophecies in the Old Testament suggest that the controversy of the Last Days between Israel and the Arabs will revolve around the Temple Mount and the Jewish holy place there:

Psalm 79:1-4,7,10,13: "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem; and there was none to bury them. We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us....For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place....Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? [as though they had entered the most holy place and thrown back the curtains to discover....nothing there!] let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed....So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations": Quoted in Revelation 11! A Last Days battle over God's holy place?

Psalm 83:5,12: "For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee....Who said, Let us take to ourselves the houses of God in possession": The Arab nations are fighting, not just against Israel, but most especially against Israel's God! Why "houses", plural? The Hebrew "plural of majesty" — signifying 'God's great House'!

Ezekiel 25:3: "And say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thou saidst, Aha, against my sanctuary, when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity": Compare vv. 8,12,15.

Ezekiel 36:2: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because the enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient high places are ours in possession."

Obadiah 10,11,13,16,17,21: "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou shouldst not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldst not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity....For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been....But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD's": All directed against Edom, for its hatred shown against Jerusalem and against God's Holy Mountain.



**Joel 3:9,17:** "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare [AV mg.: 'sanctify'] war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up....So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more": A holy war ( *Jihad* ) that results in the final purification of God's holy mountain at Jerusalem.

**Zech. 14:2,21:** "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city....Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts": The same.

How does this suggested interpretation (i.e. that "heaven" = God's heavenly sanctuary in Jerusalem) fit the Apocalypse?

**4:1,2:** "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. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, **a throne was set in heaven**, and one sat on the throne": The door in *heaven* leads to a Temple scene, with God seated on His throne, surrounded by the cherubim (cp. Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 2:9,10).

**6:2:** "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": Is this, in its first-century application, the Apostles going forth from the "heavenly" Temple Mount to spread the gospel throughout the earth (Acts 2, etc.)?

**6:14:** "And the **heaven** departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places": The heavenly place of the Temple is where the scrolls of the Law were kept. The destruction of the one would mean the destruction of the other also. Compare the symbols in Isa. 50:9; 51:6,16; Heb. 1:12.

**11:1,2:** "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. 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": Compare Psalm 79. The holy city (Jerusalem: v. 8) is trampled under the feet of Gentiles, but God's "temple" is protected.

**11:12:** "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": The witnesses, raised from the dead (v. 11), are called up to "heaven". We next see them, however, on mount Zion (14:1), listening to a voice from "heaven" (the most holy place) (v. 2), as they stand before the throne (v. 3). Thus God's "temple in heaven" (11:19) is really the "lifted up" place of His Glory on the Temple Mount.

**12:7,8,10:** "And there was **war in heaven**: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; **neither was their place found any more in heaven**....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": The war "in heaven" is really a war at Jerusalem, about the Temple Mount. The Dragon with ten horns represents the Arab oppressors of Israel, cast out of Jerusalem by Christ and the saints, after which the "heavens" rejoice at their liberation (v. 12).

**13:6:** "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme **his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven**": So the place where God makes His Name to dwell (cp. 14:1; 2 Chron. 6:20,21) is called "heaven"!

**14:1-3:** "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. 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: 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."

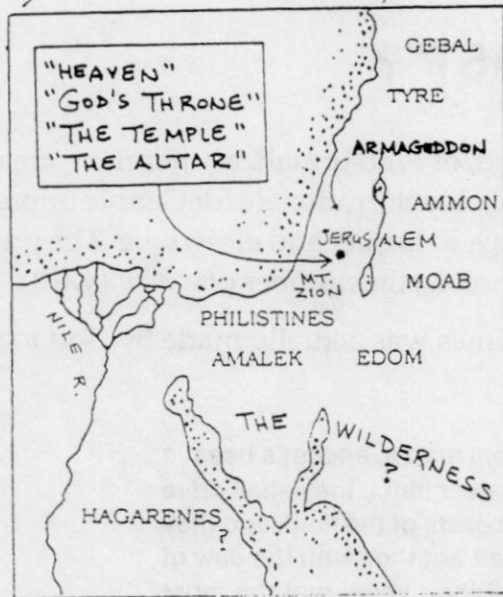
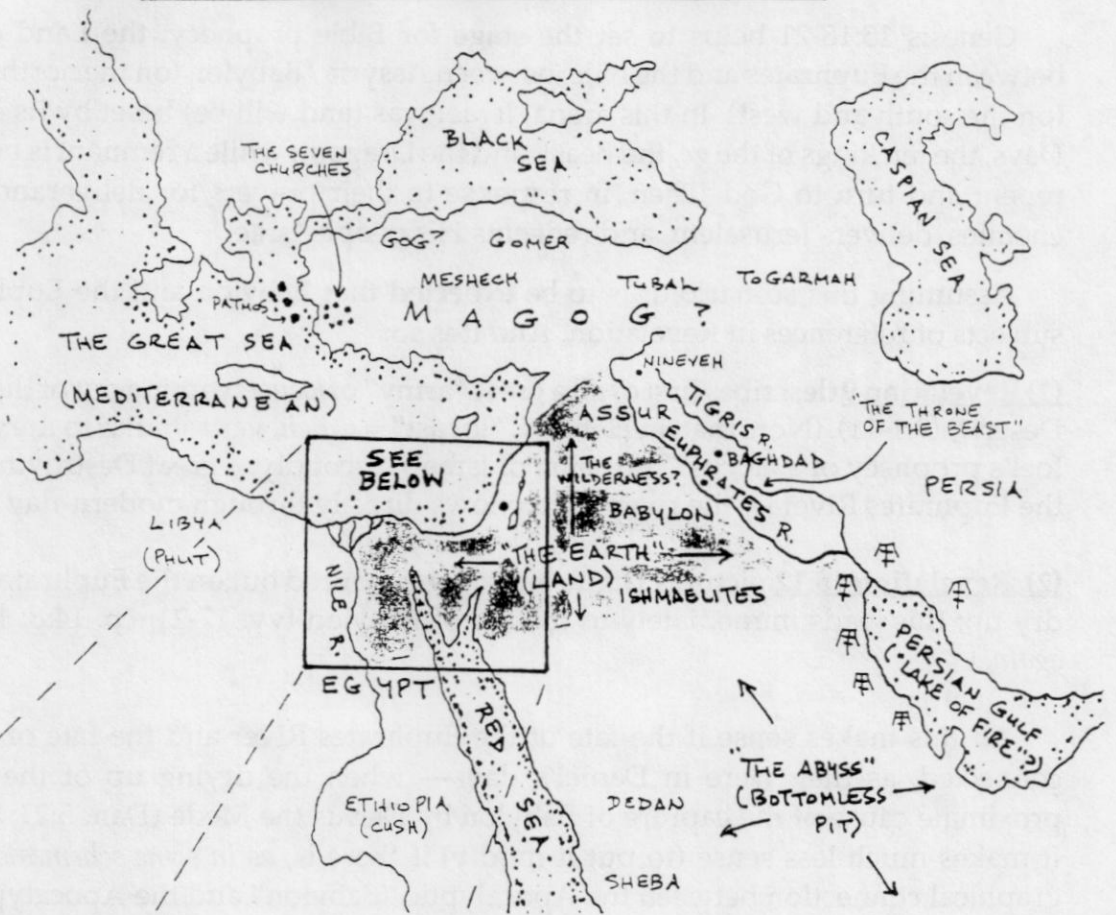
**15:1,5,8:** "And I saw another sign **in heaven**, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God....And after that I looked, and, behold, **the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven** was opened....And **the temple** was filled 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": It is from the "heavenly" Temple Mount that God's judgments are sent out against those on the earth, or in the Land (cp. 16:17,21; 18:1,4; etc.). Until those judgments are finished, no one may enter the Temple except those who have already been redeemed (14:1-3).

