

## Understanding Revelation: 4) Revelation's Interpretation of History

In order to understand **Revelation**, an interpreter must realize that its oracles are prophecies which contain a divinely revealed interpretation of history. The Bible contained earlier beginnings of a revealed interpretation of history before 96 A. D., when John received and wrote **Revelation**, which takes them up, elucidates them, and adds unique new features which round them out to form a magnificent, full-fledged, comprehensive interpretation of history. It is especially important to discover this because an unequalled, centuries-long confusion has existed regarding this subject, and still does. Indeed, **Revelation's** interpretation of history proved to be a rock of offense and a stone of stumbling **and** a stone which the builders have been rejecting throughout many centuries of church history. It has been the *bête noire* of hosts of Christians. It has gone by the board, and has yet to come into its own.

In this Introduction we shall describe briefly: (i) the centuries-long confusion which many misunderstandings of **Revelation's** interpretation of history produced; (ii) the Bible's divinely revealed interpretation of history which God had revealed before 96 A. D. when John wrote **Revelation**; and (iii) the nature of **Revelation's** interpretation of history and the relation of its prophecies to the Bible's earlier prophecies and the interpretation of history which they contain. Our principal aim will be to show how certain leading features in **Revelation's** revealed interpretation of history not only supplement and elucidate the Bible's earlier prophecies, but exalt them by incorporating them into its sublime, supremely meaningful, full-fledged, comprehensive revealed interpretation of history.

The mere thought of a possible interpretation of history has always raised many questions in men's minds. They have always perceived intuitively that the questions thus raised were inescapable because the very nature of their existence as human beings saddles those questions upon all of us. Moreover, every thoughtful person has recognized that these questions were very high priority questions. For this reason it is important to know **Revelation's** divinely revealed interpretation of history and to note carefully how it has been greatly misunderstood.

### i. The Centuries-long Confusion

Recently many interpreters of **Revelation** have refused to believe that it contains any divine revealments at all. They have put it into a class of writings which they call "the literary *genre* of Apocalyptic Literature," all of which they had long before rejected as spurious. Nevertheless, almost all who have despised and rejected **Revelation** have found some interpretation of history in it — usually by means of giving it an early date before 70 A. D., by referring it to legends about a reappearance of Nero and to other historical facts of first and early second century history, and by putting a special interpretation upon the number 666.

Many others, who have believed that **Revelation**'s oracles do contain prophecies, have attempted to make its prophecies foretell something or other that they have mistakenly supposed God must have meant them to foretell. For example, hundreds of interpreters used to assume that in **Revelation**'s oracles God must have been foretelling the processes, developments, and events which would occur during the entire future course of Church History. The net result of **their** attempts to interpret **Revelation** has been to prove that it is impossible to show the very thing that many of them believed they had succeeded in showing. Other interpretations had been an effort to show that the events which **Revelation** foretold had actually received, or could yet receive, unmistakable historical fulfillments during the very calendar years which a year-day system of interpretation would lead any interpreter to expect. However, every year-day system of interpreting prophecy requires many foretold events to occur before some definitely foretold calendar year has ended, namely, before the latest possible year for a given event to occur. Unfortunately, however, the latest possible years for the most important events to occur came and went without the expected fulfillments occurring as predicted. This has compelled advocates of year-day systems to abandon all such efforts in self-acknowledged defeat.

Still others who have tried to interpret **Revelation** have failed to grasp its divinely revealed interpretation of history chiefly because they began by throwing away the key of knowledge which is the Prophetic **and** the Dominical **and** the Apostolic doctrine of a **coming apocalyptic Messianic Kingdom of God**. They first decided that that view **must** somehow have been mistaken because, forsooth, **the kind of Kingdom of God** which they **knew** that the Word of God had foretold had still not come; that is, it had not yet come **at that time** which they **assumed** that the Word of God had foretold. In short, the Kingdom of God had not come as soon as **they** had thought that it **ought** to have come, and that it surely **would** have come; that is, if the prophecies had not been mistaken. In a word, the delay in its coming "threw" them. Therefore, they repudiated and discarded the key of knowledge. Moreover, they did not hesitate to throw it away because they felt pretty certain that the prophetically promised Kingdom of God **had** already come; that is, in other, better forms and ways. Consequently, when they repudiated and abandoned the true Prophetic, Dominical, and Apostolic doctrine of a coming apocalyptic Kingdom of God (including, of course, **Revelation**'s prophecy of our Lord's and His saints' coming reign of a thousand years in the so-called Millennium), they replaced it at once with a new, improved doctrine of the Kingdom of God.

