

## **ARMAGEDDON**

### ***Introduction***

**WE** believe that the Holy Scriptures is not primarily a history book. Where events are recorded they are only done so as is necessary to communicate the grace of God. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible moves forward to the climax of the over-throw of Satan's kingdom among men and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Under Satanic influences mortal men have rebelled against God in a vain attempt to rule this world. Satan is shown to have one desire and that is to have men worship and honour him directly in the place of God. He shall achieve this in the person called the man of sin: <sup>3</sup>*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;* <sup>4</sup>*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (2Thessalonians 2:3-4).*

How Satan gets to that point is the subject of this article. Being prophecy there are numerous interpretations, however, the basic elements are quite plain so that we should not fail to grasp its truth. It is not my intention to give the many varied views that exist. Certainly if we want a summary of the subject we call 'Eschatology' then the online encyclopaedia, Wikipedia is as good a starting place as any. What I will say with respect to a popular interpretation is simply that to take the one reference of a thousand years literally (Rev 20) in a highly symbolic book is inconsistent with the immediate context and the rest of the book. For example, those who reign with Christ were beheaded for their faith. That being the case then the vast majority of Christians won't be included! They were beheaded because they refused to worship the beast or to receive his mark. Yet our friends say the church won't go through the tribulation; we also see them reigning as disembodied souls, and yet the rapture is physical – body and soul! I am of the 'A-millennium' school of interpretation in which the thousand years, along with the bulk of the book, is understood symbolically to represent the entire period between Christ's first and second coming (with Satan's little season being prior to Christ's appearance). I do, however, take the liberty to say some things as I understand them.

Even so, though interpretations may differ, we are sure of one thing: God's kingdom shall come and only God's people shall survive to the end. When Christ comes billions of us shall be alive and we shall be completely caught unawares! Non-Christians will be rooted to the spot as Christians rise from the earth to meet their Saviour. Those whose bodies cannot defy gravity shall also be those that cannot defy the judgment! Racked with guilt, fear and shame and with nowhere to run, only the doom of the lake of fire awaits them! Today while we live there is only one way that we can escape the awful judgment and that is by repenting of our sin to God and

believing in the death and resurrection of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. For us salvation couldn't be any easier! Why not do it now? Why delay? Nothing can be more urgent and important than the saving of your soul! I hope we shall see each other in God's kingdom.

### ***Prophecy of the nations***

It is evident that nations rise and fall but what is the cause? How did the once great nations of Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome fall; and more recently the Spanish, French and British empires, to mention but a few? However, in case there is any misunderstanding, let me say at the outset that the nations do not become great as a result of random human activities but always it is God who sets them up, they corrupt themselves and God then judges them by raising up another power to displace them. As we shall see, Daniel's vision is of one composite image in which Nebuchadnezzar, just like Pharaoh, is told that God put him in power (Daniel 2: 36-49), likewise Isaiah mentions by name Cyrus the Persian (Isaiah 45:1-4), therefore the fourth kingdom i.e. the nations from Rome to the end of the world, are also put in place by God: although the beast of John's vision gets his power from the Dragon (Revelation 13:2), but Satan could not give him power if God did not plan it to be so.

The first reference to nation-building is in Genesis chapter ten in which after the flood, nations emerge from the three sons of Noah. As far as the early history goes it is the African nation of Egypt that dominates. Of course from a biblical perspective we do not accept Egyptian chronology of times.

#### ***1) Egypt***

Egypt cannot be older than the time of the dispersal at the tower of Babel. By the time Abraham enters Egypt it is functioning as a state with a king. Abraham born something like 222 years after the dispersal did not come into Egypt until he was about 80 years old; Egypt had something like 100-300 years on him – more than enough time to establish itself as a sovereign nation. With the recent interest in ancient Egypt, especially the pyramids and the subsequent plundering of them, many 'Egyptologist experts' are at a loss as to how and why things were done as they were. So amazed are they it has even been said that aliens built the pyramids! Such thinking of course is way off the mark as far as the Bible is concerned.

We should remember that first of all the people of antiquity were not cavemen, but were far superior in knowledge than we are today. Also they lived longer, so had more time to learn. Furthermore the biblical record shows that some of the generation immediately after the flood were still alive when Abraham was born. When Abraham's father was born there was a combined age (excluding Noah) of 1,180 years of the eight fathers still living in Shem's family and there is no reason to believe that Ham's posterity – the founders of Egypt – didn't live as

long as Shem's posterity. Therefore, with that collective wisdom great things must have been possible, as is evident.