**19:11-16:** The armies of "heaven" that go forth with Christ are arrayed in fine linen (v. 14). This identifies them, not as angels, but as the Redeemed and Glorified Bride in multitudinous form (v. 8). The suggested alternative meaning for "heaven" clears this up: The immortal saints do not of course go forth from the literal heaven, but instead they go down from the heavenly place on the top of mount Zion into the rest of the earth, to finish the judgments of God.

**21:1-3:** "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. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, **coming down from God out of heaven**, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 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" (cp. v. 10; 3:12): A new Jerusalem, holy and glorified, to replace the old city. Again, as in 19:11-16, the "Bride" comes down from the Temple Mount to dwell in the whole world. Thus God's glory covers the earth.



# THE "GEOGRAPHY" OF REVELATION



## NOTES

1. "The earth" (or "Land" — Hebrew *eretz*, Greek *ge*) which was promised to Abraham's seed is precisely defined as from the river (*nachar* = great river) of Egypt (i.e. the Nile) to the river Euphrates (Gen. 15:18). This is a land of *ten* kings (vv. 19-21 — cp. *ten* nations in Psa. 83:5-8; "toes" in Dan. 2:41-44; and *ten* kings/horns in Rev. 12:3; 13:1; etc.; and Dan. 7:7).

2. "Heaven" may mean the heavenly temple (the most holy place, God's throne) in Jerusalem: cp. ideas in 1 Kings 8:4,6,10,11,22,30,33; 2 Chron. 30:15,16,27; Psa. 11:4; 18:6; 20:2,6; 26:8; 27:4; 28:2; 96:5,6; 102:16,19,21; Heb. 9:7,8,12,24; cp. also 2 Chron. 7:1,2 with Lev. 9:24.

3. Ezekiel 38 lists the nations of Gog's confederacy. These nations come from the four quarters of the *earth* (or *Land*) (cp. Rev. 20:7,8), after having been earlier restrained on the four corners of the *earth* (or *Land*) (Rev. 7:1-3). These are all Moslem nations also: Turkey (north), Libya (west), Ethiopia (south), and Iran (east).

## REFERENCES TO BABYLON IN THE APOCALYPSE

Genesis 15:18-21 helps to set the stage for Bible prophecy: the Land of the Middle East, between the Euphrates and the Nile, between Assyria/Babylon (on the north and east) and Egypt (on the south and west). In this arena, Israel was (and will be) beset by its enemies (in the Last Days, the ten kings of the *ge*, the Beast, and the Dragon), while a remnant is being developed who repent and turn to God. Then, in response to their prayers for deliverance, God judges their enemies, delivers Jerusalem, and redeems His people Israel.

Assuming this scenario, it is to be expected that Babylon and the Euphrates would be the subjects of references in Revelation. And it is so:

**(1) Revelation 9** describes first of all a great "army" of *locusts* coming out of the Abyss (the Arabian Desert?) (9:1-11). (Note that, in Hebrew, "locust" = *arbeh*, very similar to the word for "Arab"; see Joel's prophecy of a "locust" invasion of Israel). Secondly, a great Destroying Power is bound at the Euphrates River — the river which flows directly through modern-day Iraq (9:12-21).

**(2) Revelation 16:12** pictures Divine judgments poured out on the Euphrates River, causing it to dry up; this leads immediately to the fall of Babylon (vv. 17-21; cp. 14:8; 17:5; 18:2,10,21) (*Iraq again!*).

All this makes sense if the fate of the Euphrates River and the fate of Babylon are closely connected, as they were in Daniel's day — when the drying up of the Euphrates was the proximate cause of the capture of Babylon by Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:21; cp. Jer. 50:38; 51:36). It makes much less sense (to put it mildly) if there is, *as in some schemes of exposition*, no geographical connection between the Apocalyptic "Babylon" and the Apocalyptic "Euphrates"!