Foremost among those who lost their grip on the true Prophetic, Dominical, and Apostolic doctrine of an apocalyptic Messianic Kingdom of God, and who threw away the key of knowledge, were Dionysius the Great of Alexandria, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Jerome in Palestine, and St. Augustine of Hippo in North Africa. This is not the place to describe the reasonings of these innovators. Suffice it to say that after Constantine and later emperors gave the churches official imperial sponsorship, many Christians no longer felt an urgent need for the coming of Christ to deliver them from an intolerable situation. Indeed, some Christians probably liked the new situation in much the same way as some Jews have preferred Brooklyn or the Bronx to Jerusalem. Moreover, after Rome fell in 410 A. D. a multitude of men **needed** an interpretation of history. Accordingly, in 413 A.

D. St. Augustine began to write the first full-fledged Christian interpretation of history, namely, *The City of God*, which he published in 426. In it he asserted that the then existing Church was (already) the prophesied Millennial Kingdom of Christ and His saints which **Revelation**'s oracles had foretold. Augustine's book contained many profound insights. It found acceptance at once, and became perennially popular with Christians. His interpretation of history with its mistaken "realized eschatology," took possession of many men's minds. Indeed, it soon became the "standard" or "classical" **Christian** interpretation of history. It has satisfied many Christians for more than fifteen centuries on end. In a word, they sold **Revelation** short and "bought" *The City of God*. They adopted St. Augustine's interpretation of history and repudiated **Revelation**'s.

The Church of Rome adopted Augustine's Christian interpretation of history. It at first officially taught, and later infallibly taught, its millions of members to believe assuredly that the Roman Catholic Church, or especially its clergy, was and is the very Kingdom of God and Christ on the Earth. And recently the Constitution on the Church of Vatican II decreed that it, or its clergy, was (is) Jehovah's elect people of **Exodus** 19:6. And thus a great revolution in the interpretation of the Bible had occurred and has prevailed.

This revolution had become very solidly established and consolidated because right from the outset the original innovators had perpetrated many exegetical *tours de force*. They had excogitated and published a lot of figurative, spiritual, and allegorical interpretations of prophecies — especially of the Old Testament's prophecies. Their interpretations asserted that all the good and glorious things which the prophecies had foretold concerning Zion and Israel applied to the churches, but all the severe condemnations continued to apply to the Jews. They discarded much of the Old Testament's religion as false or outmoded or as utterly unsuited to serve as a universal religion. They remodeled what they retained to make it harmonize with **their own** advanced ideas of what the New Testament taught, or ought to have taught. The effect of such revolutions in Biblical interpretation was to destroy all the Old Testament foundations of the New Testament's, and especially of **Revelation**'s interpretation of history, including its plain prophecy of our Lord's and His saints' coming reign of a thousand years during the so-called Millennium. This radical hermeneutical and exegetical annihilation of the foundations began in earnest before the days of Eusebius. It still continues in many circles. Then in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many performed comparable feats of exegetical acrobatics when they propounded novel post-Millennial and a-Millennial interpretations of **Revelation**'s interpretation of history, thus repudiating anew and with great explicitness its prophecy of our Lord's and His saints' coming reign of a thousand years during the so-called Millennium. So that from very early times the exegetical *tours de force* of men who were leading lights in the churches destroyed the true Scriptural foundations of the Biblical and Christian interpretations of history.

The exegetical *tours de force* have proved to be extremely tragic. The Jews recognized immediately that the innovating interpretations of the Old Testament's prophecies were inexcusably unsound. They knew that on one vitally important issue they were truer to the Bible's interpretation of history than the leading lights in the