However, most importantly was the unseen hand of God behind Egypt's rise (and demise). When Moses stood before the great Pharaoh – the great king of the world – God told Moses to say to him: *And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:16)*. Egypt's greatness was because God was coming to make his mark in such a dramatic way that the world would never stop talking about it. Egypt had mingled good knowledge given to it by God to make her a great nation with spiritual wickedness in high places. Egypt had become a spiritually dark place. It had fallen into gross idolatry and God would now judge her gods.

God allowed Egypt to recover from the devastating judgment at the Exodus. But her days were numbered. God would bring into effect his plan for the nations. 800 years into the future another kingdom would rise to rule the world. Egypt, though influential up to this time would lose its dominance to the might of Babylon: (Ezekiel chapter 30 ...*Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon. verse 10*).

Egypt shall never recover its weakened state, as she bows to the might of the others: <sup>42</sup>*He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape.* <sup>43</sup>*But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps (Daniel 11:42-43).*

Egypt has received severe judgments from God; but she has also had great blessings of grace, which multitudes of her children scattered around the globe – even in the midst of affliction – enjoy to this very day and shall do so to the end of time (e.g. *Isaiah 19:22 And the LORD shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the LORD, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them*).

### **Other nations**

The way God dealt with Egypt has been repeated again and again among the other nations of this world <sup>1</sup>*Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.* <sup>2</sup>*For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter (Isaiah 34:1-2)*. The prophet Ezekiel for example is very graphic and specific in some cases, each being typical of God's judgment of the nations (e.g. chapters 25-32).

## ***Spiritual wickedness***

However, despite the many powerful nations that have ruled on the earth the Bible reveals to us that spiritually there are only two kingdoms and ultimately there will only be one! The Bible reveals to us that behind the human face of earthly powers – regardless of the amount of melanin in the skin – there are demonic rulers: and the greater the nation the more powerful are the demonic influences. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 4:12)*. Isaiah chapter fourteen speaks of Lucifer, Ezekiel twenty-eight speaks of the prince of Tyrus, Daniel ten speaks of the prince of Persia; and Revelation twelve speaks of the great red dragon.

## **2) Daniel's prophecies**

### ***First vision***

In Daniel chapter 2:31-45 we get a description of a dream that the king Nebuchadnezzar had, and none of his interpreters were able to give the king an answer. God revealed to Daniel both the content of the dream and the interpretation. It is really so straight forward. It is an image of the kingdoms of man. Moving down from the head of gold to silver breasts and arms, to belly and thighs of brass and finally to iron legs and iron and clay feet we see that man's kingdoms shall degenerate.

### ***First explanation***

The dream reveals five kingdoms. The first two rule regionally, but the third and fourth extend even further. The fourth kingdom is the most destructive but it shall also be the cause of its own downfall. The fifth kingdom is the final kingdom but unlike the earthly kingdoms this last kingdom is miraculously established by God. Daniel finishes his speech saying: *...the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure*. The heathen king is so impressed he acknowledges the superiority of Daniel's God; he even prostrates before Daniel lavishing him with gifts and promotes Daniel and his friends.

### ***Second vision***

As amazing as this dream is, predicting events within his life-time and beyond into the future, the book of Daniel reveals even more details to us; in Daniel chapter seven many years have now passed. Nebuchadnezzar is no longer on the throne, details are not given when Belshazzar ascended the throne simply because it doesn't really matter; what's important for us is the content of Daniel's vision. It transpires that the vision is further elaboration of the earlier image that Nebuchadnezzar dreamt.

### **Second explanation**

The vision is equally straight forward describing the same four kingdoms of man and God's final kingdom. The kingdoms are this time described as beasts. God's kingdom is the only one which has a true man as the sovereign. However, of the four beasts it is the fourth kingdom which draws Daniel's attention because of its extreme nature and extreme violence. Daniel is given some explanation, even to the extent of its duration, which by the end leaves him in a state of shock: "...As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart." (Daniel 7:28)

### **Third vision**

Yet again God will give us more information about this great prophecy! In chapter eight Daniel has a vision of a ram with two horns in which one horn is larger than the other. The ram extends westward, northward and southward. Then a male goat comes with great force and overpowers the ram. The goat now assumes power but the principle horn quickly dies and four other horns rule a divided kingdom. Another horn, however, appears out of one of the four and becomes a tyrant, causing true religion to cease, even disdaining truth; he also excels materially.