## WHO IS THE "BEAST"?

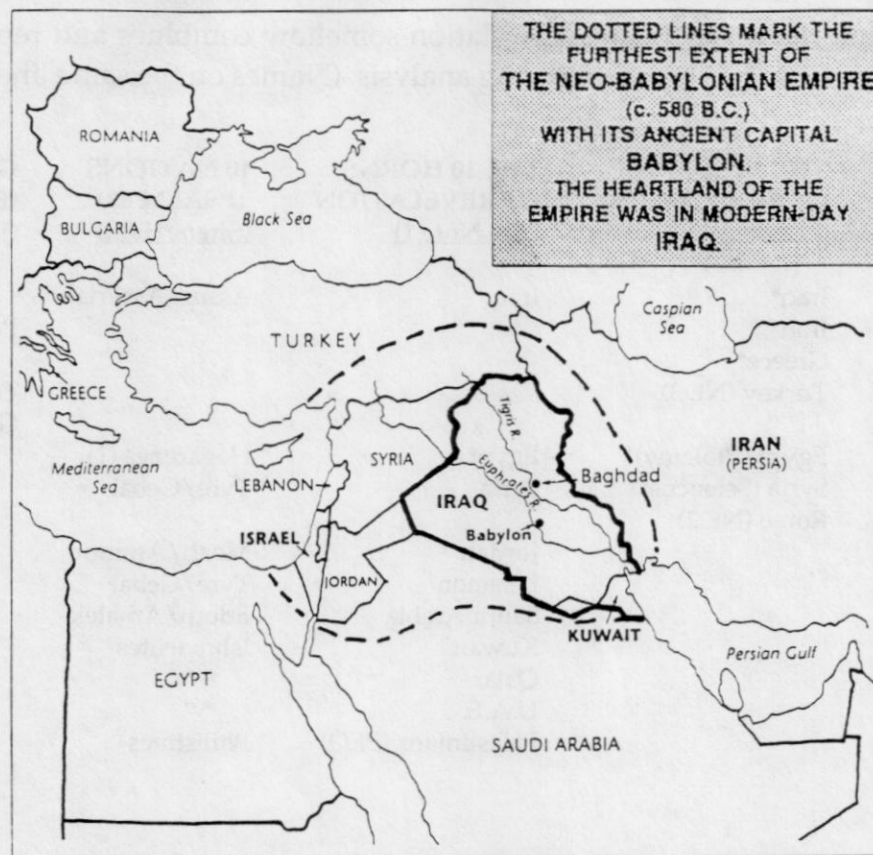
The Bible tells us generally that men who know not God, or who brutalize other men, are no better than "beasts" (Psa. 49:12,20; Eccl. 3:19,20). This is probably the rationale for Gentile oppressors of God's people being characterized as "beasts" of prey, in Daniel and elsewhere. The great "Beast" of Revelation 13, with its 7 heads and 10 horns, also has the number of a *man* (v. 18).

More specifically, at least one man in Old Testament times was actually made by God to be like a "beast":

**"Let his [Nebuchadnezzar's] heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him....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 whosoever he will....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" (Dan. 4:16,25,32,33).**



Does this suggest that the "Beast" of the Last Days is *Babylonian*, as was Nebuchadnezzar?



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"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. 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" (Rev. 13:1,2).

This Beast combines the characteristics of Daniel's four beasts. Thus:

**Beast of Revelation 13**

Like a leopard  
 Feet like a bear  
 Mouth of a lion  
 10 horns

**Daniel 7**

3rd Beast  
 2nd Beast  
 1st Beast  
 4th Beast

The Apocalyptic Beast appears to be a composite of all four beasts of Daniel 7. Furthermore, the four beasts have, collectively, 7 heads and ten horns, i.e.:

	<u>Heads</u>	<u>Horns</u>
Lion	1	—
Bear	1	—
Leopard	4	—
Fourth Beast	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	7	10

And the one Beast of Revelation 13 likewise has, all to itself, seven heads and ten horns!

This idea — that the great Beast of Revelation somehow combines and represents the four kingdoms of Daniel — suggests the following analysis. (Names on the same line are equivalent):

<u>THE 4 KINGDOMS (DANIEL 2 &amp; 7)</u>	<u>THE 7 HEADS OF REVELATION</u>	<u>THE 10 HORNS OF REVELATION (See Note 1)</u>	<u>10 NATIONS (PSALM 83) (Shem/Ham)</u>	<u>GOG/MAGOG (EZEKIEL 38) (Japheth)</u>
Babylon	Iraq*	Iraq	Assur (Assyria)	
Persia	Iran*			Persia
Greece (Nt. 4)	Greece*			
" "	Turkey (Nt. 3)			Togarmah, Gomer, etc.
" "	" "			
" "	Egypt (Ptolemy)*	Egypt	Hagarenes (?)	
" "	Syria (Seleucus)*	Syria	Tyre/Gebal	
Rome	Rome (Nt. 2)			
		Jordan	Moab/Ammon	
		Lebanon	Tyre/Gebal	
		Saudi Arabia	Edom/Amalek	
		Kuwait	Ishmaelites	
		Qatar	" "	
		U.A.E.	" "	
		Palestinians (PLO)	Philistines	
				Libya Ethiopia

**NOTES:**

Most of the above analysis derives from these basic premises: (a) the "Beast" of Revelation is a composite of Daniel's 4 beasts, and (b) the 10 nations of Psalm 83 correspondent to the 10 horns.

While there are numerous points of connection between the Beasts, the heads, the horns, and the nations of Psalm 83, the nations of Ezekiel 38 and 39 are not the same group at all.

Might they not (as Revelation 20 suggests) attack Israel only after Christ and the saints have defeated the Arab powers and established the Kingdom in Jerusalem?

\* These five "heads" had ruled over Israel by John's time. Egypt (the king of the south) and Syria (the king of the north) each ruled for only short periods during approx. 300-100 BC (see first part of Daniel 11).

1. These nations (all Arab) are all remnants of the Roman Empire in the Middle East (thus justifiably considered the "extension" of Rome, and the "toes" of Daniel 2). This criterion (i.e. being part of the old Roman Empire) would exclude other nations like Yemen, Oman, and Iran. In fact, the territory of the 10 Arab kings, along with that of Israel, is the only area of the whole world where all of Daniel's 4 kingdoms actually ruled (i.e. where the territories of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome at their furthest limits overlapped)!
2. The 6th "head" "now is": At the time of John's writing, Rome ruled over Israel.
3. The 7th "head" "is to come" — i.e. Turkey/Ottoman Empire. (Although it rules over Middle East for a long time, it rules only for "a short time" over Jewish-populated Palestine.)
4. Greece's 4 "heads" (Dan. 7:6; 8:8,22), plus other 3 kingdoms (with one head each) = 7 "heads".

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

- A. The "little horn" in Daniel (Dan. 7:8) appears parallel to (identical with?) the 8th "head", whose deadly wound is healed (Rev. 13:3,5,6). Thus, it is also related to the great and terrible beast. Who is the beast? Consulting the preceding chart, which modern nations are both "heads" and "horns"? There are only three: Iraq, Syria, & Egypt. The great "Beast" should therefore come from one of these three nations.
- B. Given the above assumptions, and observing the world around us, it seems possible that either Iraq or Syria could become the dominant military power among Arab nations.



- C. Iraq might grab the gulf oil fields, thus "uprooting" 3 "horns" like Saudi Arabia. Iraq would then become the "head of gold" — i.e. virtually the economic "ruler" of the world (again, very similar to the *original* "Nebuchadnezzar", the Babylonian head of nations and preeminent commercial power of his day).
- D. Iraq is absolutely anti-Semitic, and might be influenced even further against Israel by the likes of Arafat. Could Arafat be the "little horn with a mouth speaking great things" — i.e. great things *against Israel*? Consider: Daniel's "beastly image" had *Babylon* for a head, but David's "beastly image" — Goliath (1 Sam. 17) — was a Philistine, i.e. *Palestinian*!
- E. Is Saddam Hussein's recent defeat in the Gulf War the "deadly wound" (Rev. 13:3) from which he will (seemingly miraculously) recover to dominate the Arab nations and threaten Israel again?

