

## **Understanding Revelation:**

### **3) Revelation, the Bible's Capstone and Wrap-up**

In order to understand **Revelation** an interpreter must realize that it is the Bible's capstone and wrap-up. As the last book to be written it performs a function like that which the "head of the corner" performs in a noble edifice. It does so in several important regards, but chiefly with respect to **the entire corpus of Scripture's earlier prophecies. It is the last and greatest of the prophecies, and therefore, quite fittingly, it is the head of the corner with respect to all of them.**

Two illustrations will make clear why we apply the idea of a capstone and wrap-up to **Revelation** in this connection. The first will show how **Revelation** is the capstone in regard to the nature of the great processes and programs of the Bible in its entirety. The second will show how it is a capstone in the case of key prophecies of key events.

#### **i.**

When a disciple surveys the entire Bible carefully, he perceives that it contains a number of accounts of very extended processes. Each of them is a great program of Jehovah. The processes, developments, and events which **Revelation** has foretold will advance them to culminating developments and wrap them up. The following are twelve examples of His great programs. We chose them for mention because Scripture has defined them explicitly, and because even a casual reader of the Bible can hardly fail to be aware of them.

- (1) Creation of the Heavens and the Earth to the Creation of a New Heavens and a New Earth.
- (2) Eden (or "Paradise") to the arrival of the New Jerusalem: a King Adam I. to a King Adam II.

- (3) The Horrendous “Interlude” from the Entrance of Satan and Death to Their Final, Post-Millennial Removal.
- (4) The Program for the Post-Flood Nations of Mankind from Their Beginnings to Their Final Destiny.
- (5) The Program for Abraham, His Seed, and His Great Nation, and His Function as the Divinely Appointed Source of Jehovah’s Blessings to “All Families of the Earth.”
- (6) The Program for the Jacobite People of Jehovah and Their Mosaic Government and Aaronic Priesthood.
- (7) The Sure Mercies of David and the Program of the Davidic Theocratic Christocracy.
- (8) The Vision Concerning Judah and Jerusalem: Jehovah’s Six Purposes and His Seventy Weeks, including the Coming of “the Anointed One, the Prince” (Hebrew, Messiah (משיח נגיד), “who shall be cut off” (יכרת) and who “shall have nothing” (ואין לו).
- (9) The Preaching of the Kingdom of God and the Rape of the Kingdom.
- (10) The Kingdom of God, as Come Near and Recruiting: the Blessing of Abraham Comes on the Gentiles.
- (11) The Kingdom of God, as Arrived, Installed, and Functioning.
- (12) The Post-Millennial Kingdom of God: the New Jerusalem.

Each of the above programs of Jehovah is a remarkable, comprehensive, composite unity. As we said, Scripture itself has expressly defined each. The first ten were launched and well under way long before St. John saw our Lord open the Seven-Sealed Book and reveal its contents to him (and us).

Later in this Introduction we shall consider the programs in this list further; for example, when we consider “The Analogy of All Scripture” and “**Revelation**’s Place in Biblical Prophecy.” At present all that we wish to say about them is that if **Revelation** is the capstone of all Scripture, then the events which its oracles foretell ought to fit right in with these twelve programs, and with any others like them, and advance them on the way toward their completions and fulfillments. And of course, they do. For its oracles consistently provide prophecies of glorious culminations for each of the programs which the Bible says that Jehovah had initiated.

For example, almost everyone is aware that **Revelation** completes earlier prophecies of Jehovah’s new creation, including the prophetic, creation-caliber miracles of Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and those of Christ and His Apostles. It does this by the prophecies in which Jehovah says: “Behold, I create all things new,” and by those that describe the nature of the new, deathless and disease-free condition of His glorious future. And even the most casual readers of **Revelation** know that it foretells the New Jerusalem which will contain the Tree of Life of which all will partake freely. They know, too, that it foretells (1) the imprisonment of Satan and (2) his final end in the Lake of Fire, and (3) the final end of Death and Hades in that same lake. They know that it foretells the coming of the Kingdom which will replace all the mighty empires, and which will never end. More on **Revelation**’s relation to these programs later.