### **Third explanation**

The vision is again explained to Daniel by the angel Gabriel. This time the nations are named: the ram being Media and Persia and the goat being Greece. It has a great powerful leader who is short-lived. The kingdom is then divided into four and a fifth ruler dominates making direct assault against the Jews. Daniel again tells us of his reaction to the vision: *And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood it (Daniel 8:27).*

### **Fourth prophecy**

God's kingdom had sustained a serious check on its advance because the people had broken God's covenant choosing to follow the idol worship of the heathen. For this God chastised them with seventy years of exile, under the Babylonian captivity. In chapter nine Daniel has come to understand from his reading of an earlier prophecy by the prophet Jeremiah that the captivity is drawing to its seventy years end. With this revelation, Daniel is moved to pray to God that he would bring it about as prophesied.

### **Fourth explanation**

The angel Gabriel is again commissioned to explain the prophecy to Daniel. The seventy years is curiously transferred into seventy weeks, in which a number of things are to be accomplished, with particular reference to Messiah the Prince. The weeks are divided into three periods: seven, sixty-two and one. What is so amazing about this prophecy is the explicit information

about the crucifixion of Messiah the Prince! The last week covers the entire period from Christ to the end of the world; and it will be an extremely difficult time for the people of God.

### **3) Kingdoms identified**

#### ***Babylon***

Babylon is the fine gold head of the first vision; and Babylon is also the lion with eagle's wings; its wings plucked and being made to stand on its feet and given a man's heart. Which means that of all the empires, Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar in his final days showed the most humanity.

#### ***Media and Persia***

The second kingdom follows, even in Daniel's lifetime; this is the Medes and the Persians, described as the silver breasts and arms in the first vision; in the second vision it is the bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth; and finally in the third vision it is the ram, destroyed by the goat.

#### ***Grecia***

The third kingdom is the belly and thighs of the first vision and the four-winged, four-headed leopard of the second vision; finally identified as the goat in the third vision, which is the Greek empire.

#### ***Fourth kingdom***

The book of Daniel does not reveal who the fourth kingdom is; however, we can identify it in the light of Daniel's seventy weeks prophecy, which brings us into the New Testament and the Roman Empire. But unlike the other three kingdoms it is not actually named. So we do not limit the fourth kingdom to the literal Roman Empire. The fourth beast continues to the end, moving from the strong legs to the weak toes, representing the subsequent European powers following the fall of Rome.

#### ***Fifth kingdom***

The fifth kingdom is God's kingdom. God's kingdom is the final and eternal kingdom of one called 'the Ancient of Days' who gives the kingdom to one called 'the Son of Man'.

#### ***Final explanation***

In chapters 10-12 Daniel is given a grand finale of the visions: *"In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision."* (10:1)

This time it is not the angel Gabriel but a man of awesome greatness and majesty who says to Daniel: *"Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."* (10:14)

This man informs Daniel of his responsibilities: *"Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. <sup>21</sup>But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince."* (10:20-21)

In chapter eleven the man continues his speech to the end of the book: *"Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. <sup>2</sup>And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia. <sup>3</sup>And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. <sup>4</sup>And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."* (11:1-4)

The explanation is very complicated but we remember it is speaking about the end of the Persian and the Greek rule into the Roman Empire (chapter 12). The political manoeuvrings, alliances, coups, betrayals, lies, deceptions, killings, corruptions, blasphemies, idolatries and plundering are revealed – now history – but itself becoming prophecy because the episode doesn't finish until the end of the world.

The book of Daniel closes in 12:8-13: *"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? <sup>9</sup>And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. <sup>10</sup>Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. <sup>11</sup>And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. <sup>12</sup>Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days. <sup>13</sup>But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."*

We are now some 2,600 years on from Daniel's time: are we any nearer to understanding? Only the wise shall understand – are you and I one of them?

#### **4) The Revelation of John**

Daniel provided much needed prophecy for the ancient people of God and although he prophesies to the very end of the world there are crucial elements omitted. The vision is now taken up some 500 years later by the apostle John in exile for his faith in Jesus Christ. However, we should not get bogged down in history. Revelation is about the future of things that must come to pass. John's future is our present. Clearly we cannot go into too much detail. Our purpose is to identify the highlights: neither do I suggest that the views presented here are definitive or that I understand every vision. Furthermore by the very nature of prophecy a degree of speculation is inevitable. But like Daniel's prophecy the basic elements are quite plain: God is in conflict with Satan and the world powers; God and his people will be victorious.

Daniel's visions started with an image of a man, John's visions start with the sight of the living Christ! Symbolically Christ is seen in all his glory, his perfection and his purity. Christ is sovereign; Christ is universal and Christ disciplines his churches. Also Daniel's visions started with the kingdoms of the world, precisely because they held sway in his day. John, however, starts with the vision of the kingdom of God, because as Daniel said God's kingdom would now hold sway. It is Christ, 'the Son of Man' with 'the Ancient of Days' who now executes governance of the nations, ruling with a rod of iron such that none can resist his will.