## "666"

**"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" (Rev. 13:18).**

The Beast/man, with his allies, is a composite/culmination of all those who have trampled Jerusalem under their feet (cp. 11:2).

The total years from the first subjugation of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar....

c. March 16, 597 B.C.

...to the beginning of the final siege of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire....

Early April A.D. 70

...is almost exactly 666 years!

## REFERENCES TO EGYPT IN THE APOCALYPSE

Just as there are a number of references to Babylon and the Euphrates in the Apocalypse, so it may be expected that there would be references to Egypt and the Nile:

**8:8-11:** "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; 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. 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; 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" (cp. 16:3,4): The sea becomes as *blood*, and the *rivers* become bitter. Compare the first plague upon Egypt (Exod. 7:19-21).

**8:12:** "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" (cp. 16:10): Compare also with the ninth plague upon Egypt — the plague of darkness (Exod. 10:21-23).

**11:6:** "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."

**12:1-10:** The Dragon (crocodile) is often a symbol of Egypt:

"Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself " (Ezek. 29:3).

Interwoven into the Apocalyptic scene there is also the drama of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The similarities are listed below:

<i>Revelation 12</i>	<i>Moses' deliverance of Israel</i>
1. The Dragon.	Egypt (Ezekiel 29:3; Psalm 74:13, 14; Isaiah 27:1 and 51:9).
2. The woman.	Israel.
3. The man child to be destroyed.	Pharaoh's fiat against all male children (Exodus 1:16).
4. The child caught up to God.	Israel at Sinai.
5. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb."	Deliverance through the Passover Lamb.
6. The woman in the wilderness.	Israel in the wilderness (Ezekiel 20:32; Hosea 2:14, 19).
7. Provided with food there.	Manna given.
8. Wings of the great eagle (the cherub of Revelation 4:7).	"I bare you on eagles' wings" (Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11).
9. "The dragon persecuted (=pursued) the woman."	Pursuit by Pharaoh's army.
10. "The earth swallowed up the flood."	"The earth (i.e. Red Sea quicksands) swallowed them up" (Exodus 15:12).

(H.A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach*, p. 162)

**16:13,14:** "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. 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": "Frogs" are mentioned elsewhere only in relation to the plagues of *Egypt* (Exod. 8:6). Three "frogs" from three rivers in Isa. 27:1 (i.e. Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile)? "Dragon" = Egyptian crocodile? "Beast" = Babylon/Iraq? "False prophet" = Islam (i.e. the religious element)? These three gather all kings (of Islam? of the Land?) to the great battle of Armageddon.

## "TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE KINGS FROM THE EAST"

**"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" (Rev. 16:12).**

The Last Days deliverance and return of Jewish believers who have been carried into captivity by the invading Arabs, is the subject of Isaiah 11. There is pictured there the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is described as "a rod out of the stem of Jesse" (11:1), upon whom God's Spirit rests (vv. 2,3), who will "smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips



shall he slay the wicked" (v. 4; cp. Rev. 1:16; 2:26,27; 11:15; 12:5; 19:15,21). And so, when Israel is delivered and God's Kingdom is set up (Isa. 11:9),

**"...the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to receive the remnant of his people....from Assyria (Iraq)...from Egypt....from Elam [Persia, or Iran]....and from Shinar [Babylon, or Iraq again]....And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (vv. 11,16).**

The Last Days deliverance and return of Jewish believers — who have evidently been carried into captivity by the invaders (cp. Zech. 14:2) — is also alluded to in a number of other passages:

**Isa 19:23-25:** "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance": Assyria and Egypt figure prominently in this prophecy as well. They represent the two extremes of the Land of Promise, on the east and the west. When the Land promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18) comes in for special blessings, then Egypt and Assyria will also!

**Isa 27:12,13:** "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem": The remnant of Israel, once scattered, are then gathered from the very edges of the Land of Promise, where they had been carried away, presumably after the defeat of Jerusalem by the Arab hordes (Zech. 14:2).

**Isa. 35:1-10:** "And an highway shall be there [i.e. in the desert], and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein....And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

**Isa. 43:1-7:** "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him": Notice carefully that this is *righteous* Israel, the ones who are called by the Name of God, created for His Glory, etc. As the Egyptians suffered punishment when God first delivered His people out of bondage, so — this time — the Egyptians and the Ethiopians and other Arab peoples of the east and north and south will suffer for their degradation and oppression of God's people in the Last Days.

**Isa. 52:1-10:** "For thus saith the Lord GOD, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the LORD, that my people is taken away for nought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the LORD; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. Therefore my people shall know my name: therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak: behold, it is I. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!....Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem."

**Jer. 3:18:** "In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers": Compare also 16:14,15.

Joel 3:2-7: "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. And they have cast lots for my people; and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink. Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompense? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompense upon your own head; Because ye have taken my silver and my gold, and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompense upon your own head."

Zech. 10:9-11: "And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries; and they shall live with their children, and turn again. I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria; and I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon; and place shall not be found for them. And he shall pass through the sea [the Red Sea?] with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river [the Euphrates?: cp. Isa. 11:15; Rev. 16:12] shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away."

Rev. 13:10: "*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.*" (When was the New Testament Church ever carried into captivity *en masse*? But these verses are particularly appropriate to Israel, both past and future.)

The drying up of the great river (the NIV has "the Euphrates") in its seven streams — referred to above in Isaiah 11:15 — as part of the deliverance of the Jews from captivity, is probably the subject of quotation in Revelation 16:12:

**"And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."**

This drying up immediately precedes the battle of the great day of God Almighty, called "Armageddon" (vv. 15,16) and is, in Isaiah 11, the direct means by which God's redeemed people return to their own Land! So this saving of a righteous remnant of Israel from Assyria/Babylon (and Egypt) is not something that has already happened, but rather a yet-to-be-fulfilled feature of the very Last Days!



# A SUGGESTED OUTLINE OF THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS IN THE LAST DAYS

(In every instance, the references cited are only samples of numerous others.)