## ii.

A second illustration, as was said, will show how **Revelation** is a capstone in the case of key prophecies of key events. For example, only consider how **Revelation**’s oracles function as a capstone in the sense that they foretell events which not only will perfectly fulfill two key prophecies in **Daniel 2** and **Daniel 7** but

which will at the same time fulfill other prophecies also; that is, by integrating the events which many earlier prophecies had foretold into a comprehensive prophecy of **a single, unified fulfillment of them all.**

First, **Daniel 2:44** foretells a great key event as follows:

And in the days of those kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom (1) which shall never be destroyed, nor (2) shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but (3) it shall break in pieces and shall consume all these [aforementioned] kingdoms, and (4) it shall stand for ever.

What this prophecy foretells is first that Jehovah will introduce and establish **an institute or establishment of government** — an **indestructible** establishment of government. And second, that an **indefectible** personnel will govern in it. They will have no heirs or successors. No other kingdom, people, or nation will ever take over that establishment of government. It will have no successors. But on the contrary, thirdly, it will **pulverize** and consume all the previously mentioned kingdoms — all **four of them**. In other words, that kingdom, when it has come, will do what **I. Corinthians 15:24** says that Christ will do, of whom it is written that “He must reign until He has abolished all rule and all authority and power”; that is, until He has abolished all earlier establishments of government. And finally, this prophecy foretells that this kingdom, as thus inaugurated and triumphant over all, shall stand for ever. Such is one key prophecy. Let us call the kingdom which it foretells “the Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom.” In describing it we have not mentioned how the kingdom will grow because that is foretold in the next verse, namely, in **Daniel 2:45**. Surely, the event which **Daniel 2:44** foretells is a key event. **Revelation** ought to shed fuller light on such a key event.

Second, **Daniel** 7:9ff. also foretells a great key event, namely, the same event, as follows:

I beheld, till thrones were set and one that was ancient of days did sit 1 I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

The four great beasts which Daniel saw were four kings or kingdoms. All were on the earth. When the last of them was tearing the earth to pieces Jehovah came and established a bridgehead preparatory to taking over. Thrones were set, and the “Ancient of Days did sit.” We have here, then, what might be termed “the Ancient-of-Days Kingdom.” One “like a son of man” then “came with the clouds of heaven.” He “came even to the Ancient of Days.” He was escorted; for it says: “**they** brought him near before him.” The Ancient of Days then gave him “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.” Thus, we have here, then, what might be called “the Son-of-Man Dominion.” And Scripture is very careful to state that His universal dominion will be “an everlasting dominion.” And at once, when the interpreting angel elucidated the vision to Daniel, he said: “But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever” (**Daniel** 7:18,27). Therefore, we may also call it and “the Saints-of-the-Most-High Kingdom.” Thus, the kingdom which **Daniel** 7 foretells can have three names. What are we to think?

Certainly there cannot possibly be **two different** future universal and everlasting dominions. Therefore, those two prophecies in **Daniel** 2 and 7, if they are genuine oracles, must foretell the inauguration and establishment of one and the same kingdom. In other words, there will be a Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom and there will be a Son-of-Man Dominion; but the Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom which **Daniel** 2 foretells and the Son-of-Man dominion which **Daniel** 7 foretells must be the same establishment of government. This is what two key prophecies foretell, and on the assumption that they give us true words of God the identity of the two kingdoms is a necessary conclusion. And the same reasoning makes it certain that it must also be identical with “the People of the Saints of the Most High Kingdom.”

Now, inasmuch as hardly any event could ever be more significant than the introduction and establishment of that particular kingdom, **Revelation** ought to have something very important to say about its future arrival. Does it?