#### ***Kingdom of God***

The power and glory of God in John's visions sees the kingdom of God controlling all the forces of nature, heaven and hell. There are the seals of judgment, the trumpets of judgment and the vials of judgment inflicting his enemies. Christ commands the angelic forces protecting his people and triumphs with ease over all his enemies. In chapters twenty-one and twenty-two the splendour of God's kingdom is seen. God creates a new heaven and a new earth. God comes down to be literally with the redeemed people forever on the earth! It is populated by the nations of them which are saved <sup>26</sup>*And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.* <sup>27</sup>*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (21:26-27).* The visions close with an admonition and invitation from the Spirit and the church to come and take freely of the water of life and a solemn warning not to tamper with God's Book. And finally: <sup>20</sup>*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.* <sup>21</sup>*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

## ***God's enemies***

The vision of the kingdom of God is so overwhelming that we will pass it over to continue focusing on his enemies. In chapter twelve, the vision takes us back in time to the woman, symbolising the spiritual church, giving birth to the Christ.

## ***Satan***

*"And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. (Revelation 12:3)*

The great red dragon is plainly declared to be Satan and the Devil. He is the Serpent that deceived Eve in the beginning. Satan and his demons fight against the holy angels but is cast down to the earth. God declares the world belongs to him and the Christ. The people of Christ gain victory over Satan regardless of his vain attempts to destroy them.

The revelation of Satan is actually to be understood as one event. However, Satan is presented to us in a number of visions. Essentially two sides are revealed. One shows him as a vicious monster, persecuting even unto death Christ's people. He is also seen as a subtle serpent. In this guise he seduces saints and sinners alike to disobey God's will. He fills the world and the church with liars. He raises up the false apostles and the Jezebels in the Church. While in the world he raises up the atheists and immoral trend-setters. He is the instigator behind every evil act. He seduced Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He whispered into David's mind to number the people. Satan put words into the Apostle Peter's mouth! He entered into Judas to betray the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's be clear, Satan is not a free agent! He is subject to Christ his Sovereign Lord! He is used by the Lord as an instrument of judgment on the ungodly. He is the fallen star called Wormwood (Rev 8: 11). He poisons the things that are pure amongst men. He is Abbadon, the king of the bottomless pit, released to punish people (Rev 9:11).

Within the literal texts of Scripture Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Zechariah 3:1-3). Satan is described as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5: 8). Satan presents himself as an angel of light (2 Cor 11: 14). He withstood Paul in his mission labours (1 Thess 2:18). We are told to resist him and he will flee from us (James 4:7). How then do we reconcile all this activity with the fact that Christ bound the strong man armed and led captivity captive (Eph 4: 8; Psalm 68: 18) and that his demons are said to be bound in chains until the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6)?

We can liken the captivity and activity of Satan to an imprisoned gang lord. The gang lord rules from his prison cell. He sends out instructions and woe betide any who cross him! Of course no one can be as evil as the leader, so once released he takes full control, doing things directly himself. Therefore we can understand his thousand years of captivity (Rev 20 :1-10) as meaning

that he is severely restricted in what he can do against the church in contrast to the violence and seduction seen in Revelation 12. We can therefore tie-in his 'little season' (Rev 20:3) with the forty-two months of the beast's rule (Rev 13:5) and the great battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:12-21) as one event but many visions.

Once released by Christ's angel, Satan brings with him the 'beast' from the bottomless pit (Rev 11:8; 17:11). Satan now possesses the son of perdition to rule the world, thus resurrecting the Caesar-like absolute dictator (2 Thessalonians 2). Satan has probably only been seen in his true form by only one man -- the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness. Before and forever after, Satan cannot be seen but operates by shooting his lies and seductive arrows into our souls. Judas and the antichrist are both called 'son of perdition'. In this respect they are actually possessed by Satan. However, just as the other disciples didn't know Judas was possessed, so the ungodly and false Christians will not know the antichrist is possessed. This is because God will send them a strong delusion that they might believe a lie, that they all might be damned.

### ***The Beast From the Sea***

*<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.....Revelation 13:1-10)*

Rising from the sea, this beast is a composite of three beasts from Daniel's visions: the leopard, the bear and the lion, though more grotesque, having seven heads, ten horns and a crown upon each horn. It has the name of blasphemy on each head. It has its power given to it by Satan. It sustains a fatal blow to one of its heads but the wound is healed. The world worships this beast and the dragon. Its duration is fixed and in that time it blasphemes God and is allowed to make war with the saints and to overcome them. It is given global dominance by the devil. All except those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will worship him.