1. **A final Arab-Israeli War, resulting in a devastating defeat for Israel:** Notice the same basic order of events in each prophecy below:

	PSALM 83	EZEKIEL 35,36	JOEL 3	OBADIAH	ZECHARIAH 14	ZEPHANIAH 2,3	AMOS 1,2
a. Arab invasion and annexation of Israel, including especially the "ancient high places". The nations involved....	3,4, 6,8	35:10,15; 36:2,3	1,4,11,19	1,10, 13	2,3	2:4,5,8,9	1:3,6,9, 11,13, etc.
	EDOM, MOAB, Gebal, AMMON, Amalek, Hagarenes, Ishmaelites, <b>Philistines</b> , Tyre, and ASSUR	Idumea (i.e. EDOM)	"All nations" ("round about"), that is, Tyre, Zidon, <b>Philistines</b> , Egypt, EDOM	EDOM, <b>Philistia</b>	"All nations" ("round about"): Egypt, <b>Canaanites</b>	<b>Philistines</b> , MOAB, AMMON, Ethiopia, ASSYRIA	Syria, <b>Gaza</b> , Tyre, EDOM, AMMON, MOAB
b. A Divine judgment against them.	9-15	35:11; 36:5	2,12,14	8,15,16	3,4,12	2:2; 3:8	
c. A manifestation of Divine glory (thus, this cannot be fulfilled in 1948 or 1967!).	16,18	35:4,11, 14,15	16,17, 20,21	17-21	5,8,9,16	3:9,17	1:2
<i>Notice that this defeat of Israel is the LAST agony before the fulfillment of Israel's hope!</i>		36:12,14, 15	17,20	17,21	11,21	3:19,20	

2. Israel's defeat will bring about **national repentance**, a necessary preliminary to the return of Christ: Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 30:1-3; Hos. 5:15—6:3; Ezek. 20:42-44; Zech. 12:10—13:1; Acts 3:19,20.  
This is probably accomplished through the **preaching of Elijah** (or a prophet and teacher like Elijah): Mal. 3:1; 4:5,6; Matt. 17:11.  
Possibly this will cover **3 literal 1/2 years**: Luke 4:25; James 5:17,18; Dan. 12:7; Rev. 11—13.
3. In response to Israel's repentance and prayers, **Christ descends to Jerusalem**: Compare Zech. 14:4 with Acts 1:11,12. See also Psa. 2:6-8.  
Compare Ezek. 10:4,19; 11:23,24 with 43:2,4.
4. The responsible dead are raised and — along with the living — are called away to judgment, again at Jerusalem: There **the righteous are given eternal life** (Matt. 25:31-34; Psa. 87:5; 133:3); 1 Thes. 4:13-17. (This is *not* about a "rapture" to heaven, but a carrying away from one place on earth to another: compare Rev. 14:1-5; Acts 8:39; Matt. 24:39-41. Where will the righteous "ever be with the Lord"?: Rom. 4:13; Matt. 5:5; 6:8; Gal. 3:27-29.)

5. **The rejected will be punished** at "Gehenna" (next to Jerusalem): Matt. 5:22; 10:28; Mark 9:43,45,47.
6. The oppressed Jews in and around Jerusalem are delivered by the "King of Glory": Psa. 24:7-9; Isa. 26:2; Luke 21:28; Matt. 23:37-39.
7. The Jews who have been carried away into captivity (see Zech. 14:2) are delivered in a "**Second Exodus**": Isa. 11:11-15; 19:20-25; 63:11-19; Mic. 7:15.
8. **Nuclear war (?)**, with disastrous short-term results for much of the world: Isa. 24:17-20; Zech. 14:12,13; Joel 2:30,31; Luke 21:25,26; 2 Thes. 1:7-9; 2 Pet. 3:7,10. Thus will be overthrown most of the religious and political opposition to the rule of Christ and his saints.
9. **Christ's worldwide kingdom is proclaimed and firmly established in Jerusalem:** Isa. 2:1-4; 24:23; 60:14; Jer. 3:17; Joel 3:16; Mic. 4:2-8; Zech. 14:16; Matt. 5:34,35; Luke 19:42; etc.
10. **The Gog-Magog invasion** of Ezekiel 38, 39 (and Revelation 20) — probably *after* Christ's kingdom is set up in Jerusalem. Reasons:
  - a) The sequence of events in Ezek. 35—39.
  - b) Compare Rev. 19: The "marriage of the Lamb" (vv. 5-9), where Christ puts on his "many crowns" and assumes the name "King of Kings" (vv. 12,16), *precedes* the overthrow of "Gog" (cp. vv. 17,18 with Ezek. 39:17-20).
  - c) Ezekiel's confederacy is comprised of descendants of Japheth (cp. Gen. 10), whereas Psalm 83 pictures a Semitic confederacy. First, the "inner circle" of Moslem nations (Shem) attacks Israel (#1 above), and then later the "outer circle" of Moslem nations (Japheth) comes against Israel — but is (apparently) immediately destroyed before doing any harm.
  - d) The phrase "dwelling safely (or securely)" (Ezek. 38:8,11,14) is a "Kingdom" description which parallels Ezek. 34:25,28; 28:25,26; Zech. 14:11; Jer. 23:5,6.
11. **The Millennium:** That is, a 1,000-year reign of Jesus Christ and his saints on the earth: Psa. 72; Isa. 2:2-4; Isa. 35; Zech. 14:16; Rev. 20:6; etc.



THE TIME PERIODS IN DANIEL AND REVELATION

- 3½ times (years) (Dan 7:25) Little horn over saints; ends with its destruction and saints possess the kingdom
- ½ week (of 70th wk) (Dan 9:27) Offerings cease; ends with destruction of desolator
- 3½ times (Dan 12:7) Length of "wonders"; ends with shattering of power over the holy people
- 1290/1335 Days (Dan 12:11,12) From time offerings cease, to the blessing of the "wise" (cf. v.2.10.13)
- 300 evening-mornings = 150 days = 5 mos (Dan 8:14) Length of vision re continual burnt offerings, the transgression that makes desolate, the giving over of the sanctuary, & host to be trampled  
 (literally, "3 hundreds, thousands", so not necessarily = 2000)
- 5 months (Rev 9:5) Locusts torture "unsealed" mankind, but not kill  
 (Note: 5 mos = approx. length of AD70 siege of Jerusalem)
- 42 months (Rev 11:2) Court of temple/holy city trampled by nations
- 1260 days (Rev 11:3) Prophesying of two witnesses; ends by being killed by the beast; after 3½ days, raised; earthquake
- 1260 days (Rev 12:6) Woman in wilderness, to place prepared by God
- 3½ times (Rev 12:14) Woman in wilderness, to be nourished
- 42 months (Rev 13:5) Beast exercises authority; war on saints & conquers
- 1 hour (Rev 17:13) Ten horns make war on Lamb & lose
- (Luke 21:2-24) Jerusalem trodden down by Gentiles, to fulfil all that is written (cf. Matt 24:15, quotes Daniel)

NOTICE how all the time periods could easily be aligned, and the events concurrent.