It surely does, for it foretells the coming of the Seven-Headed, Ten-Horned Beast. Its anatomical makeup will consist of a combination of distinctive features of the four beasts that Daniel had seen in his vision 600 years previously. It, and its horns, will make war against the Lamb (**Revelation** 17:14). He will crush them. We say “crush” them because it is important to realize that Nebuchadnezzar’s dream showed that the Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom would destroy the four kingdoms which preceded it **at a single stroke**. The key word in **Daniel** 2:35 is כְּהֶרֶף. This word occurs in Daniel’s description of the dream, but not in his explanation of its meaning. One ancient Greek version of the Old Testament translates it αμα, which is an adverb and means “at the same time, at once, together.” And another translates it εις απαξ, which is an adverbial phrase that means “at once.” And this is exactly what **Revelation** foretells in 16:12-17. The armies of the world will assemble at Armageddon, and the crushing defeat of these kingdoms

will occur immediately thereafter. Our Lord's Millennial Kingdom will defeat and succeed them. It will be a Fifth Monarchy. Its King will be the just then returned Son of God. It is thus that **Revelation** 20:1-6 foretells events in which the newly arrived Millennial Kingdom of our Lord will function in its long foretold rôle as the Son-of-Man Dominion. And it is also thus that it will clearly demonstrate itself to be the long prophesied Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom. For the defeat will be like those sudden, single-stroke, total overthrows which Joshua accomplished at Jericho and in the day of Gibeon — like the overthrow which Gideon wrought in the Day of Midian; and like the overthrow that **Isaiah** 11:4 foretells; and like the devastating overthrow which Jehovah had foretold in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. It will also be like what Zechariah foretold in **Zechariah** 14:9-15, and like what Paul foretold in **II. Thessalonians** 1:7-9 and 2:8f.

Moreover, in reference to the fulfillment of the prophecies in **Daniel** 2 and 7, **Revelation** foretells still another event of utmost importance. For every believer will certainly ask: "Who will be the indefectible personnel in the Crushing-Stone Kingdom and in the Son-of-Man Dominion, and where will they come from?" **Revelation's** oracles (20:4-6) foretell what it calls "the First Resurrection." That event will produce the indefectible personnel of the universal and imperishable Pulverizing-Stone Kingdom and of the Saints-of-the-Most-High Kingdom. That event will also be the fulfillment of Paul's prophecies in **I. Corinthians** 15 and in **I. Thessalonians** 4 of the resurrection of the dead in Christ in conjunction with the translation of living believers. It is thus that the oracles in **Revelation** foretell integrated fulfillments in the sense that fulfillments of many earlier prophecies will be combined in single integrated fulfillments, just as the head of the corner in an edifice connects the two walls and the roof and consolidates and locks them into a binding unity.

Thus **Revelation**'s prophecies wrap it all up by foretelling the events by means of which Jehovah and the Lamb will wrap it up when they introduce their preliminary Millennial Kingdom. Once anyone has seen and recognized that **Revelation**'s prophecies of the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord shed fuller light on the key event which **Daniel** 2 and 7 foretold, and how they shed fuller light on such a key word as מְלָכִים in **Daniel** 2:35, and how they shed fuller light on the timing of that inimitable and never-to-be-repeated *sui generis* event in which the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Messiah — he will ask: Could anything be plainer? **Daniel** 2 and **Daniel** 7 and **Revelation** 20 all foretell the same great event.

Our two illustrations are only a few samples of the kind of function **Revelation** performs *quâ* capstone in the case of all of the twelve programs of Jehovah which were mentioned earlier and of other programs, and of many other prophecies of key events. In fact, the interpreter of **Revelation** must know hundreds of details in that work and must correlate them with hundreds of details in the prophecies which occur throughout the entire length of the Bible. This is no easy task. The only way to prevent getting lost in the woods is to acquire a good working acquaintance with the details. It will help to pay attention to good outlines, and we shall try to provide some.