Like Satan the beast is seen once but with many visions. We see him actively persecuting God's people. He kills the two witnesses having ascended from the bottomless pit (Rev 11: 7). He is the object of worship and adulation of the ungodly and ruling for forty-two months he again is persecuting the saints (Rev13: 1-9). He is punished but hardens his heart (Rev16: 10-11). He recovers to instigate the battle of Armageddon (Rev 16: 12-7). To our surprise we see that he is actually controlled by the harlot (Rev 17:3,7). Contending with Christ he is cast into the bottomless pit (Rev19:19-20)...

...However, the vision is given a complicated twist. This is because he is said to ascend from the bottomless pit to persecute the two witnesses (Rev 11:8). This vision therefore ties-in with the

final vision of Satan (Rev 20; 2 Thess 2). In this respect as Satan is 'released for a little season' he possesses the man of sin, the antichrist. Through this particular individual a system of government that was 'dead' is 'resurrected' in the form of an elected Caesar-like dictator.

The sea is symbolic of influence beyond national boundaries. The number seven means completeness (seven churches, seven seals, seven vials, seven trumpets, seven mountains etc). Each king is symbolic of a succession of *kingdoms* and not a succession of Roman rulers. This perfectly fits the description in chp 17:10-11. <sup>10</sup> *And there are seven kings: five are fallen, [i.e. Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medeo/Persian, Greek,] and one is, [i.e. Roman] and the other is not yet come [i.e. British]; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* <sup>11</sup> *And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.* In this respect the vision, like chapter twelve, takes us back in time. Egypt was the first persecuting head. Therefore the six kings is evident within the biblical text, but Britain?

The imperial crown of 'king of the world' laid long in the dust as many European nations like France and Spain clashed in their struggles to wear it; but it was The United Kingdom of Great Britain, during the reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), that distinguished itself to qualify as the seventh head having undergone in the words of Dr David Starkey in his excellent Channel 4 TV documentary, *Monarchy*, series 3:3 *Rule Britannia* [<http://www.channel4.com/programmes/monarchy/4od#2921915>] "...the most rapid expansion of any European power since Rome..." But isn't Britain Christian? The fact is the British Empire garnered its power whilst using the name of God in vain and persecuting the true believers, as for example during the reign of 'Bloody' Queen Mary, and epitomised in the story of the Pilgrim Fathers fleeing its shores to seek freedom of worship.

The beast's eighth head is the ultimate enemy of the final generation, which I believe is the composite nation of the U.S.A; whilst the ten horns of the beast are the vassal kings, (e.g. Herod and Agrippa) seen today in the ever-expanding United Nations, which is merely America's 'rubber stamp'. This fits well with the description in Rev 17:12 *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.* In their brief hour of glory they promptly capitulate with the beast in persecuting the saints. They also destroy the harlot as instruments of God's wrath upon her.

When Britain lost the colony America *the eighth* was born. The phrase *of the seven* means that America is an amalgam of the systems and ideologies of the seven. English is America's national language – and importantly is the international language of politics. America's power-base, WASP: White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, is essentially a continuation of British and protestant political power, which, although dead lives on in America. (Though we note Deism is its foundation, a system that denies traditional apostolic doctrines.)

America is also an aberration. Notice carefully that the eighth is not referred to as a king. What sets America apart is its government, which unlike the 'seven' kings that ruled as monarchies, unelected and indefinitely, America is a Republic with a fixed-term elected president. America stands as a microcosm of the world, whose mottos – 'e pluribus unum' 'out of many one' and 'novus ordo seclorum' 'a new order of the ages' – says it all. Regardless of origins his citizens are swept up in the 'Amerisphere', besotted by the dogma of life, liberty and the pursuit of personal happiness. On that land mass the world is poised, ready to defy the God of the universe headed by its last leader, which will be a despot like Caesar, i.e. the antichrist. Hence what was dead has revived: *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and shall go into perdition:...(Revelation 17:8).*

It's rather ironic that while the West polices the world to rid it of what it perceives to be the cancer of dictators, it is itself dying of the very thing it seeks to eliminate elsewhere! History shows that when times become difficult people look for a 'strong man'. It was so in Nazi Germany. As the nation found itself in an increasingly difficult position a man was found who said what they wanted to hear. The result was death and destruction on a massive scale. Without doubt Hitler was an archetype of antichrist!