## THE WOMAN OF CHAPTER 12

**“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” (Rev. 12:1).**

Sun, moon, and stars are used in the Bible frequently as symbolic of Israel:

**Gen. 37:9,10:** “And he [i.e. Joseph] dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?”: In Joseph’s dream, the sun = his father, the moon = his mother, and the stars = his 11 brothers (i.e. the whole house of Israel).

**Gen. 22:17:** “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed *as the stars of the heaven*, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies”: Compare also Deut. 1:10; 10:22.

**Jer. 31:35,36:** “Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the *sun* for a light by day, and the ordinances of the *moon* and of the *stars* for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then *the seed of Israel* also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.”

Other similar passages: Amos 8:9; Mic. 3:6; Isa. 60:20; Joel 2:10,30,31; 3:15; Psa. 89:35-37.

**“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” (Rev. 12:5).**

Two possibilities:

- (1) Jesus himself (19:15; cp. Psa. 2:9; 110:2), or
- (2) Those of Israel who come into Christ (2:26,27).

**“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” (Rev. 12:4).**

- (1) Herod’s attempts to kill the baby Jesus (Matt. 2:1-6), and later attempts on Jesus’ life (John 5:18; 7:1,10; etc.), or....
- (2) Numerous Jewish and Roman attempts to destroy the early Jewish Church.

Last Days application? Confined, perhaps, to the *Jewish Church*, the repentant and faithful remnant born out of Israel’s sufferings at the hands of her Arab enemies, through the preaching of a Latter-Day “Elijah” (see #2 in “A Suggested Outline” above).



## THE WOMAN OF CHAPTER 17

“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 three-score days....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” (Rev. 12:6,14).

“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: 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. 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” (Rev. 17:1-3).

The woman of Revelation 12, identified with Israel, was last seen being pursued *into the wilderness* by the Dragon. Now the same woman (or so it would seem!) appears again, this time already *in the wilderness*, riding on the Beast. But her character has drastically changed!:

“And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**” (Rev. 17:5).

It appears this woman (Israel?) is identical with Babylon. But, more properly, it may be said that she has the *mark* of Babylon on herself! She is now the *slave* of Babylon, being one of those who is branded or marked on the forehead with the name of the Beast (13:16). By contrast, the faithful are marked on their foreheads with the name of God and His Son (7:3; 2:17; 14:1; Ezek. 9:4).

As a result of its oppression by the Beast and the ten kings, the nation of Israel has now become differentiated into two elements: the faithful remnant who bear the mark of God and His Son, and the unfaithful harlot who bears the mark of Babylon — having sold her birthright and allied herself with God’s enemy so as to receive a share of the Beast’s power. These powers she uses, to the best of her ability, to persecute the true Church in her midst.

There are now to be seen remarkable contrasts between the Bride and the Harlot:

<i>The Bride</i>	<i>The Whore</i>
New Jerusalem.	Babylon.
Sea of glass.	Sits on many waters.
A bride adorned for her husband.	"I sit a queen and am no widow."
Married to the Lamb.	Commits fornication with kings of the earth.
Hunger no more, neither thirst any more.	Makes people drunk with her wine.
In fine linen, the righteousness of saints.	Purple and scarlet, yet made desolate and naked.
Adorned with jasper stone.	Gold, precious stones, pearls.
Clear as crystal.	A gold cup—abominations.
The mystery of God finished.	Mystery.
With her, the redeemed, virgins.	Mother of harlots.
Guided by "the spirit of prophecy."	Drunk with blood of saints and martyrs.
Having the glory of God.	Burned with fire.
The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.	"Come out of her, my people."

(H.A. Whittaker, *Revelation: A Biblical Approach*, p. 213)



# THE JEZEBEL CONNECTION

Old Testament Jezebel	New Testament Jezebel	Mother of Harlots
A pagan; daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians (1 Kings 16:31).	Convert (pseudo-convert?) from pagan Thyatira.	Heavy influence from paganism.
False prophetess to Israel (Daughter of a priest of Astarte <sup>1</sup> , indicating that she could have been a priestess).	Called herself a prophetess (Rev. 2:20).	False prophetess of blasphemy to the world (Rev. 17:3-5).
Wife of Ahab, King of Israel (1 Kings 16:31).	Wife of the overseer or an elder in Thyatira? <sup>2</sup>	Supposed to be betrothed to Christ, the King (Rev. 19:7).
Leads and seduces Israel into idolatry and immorality (1 Kings 16:31-33; 2 Kings 9:22).	Leads and seduces many in the Thyatiran Ecclesia into idolatry and immorality (Rev. 2:20-23).	Leads and seduces inhabitants of the world into immorality (Rev. 17:2-5, 18:3,9).
Committed fornication (2 Kings 9:22) <sup>3</sup> .	Committed fornication (Rev. 2:21) <sup>3</sup> .	Commits fornication (Rev. 17:2) <sup>3</sup> .
Killed the prophets of the LORD (1 Kings 18:4,13).	Did away with the truth of the faithful (Rev. 2:20).	Drunk with the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6) and guilty of their blood (Rev. 18:24).
Supported prophets of Baal that performed ungodly acts in groves (1Kings18:21) and seduced Ahab into setting up a grove (1Kings16:33).	Seduced members of the Thyatiran Ecclesia into fornication and worship in the groves (Rev. 2:20) <sup>4</sup> .	Committed fornication with the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:2).
Israel, in the days of Jezebel and Ahab, 'halted between two opinions' (1 Kings 18:21).	Ecclesia in Thyatira halted between two opinions by allowing truth and error to exist side by side (Rev. 2:20).	Compromise of the Truth -- mixture of truth and error.
A remnant of 7000 did not serve Baal (1 Kings 19:18).	A remnant remained faithful (Rev. 2:24).	A remnant remains faithful and holds fast to the Truth (Rev. 18:4, 19:7-9).
Judgment upon Jezebel (1 Kings 21:23; 2 Kings 9:33-35) and her cohorts (1 Kings 18:40).	Judgment upon Thyatiran Jezebel and her cohorts (Rev. 2:22-23).	Judgment on Harlot (Babylon) (Rev. 18:2-19) and her cohorts (implied by Rev. 18:4).
Jezebel thrown down and dies lying down, under the trampling feet of Judgment (2 Kings 9:30-37).	Thyatiran Jezebel warned that she could be thrown (Gr. 'ballo') into a bed of pain (Rev. 2:22).	Harlot (Babylon) thrown (Gr. 'ballo') down and is found no more (Rev. 18:21).
Jezebel's descendants killed (2 Kings 9, 10, 11).	Thyatiran Jezebel's children warned that they could be killed (Rev. 2:23).	Judgment on the children of the Mother of Harlots (implied by Rev. 17:5 and 18:4).
Appearance: 'painted her face'; 'hair done up' (2 Kings 9:30).	Appearance: Similar? Did she deck herself in cosmetics, jewellery and Thyatiran purple?	Appearance: Decked in purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones and pearls (Rev. 17:4).
Attitude: When a widow, the ex-queen adorns herself in a way unlike a widow (2 Kings 9:30).	Attitude: Similar? She was warned that she could suffer the loss of children.	Attitude: Says: 'I sit a queen, and am no a widow, and shall see no sorrow.' (Rev. 18:7). <sup>5</sup>
Flesh eaten by dogs (2 Kings 9:36).	Flesh tormented with pain (Rev. 2:22).	Flesh eaten (Rev. 17:16).
Prophets of pagan groves ate (food sacrificed to idols?) at Jezebel's table with her (1 Kings 18:19).	Seduced some to go to pagan groves and to eat food sacrificed to idols (implied by Rev. 2:20).	Inhabitants of the world get drunk with her (Rev. 17:2).
Prophets of Baal benefitted from Jezebel's patronage (1 Kings 18:19).	Seduced some in Thyatira to benefit from the fornications of the trade unions (implied by Rev. 2:20).	Merchants grow rich and benefit through her fornications (Rev. 18:3) <sup>6</sup> .
Practiced witchcraft (2 Kings 9:22) <sup>7</sup> .	Thyatiran Jezebel rebelled against the Truth, and the Bible likens rebellion to witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23).	Deceived nations with her sorcery (Rev. 18:23) <sup>7</sup> .