churches. Consequently, their leaders told Popes and prelates that they would not believe until they saw Jesus of Nazareth sitting upon the Throne of David. Thus, those Christian misinterpretations gave them a valid excuse for refusing to be converted to any form of Christianity which had adopted them. The exegetical *tours de force* gave them the excuse which has been a solid foundation of their centuries-long refusal. In their turn, the Christians who had adopted the innovative exegesis felt that in response they ought to take up the unnatural — and indeed, anti-Biblical — position that when Christ returns He will not sit on David’s Throne nor reign over the House of Jacob forever. Now for many centuries this stance of theirs has been a theoretical position, and it has been relatively safe for them to hold it. Nevertheless, it may eventually have tragic consequences for them. For **if** our Lord does sit on David’s Throne when He comes again, and **if** He does then begin to reign over the House of Jacob, **then** the view, which Christians had thought it was safe to entertain, will practically force them to conclude that the true Christ, who will then have actually returned, must surely be the false Antichrist. And in this connection we may add that a similar tragic consequence will probably follow in the case of those who hold the false dogma of a Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church which the Dallas Dispensationalists have propagated. For **if** our Lord returns and begins to reign, they will “**know**” that He cannot be the true Christ because they “**know**” that their secret Rapture must occur before the true Christ will come to reign over Israel; and they will **know** that that Rapture had still not yet occurred prior to His actual Second Advent. So that their dogma will force them to conclude that the True Christ, when He does finally arrive must be a false Christ, namely, the Antichrist.

But to resume. When the Reformation came **Revelation**’s interpretation of history fared ill at Protestant hands. See Luther’s statement concerning **Revelation**. Very many Protestants identified the Roman Catholic Church with Babylon, the Great Whore, of **Revelation** 17:1—19:4. In short, they changed **Revelation**’s eschatological Babylon into an ecclesiastical Babylon. Besides, as regards **Revelation**’s eschatological Antichrist, they identified him at times with the First Beast. At other times they identified him with the Second Beast. Sometimes they even identified him confusedly with both. They ended by changing the Biblical Antichrist, who will be an individual, from a person into an **office**, namely, into the Papacy; that is, in effect, into the successive occupants of that office. Recently, Liberal Protestants had their own way of mishandling **Revelation**. Throughout the past century they have been dividing the Apocalypse into a number of original documents. Völter began to do this in 1882 in his *Die Entstehung der Apokalypse*. Then Weizsäcker, Vischer, Spitta, Briggs, and a score or more of other higher critics mercilessly, mutilated, mangled, or butchered the hapless book.

And of course, throughout the centuries and especially recently **Revelation**’s interpretation of history had suffered much at the hands of self-appointed gate-crashers. For example, Hegel’s interpretation of history nominated the Prussian State as its perfect culmination, and the Church of the Latter-Day Saints took a name which claimed for the Mormons the achievement of the acme of religious perfection. Then the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. (*alias* The International Bible Students Association of Brooklyn), announced that the august assembly of the 144,000 in **Revelation** 7:4 and 14:1it would consist of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Moreover, the Dallas

Dispensationalists, who have powerfully advocated many Biblical truths, produced a supposedly Biblical interpretation of history. It consisted of (1) a divine program of successive, covenant-based dispensations, (2) a secret, any-moment coming of our Lord, and (3) a secret, pre-tribulation rapture of the entire church to the Third Heaven, to be followed by (4) an Israelite Millennial Kingdom of God on the Earth. Thus, they erred egregiously just where they thought they had succeeded gloriously. They have saddled their seriously erroneous special interpretations of the entire Bible and **Revelation** upon hosts of Christians.

Early in the nineteenth century Olshausen pointed out that throughout the centuries many had exhibited strong (and quite irrational) detestation of the very idea of a Kingdom of God on the Earth. Secularists taught them intensely to abhor the very idea of a Theocracy. Yet the same persons have often liked very well many humanly contrived ecclesiastical surrogates for either; that is, in much the same way as Jews have been adamant in their rejection of Jesus, but ready and willing to follow other self-designated Messiahs.

Finally, there were two other well-known causes of the bedlam of confusion and a third cause which interpreters have rarely taken account of.

**The first was** the fact that anyone, however well or ill qualified for the task he might be, has always been free to publish his interpretation of **Revelation**, and that very many did so. Such interpreters based interpretations upon a maximum number of assumptions and conjectures and had a minimum amount of success. The world saw a widespread multiplication of ill-judged misinterpretations on the part of private persons.

**The second was** the fact that very many of the Bible's prophecies contain enigmatic representations of the realities concerning which the prophets spoke and wrote. In a moment we shall explain the rôle of these, but at present we shall only point out that God gave His prophets the words they spoke and wrote. He planted the enigmatic representations of the realities in the words which He spoke to them, and they themselves often did not understand, and indeed were not meant to understand what the enigmatic terms represented. Besides, there has always been a dearth of thoughtful readers who patiently ponder the enigmatic representations and succeed in recognizing the realities which signs, symbols, enacted parables in visions, etc., represent. When readers of **Revelation** misinterpret the enigmatic representations confusion will ensue. Unfortunately, very few interpreters have perceived the meaning of many key enigmatic representations.