### ***Beast wounded***

*And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: (Revelation 13:3)...which had the wound by a sword, and did live (v14)*

The birth of America was also the birth of modern democracy and the death knell of monarchical imperialism. The fatal wound sustained by the sword is symbolic of divine justice. The reference to war could be the first and second world wars as the beast turned in on itself, when extreme right wing politics showed its fangs in fascism threatening democracy. The nations' infrastructures and people's lives were devastated as millions of the beast's sons and daughters lost their lives! However, the deadly wound was healed in that the beast recovered and the politics of democracy restored moving ever closer to the 'one world order' – ironically under an elected despot!

Maybe God's justice was for the transatlantic African slave trade. This was surely the most evil crime ever perpetrated by one set of people upon another set of people: and maybe in this God made sure that the nations of European stock would not go unpunished, albeit partially. It is therefore ironic, tragic and laughable, that the 'Rhodes Scholarship' was set up by Cecil Rhodes to provide elitist education for those of British, American and German extraction, in order to create an Anglo-Saxon empire, "...so fostering mutual understanding that was to render war impossible..!" – Oh how wrong he was!

## ***The Beast From the Earth***

*And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon (Revelation 13:11)*

Rising from the earth, this beast has two horns like a lamb but speaks like a dragon; it is also called the false prophet later in the book (Rev 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). It has miraculous powers and has also the same power to rule as the first beast. It causes people to make an image to the first beast, even giving it life and a voice! It causes any who refuse to worship the image to be killed. It further causes people to receive the mark of the beast in their forehead or right hand: and only those who receive that number six-hundred, threescore and six can buy and sell.

The earth is symbolic of merely local spheres. As a beast it also has political power. His dominion is smaller, but he still rules with the same authority as the first beast. His methods, however, are more subtle. The two horns represent two forms of idolatry. The first is false religion, like Jainism, even to the point of being a nation's government; Islam being a prime example. The second is the worship of things like possessions, celebrities, the myriad sporting activities, so-called sacred objects and religious sites etc. Churches now have to contend with Sunday sports, Sunday shopping, Sunday concerts etc. All these are alternative religions! Consequently these religious systems may appear innocent, like a lamb, but in reality they are devilish!

As the false prophet and in common with all false prophets he suckers up to the king. False prophets tell kings what they want to hear. False prophets claim to speak on behalf of the gods to the king. Good kings like David had good prophets like Nathan and wicked kings like Ahab had false prophets like Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah (1Kings 22:24). His religious influence causes people to worship the beast and its image. He is successful in turning the people away from Christ by imitating the very law of God (Ex 13: 9-16) Just as Moses taught the people to keep God's law on the hand and forehead so he has managed to twist this truth to forcing the people to receive a mark in their right hand or forehead.

In as much as he is called the false prophet more than a beast, we should beware of the subtlety of his methods. The heart of false religion is promotion of the self. The sinner is encouraged to pursue whatever he is deceived into believing will liberate the soul. Of course the effect of the delusion is enslavement. The false prophet further seals people in their delusions by his supposed 'miracles'. The point is whether the miracles are real or imagined, the desired effect is the same -- absolute loyalty to the beast!

He will be finally judged with the beast. This might mean that even many Muslims will bow to the beast!

### ***The Great Whore (chapters 17, 18)***

This enemy is actually human, but is a fallen woman, drunk with a cocktail of the wine of her fornication and the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. She rides the beast, and is dressed in all the finery of a wealthy woman. She staggers around with a golden cup in her hand filled with the abominations and filthiness of her fornication; she is a wonder to look upon!

The great whore is the spirit of ancient Babel/Babylon. She is the spiritual influence behind all the world powers. Her religion is vile because she performs perverse acts with the beast. (But not until the fall of Rome did it become obvious that she ruled the beast by filling the power vacuum, claiming divine right to rule under the name of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. Losing her political grip over Europe, on February 11 1929 Vatican City State regained political status as a sovereign state governed as an absolute monarchy, whose head is the Pope!)

She is set in contrast to the pure woman of chapter twelve, who is identified as the true church of born again believers. The record shows that this fallen woman is responsible for so much of the persecution, murder and deception that have taken place in the name of God, of which we mention the infamous Spanish Inquisition and the terrible slaughtering of French Huguenots. Her power over the beast was clearly demonstrated at the funeral of Pope John Paul II, when heads of state and royalty were seen in attendance.

Chapter eighteen describes her influence over business, commerce and culture. We see her great wealth – yet at the same time she pretends to care for the poor. In recent times under Pope Benedict XV1 she has opened the doors of Vatican City to the media. Confident of her invincibility, this is a cynical ploy to appear more open – but her days are numbered. For being so open she becomes exposed to her enemies who shall destroy her (Revelation 17:16-17).