Old Testament Jezebel	New Testament Jezebel	Mother of Harlots
A queen (also later an ex-queen) – associated with the royal colour of purple.	Came from Thyatira – a city that produced purple dyes (Acts 16:14).	Decked with purple (Rev. 17:4).
Leader and figurehead of pagan religion/cult movement in Israel.	Leader and figurehead of pagan influenced religion/cult movement in Thyatiran Ecclesia.	Leader and figurehead of pagan influenced religion(s)/ cult(s) in the world.

Endnotes:

- 1 In Josephus, Against Apion, Book I. 18, Ethbaal (Ithobalus) is called the priest of Astarte.
- 2 The Greek word for 'woman' in Revelation 2:20 (gunē) can also mean 'wife'.
- 3 The Greek LXX rendering of 2 Kings 9:22 uses 'hai porneiai Iezabel' (the fornications of Jezebel), and Revelation 2:21 and 17:2 both use the identical phrase 'tēs porneias autēs' (the fornication of her).
- 4 It is known that Thyatira had many pagan groves, and that there was even at least one woman who operated a cult shrine who called herself a prophetess.
- 5 Since Revelation 18:7 is based on and alludes to Isaiah 47:7-8, the phrase 'shall see no sorrow' in Revelation 18:7 must refer to 'loss of children' as in Isaiah 47:8. The connection then carries through to the New Testament Jezebel who was warned that she could suffer the loss of children.
- 6 It is interesting that Revelation 18:22 mentions craftsmen and crafts in connection with the Harlot (Babylon). This is significant in light of the many idolatrous and immoral trade unions in Thyatira.
- 7 The Greek of the LXX rendering of 2 Kings 9:22 uses 'pharmakon' (neuter) for 'witchcraft' and the Greek of Revelation 18:23 uses 'pharmakeia' (feminine) for 'sorcery'.

(Stephen Snobelen)

**SUGGESTION:** The original Jezebel was an Arab (Zidonian) princess masquerading as a Jewish queen. This strange combination of Israelite and Arab "harlot" may be seen again in the Last Days: a corrupt and wicked Israeli leadership will join forces with their Arab overlords to save their own skins. From this "puppet" government of Israel will come (as it did in the first century) intense persecution of God's true Church being developed out of Israel.