(Many believe antichrist is the pope. I believe this is wrong. The antichrist is to be revealed prior to the return of Christ. The pope is certainly in the spirit of antichrist. However, the Catholic Church is identified as the Harlot of Revelation 17 and 18 as being distinct from antichrist. This then rules out all popes, past, present and future, because the office cannot be said to be 'revealing'. Whereas one born in obscurity and catapulted to the highest political office, would indeed be a 'revealing' in the sense that his appointment would be totally unexpected.)

### ***5) Judgments***

God will not judge his enemies in one fell swoop. What we see is progressive judgment. These enemies are to be seen as institutions, rather than individuals. Obviously the people in these institutions will be judged in their own time, at their own personal deaths. The final judgment when everyone must stand before Christ the Judge will be the Day of Judgment, known only to

God. These enemies are conspirators, exposed as working within their secret societies, like the skull and bones or the thirty-three degree freemasons. Therefore let us not be fooled by Islamophobia. Let us not be fooled by the Roman Catholic Church's so-called stance on human rights. Let's not be fooled by the West's rhetoric for democracy and free trade. These are all part of Satan's great plan to bring the world to openly worship him under the governance of the man of sin – Satan's little season, Armageddon.

***First, the great whore (chp 17:16-18; chapter18 elaborates.)***

<sup>16</sup>*And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* <sup>17</sup>*For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* <sup>18</sup>*And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.*

Catholicism will lose her grip over the souls of its millions of followers. Priests might suffer violent deaths in some parts of the world as the people turn against her. They will reject the authority of 'holy mother church' becoming increasingly secular having rid themselves of the fear of hell. Ultimately antichrist will finally kill her off legally: 'The people of the world against the Holy Roman Catholic Church for crimes against humanity'. Found guilty the mother of harlots will be stripped of all her assets, her bank accounts seized; her property confiscated and her leaders executed. (The document, 'Memory and Reconciliation. The Church and the Faults of the Past' is virtually an admission of guilt.)

***Second, the beast and the false prophet (chp 19:20)***

*And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

This is the effective death of national sovereignty, as Satan brings us into the 'one world order', under the antichrist/man of sin. In Europe it is Brussels that makes the laws. The euro has replaced local currency. Brussels now has a presidential office with a five year term. The E.U. has expanded to include east European nations with border controls reduced to a minimum. Personal liberties are being eroded away under the guise of human rights, while big brother breathes ever closer down our necks.

America is the world's only super-power. It is running its own agenda, with a vigorous campaign to impose its own brand of government, whilst spreading its own corporate brand of products and subculture via Hollywood and the mass media. The attitude to the flag is idolatry – by law considered a living thing (see the flag code 8j) and certainly a violation of conscience of which such loyalty belongs only to Christ – whilst the eagle reminds us of ancient Rome. Since the end

of the cold war there is clearly no nation that poses a serious threat to Uncle Sam. (In the war on Iraq, it was amusing to see US delegates securing votes from nations that they would otherwise certainly have ignored and whose record on human rights is also dubious.) As for terrorism and the bomb these are merely subplots devised by Satan to distract men.

***Third, the devil and the man of sin (chp 20:10)***

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*

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

**The man of sin**, the world's most powerful man will out-do all tyrants, making Hitler look like a kitten in comparison! His time will be short-lived, if taken literally he'll only reign for three and a half years before Christ destroys him with a mere blow of his breath and the brilliance of his glory!

**Satan** will never be seen until the very last day when Christ comes. His face is the man of sin. The devil so manipulates things that his man sits as the sole ruler of the world, in what is termed 'Satan's little season'. Both will have a swift and decisive end by Christ at his second coming. (Ezekiel 28: 1-19 reveals the man and Satan then, so portraying the man of sin and Satan of the end.)

***Judgment Day of the people (chp 20:11-15)***

<sup>11</sup>*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.* <sup>12</sup>*And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* <sup>13</sup>*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.* <sup>14</sup>*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* <sup>15</sup>*And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

The homosexual lobby has secured the same legal status as heterosexuals and there are even so-called churches giving their 'blessing'; whilst the Anglican Church has ordained the first gay bishop! Pornography, promiscuity, drunkenness, gambling, drugs and a host of other evils are rampant in the world. Sport and entertainment consume people's emotions, time and money. Surely, the pit of hell has opened and released its destructive armies!

The many references to the 'last days' (1Tim 4: 1-4; 2Tim 3: 1-9) mean the day of reckoning cannot be very far! The way things are going we are in those days. Our American brethren are

embroiled in politics. They are determined to have a president that sings from the same hymn sheet. The tragedy is that while they 'lift up holy hands' in worship, the evil one in their midst will be dancing to the devil's tune; – for in their delusion they would have elected antichrist!

### **6) Escaping the tribulation**

In Israel's history the second most momentous event was the exodus from Babylon. As the named liberator, Cyrus was a unique individual in the plan of God. It doesn't take much imagination to realise that any who took the word of God seriously would be watching for Cyrus to appear on the scene. As word spread that a man called Cyrus was rising in power, it surely would have been a signal for action (1) prayer as we see Daniel doing (Dan9; 2Chron36:22), and (2) preparing to return; this would mean selling up and cashing-in (Ezr1:4,6,9-11;2:69). Gold and silver would be the only universal currencies -- the Babylonian coinage being worthless! In this we have a parallel in antichrist. When the named individual appears on the scene then Christians are to take note -- it is a call for action -- time to exit whilst there is a window of opportunity -- or else suffer persecution.

As antichrist is also a 'spirit' this implies that probably the whole world will be totally under his strong influence <sup>11</sup>*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: <sup>12</sup>That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2Thess2:11-12).* This begs the question, 'Will anywhere be safe for the persecuted saints?' I believe there is. First the Lord says when we are persecuted in one city flee to another (Mt10:23). This clearly means that if we have the means to, we can in good conscience, leave for a safe haven. Secondly, in the Lord's prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, he gave explicit instructions to the disciples to flee to a given place (Lk21:21). It is a prophecy so constructed that it weaves in the end of the world, therefore we are to assume a safe place shall exist. If as suggested the whole world will be against God's people, where can they flee to?

I suggest that Israel is the safe place! In that the Lord shall open the eyes of the remnant (Rom11): the last generation of Jews awakened by the dynamic preaching of the prophet Elijah (Mal4:5-6), turning en-masse to Christ, will be only too willing to receive Gentile Christians from around the world as brothers and sisters in Christ. Who knows but as the lawless one seeing he is out-manoeuvred, will launch an attack upon the 'camp of the saints', (i.e. the land of Israel), ushering in the coming of Christ (Rev20:7-15). The image of a camp site brings to mind the children of Israel in the wilderness, having left the relative comforts of Egypt they found themselves in the wilderness, dwelling in camps. It is so with the modern scene where displaced peoples, living in temporary tent accommodation are forced out to save their lives.

Few people choose to literally live in tents today and certainly earth is not our home, so maybe the image shows how scant conditions will be for the saints surrounded by hoards of ungodly enemies. It's now possible to see that in the providence of God the modern state of Israel exists as it does, concrete walls and all, to provide that temporary refuge for the saints.

Of course even if the saints were to remain in their respective homelands suffering persecution it doesn't really matter, because the Lord will preserve his people even though they have to go through the fire; so we can escape (Lk21:36) spiritually but suffer physically. However, the inspired history of Acts shows the church avoiding persecution. Likewise the history of the church, especially Europe is riddled with accounts of the persecuted fleeing for their lives wherever they could find safety. Things are no different today, as brethren in mainly Muslim countries flee persecution to the relative safety of the West.

So saying let us prepare for the worst and be willing, like sheep for the slaughter, to be sacrificed for our beloved Saviour! However, it seems to me superfluous to teach about antichrist if it is not a warning for God's people to literally escape. Otherwise all we need do is carry on living as normal. But the end won't be 'normal': it'll be 'do or die' – serve Satan by worshipping his man or serve Christ and suffer certain death. So I commend to you a mass exodus of God's people to the physical land of Israel.

### ***Are you ready?***

Knowing that most of these things have happened and that God's word cannot fail, we need to be prepared to meet the Judge of all the earth. Throughout the tumultuous years of the world a small number of names have survived. People like Nimrod, Ramses, Amenhotep, Darius, Alexander the great, Julius Caesar, Mansa Musa, Genghis Khan, George Washington, Henry VIII... Some lived honourable lives; some lived dishonourable lives...and whose eternal states can never change! But where do you and I fit into the scheme of things?

What I said in the introduction is worth repeating: God's kingdom shall come and only God's people shall survive to the end. When Christ comes billions of us shall be alive and we shall be completely caught unawares! Non-Christians will be rooted to the spot as Christians rise from the earth to meet their Saviour. Those whose bodies cannot defy gravity shall also be those that cannot defy the judgment! Racked with guilt, fear and shame and with nowhere to run, only the doom of the lake of fire awaits them! Today while we live there is only one way that we can escape the awful judgment and that is by repenting of our sin to God and believing in the death and resurrection of his Son the Lord Jesus Christ. For us salvation couldn't be any easier! Why not do it now? Why delay? Nothing can be more urgent and important than the saving of your soul! I hope we shall see each other in God's kingdom.