## SCENES FROM THE REVELATION

- 1:1-3: "What must *soon* take place" (compare 16:15; 22:7,20). "The time is *near*."
- 1:7: He is coming (first, and especially) for the *Jews* (Zech. 12:10-14; 13:1).
- 3:7: He has the key of David, to open....what? The Golden Gate of the City (Psa. 24:7-9; 118:19,20; Isa. 26:2).
- 3:12: He is coming to erect *pillars* in the Temple of his God.
- 3:21: He is coming to sit on David's throne (2 Sam. 7:12-14; Isa. 9:6,7; Luke 1:32,33).
- 6:1-17: **The seals:** War, death, famine, plague, persecution, and a great earthquake ("as figs drop from a fig tree" — Israel: Matt. 24:32/Mark 13:28,29/Luke 21:29-31; cp. Mark 11:13-21; Luke 13:6,7; Jer. 24:1-10; Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1).  
....To be followed by....
- 7:1-8: The "**sealing**" of the 144,000 (cp. 14:1-5), out of all the tribes of *Israel*.  
....And then....
- 7:9-17: A great multitude, innumerable, out of *all* nations.
- 8:1-13: **The first four trumpets:** *One-third* of earth (Greek *ge* = Hebrew *eretz*, which can signify "Land") is burned up; one-third of sea is turned to blood; one-third of rivers are made bitter; one-third of heavens are darkened.
- 9:1-11: **The fifth trumpet:** Smoke out of the Abyss (the Sinai Desert?) — scorpions (from the desert), and a monstrous "army" of *locusts* (Heb. *arbeh* — or "Arabs"! see Joel), who torment men for 5 months. The great Locust-king is named Abaddon (the "Destroyer").
- 9:12-21: **The sixth trumpet:** The release of a great destroying power (200 million) bound at the *Euphrates River* (Iraq/Babylon?), to kill *one-third* of the men on the earth (or "in the *Land*").  
Fire, smoke, and sulfur = poison gas / chemical weapons?
- 10:1-11: **Angelic proclamation:** "There will be no more delay! The mystery of God will be accomplished!"
- 11:1-19: **The holy city and temple are trodden down by Gentiles for 3 1/2 years** (Luke 21:24).  
**The two witnesses** — Moses (cp. plagues of Egypt) and Elijah (fire from heaven: 2 Kings 1:10) — prophesy (cp. Mal. 3:1; 4:5,6) during this time. Then the Beast out of the Abyss (9:11) kills them. Their bodies lie in the open street (plaza? western wall of the Temple mount?) of Jerusalem for 3 1/2 days. Those who (now) dwell "in the *Land*" rejoice over them (Psa. 83:3,4)! But then the breath of life enters them, and they stand up again (Ezek. 37:1-11). There is a great earthquake at Jerusalem (Zech. 14:4,5 — which is the return of Christ), and the Kingdom of God is announced. The dead are raised and rewarded, and God's holy temple is opened to mankind (cp. Matt. 27:51/Luke 23:45; Heb. 10:20)!
- 12:1-17: **A woman clothed with the sun, moon, and 12 stars** (Gen. 37:9-11; Jer. 31:35,36) = *Israel*!  
She gives birth to a man-child who will rule the nations (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:27), who ascends to his Father in heaven. The woman flees from the persecuting dragon (with 7 heads and 10 horns), and is nourished in the wilderness for 1,260 days (i.e. 3 1/2 years). The dragon is cast out of "heaven" (i.e. Jerusalem, where God's throne is) — but still persecutes the children of the woman (those Jews carried into captivity in Arab lands: Zech. 14:2; cp. Isa. 11:11-16; 19:20-25; 63:11-19).
- 13:1-18: **A great Beast with 7 heads** (a composite of Daniel's 4 beast-empires: see esp. Dan. 7:6) and **10 horns** (Psa. 83:5-8; Gen. 15:18-21; cp. toes of image in Dan. 2). One head (*Nebuchadnezzar* — the *head* of gold: Dan. 2:38; cp. Gen. 3:15) was mortally wounded, but recovers. The Beast blasphemes God and kills believers for 42 months (i.e. 3 1/2 years).  
Another Beast with 2 horns like a lamb (or ram: Dan. 8:3,6,7 — of *Persia*) "seals" its slaves with a mark (ct. Rev. 7:3), and causes the image of the first Beast to be worshiped (cp. *Nebuchadnezzar's* image: Dan. 3:1-7).

This first Beast is a *man* (cp. Psa. 49:12,20; Eccl. 3:19,20; Dan. 4:16,25,32,33 — *Nebuchadnezzar* again!).

- 14:1-5: **The "Lamb"** (ct. 13:11) **stands on Mount Zion** with the 144,000 of Israel (7:1-8), who have now been redeemed.
- 14:6-11: Angels announce the hour of judgment, the (impending?) fall of *Babylon*, and the pouring out of wrath upon those who worship the Beast and its image.
- 14:14-20: "Thrust in the sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine." And blood flows like a river for about 200 miles (the approximate length of the land of Israel, from north to south).
- 15:1-8: **The seven last plagues**, to finish the wrath of God. These are the bowls of ch. 16....
- 16:1-9: **The first four bowls**: In contrast to the trumpets (ch. 8,9), which affected only one-third of the "Land", the bowls affect *all* the "Land": Plagues on men of the Land; sea turned to blood; rivers become blood; the sun scorches men.
- 16:10,11: **The fifth bowl** is poured out on the throne of the Beast.
- 16:12: **The sixth bowl** is poured out on *the river Euphrates* (Iraq/Babylon). Its waters are dried up, making way for the kings of the east (= Arabs: Judg. 6:3; 1 Kings 4:30; Job 1:3; Jer. 49:28). Another invading army, being restrained at the Euphrates (Persia/Iran: Ezek. 38,39?) until its time is ripe.
- 16:13-16: "Frogs" = Egypt only (Exod. 8:6). Three "frogs" from the 3 rivers (Nile, Tigris, Euphrates) in Isa. 27:1? Dragon = Egyptian crocodile? Beast = Babylon/Iraq? False prophet = Islam? These gather all nations (of Islam? of Land?) to **the great battle of Armageddon**.
- 16:17-21: The great city (*Babylon*) falls.
- 17:1-18: A (Jewish?) woman comes is seen in the "wilderness" (cp. 12:14), having made immoral deals with the (Moslem) kings of the Land. She sits upon the Beast with 7 heads and 10 horns. Like the Beast, she also kills the saints.

This Beast is the same Beast who came up out of the Abyss (9:2,3,11). Its 7 heads (13:1) are 7 kings, or kingdoms which have ruled over the Land of Israel: 5 have fallen [Babylon, Persia, and 3 of the 4 Grecian heads (Dan. 7:6): Greece, Syria, Egypt]; one is (Rome, in the first century); and one is to come (Turkey/Ottoman Empire). The eighth king existed once before (as Babylon), and now (i.e. in the first century) does not exist, but will exist again (Iraq); he is part of the seven, and will be destroyed.

The 10 horns (13:1) of the Beast are ten kings who have not yet received power over "the Land" (i.e. of Israel), but will do so for a very short time ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  years?) along with the Beast. Are these listed in Psa. 83:5-8 and Gen. 15:18-21 (cp. Dan. 2:41-43)?

Finally, the Beast and the 10 kings will turn upon the Woman, and will destroy her.

- 18:1-24: The proclamation of the fall of the great city "Babylon" — a harlot who committed fornication with the kings of the Land, and who made them rich.
- 19:1-16: After the Harlot is destroyed, the pure **Bride of the Lamb** appears, dressed for their marriage. Then the Bridegroom, the King of kings, on a white horse, leads his army out of heaven.
- 19:17-21: The nations are called to **the marriage feast**, to eat the flesh of kings and captains and armies. The Beast and the false prophet (Islam?) are captured and thrown into "Gehenna".
- 20:1-15: **Christ and the saints** (the subjects of the great resurrection) **begin to reign on the earth for 1,000 years**. After their Kingdom is established, then Gog-Magog is destroyed in a last great slaughter (Ezek. 38/39).
- 21:1-22:5: "**New heavens and earth**"; the "Holy City, new Jerusalem" (the Bride of Christ). All things new; the water of life. The final victory of Jerusalem over Babylon. The kings of the Land come to offer gifts (cp. Isa. 60:3,5,11). The tree of life.
- 22:6-21: "**The time is near.**" "**Surely I am coming soon.**"