**The third was** the will of God who often will not permit any to understand the meaning of a prophecy until He is ready to reveal it in future ages to those to whom He has planned to reveal it. For example, Jews have long known that Gabriel told the prophet Daniel that "none of the wicked shall understand," and also that (in due time) "the wise shall understand" (**Daniel** 12:10).

Every interpreter of **Revelation** needs to be aware of the longstanding, extremely confused situation just described. He should especially be aware that very many, whose interpretations of **Revelation** agree in very little else, have nevertheless agreed that they ought to throw away the key of knowledge to the Biblical Christian interpretation of history.

In any case, the other documents of the Bible already contained a fairly well developed interpretation of history before John wrote **Revelation** in 96 A. D. However, it stood like a torso without its head. **Revelation**'s interpretation of history is based upon that earlier Biblical interpretation of history. Certainly, no interpreter will be able to understand **Revelation**'s interpretation of history unless he has clear and adequate ideas concerning the basic elements of that earlier, foundational interpretation of history. Therefore, we must look at it first.

## ii. The Bible's Earlier Interpretation of History

On the face of it the Bible purports to give a history of the world.

It says that in His determinate counsel and foreknowledge Jehovah God created the present Heavens, the Earth, the Sea, "and all that in them is."

The Bible also purports to give a brief historical account of the successive stages by which He performed that work and of how He completed it by creating Man in His own image as well as in two forms: male and female.

It says that He informed them at once that they were under a government and commanded them to multiply and rule the earth. He explicitly commanded them not to eat of one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Eve desired to be as God knowing good and evil, and she ate.

When they disobeyed Him He immediately called them to account and punished them for disobeying.

In what followed many features of a plan for history soon become very obvious to anyone who reads the Bible: for example, that Jehovah will first create many nations; that a single individual, namely, Abraham, will play a key part, and that Jehovah in some way will cause Abraham to become a source of His blessings to all nations.

The divine plan for history which the Bible reveals begins with a series of divine promises to Abraham. First, there will be a particular land which He will give to Abraham and to a single line of his descendants as their possession. Second, that He will make Abraham the founding father of a great nation.

It is also obvious to a Bible reader that that people will be His people which He will preserve as a separate people *vis-à-vis* all the other nations. It will confront them, and they will confront it, from the start of its career and ever afterwards.

What Jehovah did in initiating this basic election of a single nation is very noteworthy. He first took pains to establish a basic personal relationship between Abram and Himself, a relationship based upon trust. "Abram believed God ..." Jehovah recognized his belief as a form of righteousness and accepted it because He knew that He could do what He promised and that He would do it sooner or later without fail. He knew therefore that He was worthy of Abram's trust and that Abram ought to have trusted Him and did. This was a prime form of righteousness, namely, to recognize that Jehovah had spoken and to believe what He had said.

As a result, Jehovah would tell Abram what He is going to do to Sodom before He does it. Abram is not a "servant," but a "friend" of God. (*Cf.*, **Isaiah** 41:8 and **John**

15:13ff. and **Amos** 3:7). Abram will command his descendants “to keep the way of Jehovah” (**Genesis** 18:17-19).

Jehovah also told Abram that in dealing with cities He will not destroy a city if even as few as only ten righteous men are in it. And if there are less than ten, He will cause them to escape the impending overthrow. All of this was settled in principle and revealed to Abram before Isaac was born.

Jehovah will give that elect people certain advantages in intellect, morality, and religion, and also certain privileges which none of the other nations will have.

In a previous section of this Introduction we called attention to the fact that the Bible — by means of its long-range predictive prophecies, and especially by means of the choice of the subjects of those prophecies — quite literally drives us to view the whole sweep of human history as a great field or arena in which Jehovah “runs the show.”

Certainly, long before John wrote **Revelation** the Bible had said a great deal about Israel and concerning how Jehovah’s divine providence had managed Israel’s life and development, and how it always would. For His prophets had foretold many things concerning Israel’s future, and especially concerning its future relations to other nations (= the Gentiles = the heathen). And certainly, the Bible’s prophets had also said a lot concerning the historical rôles and destinies of many other nations, including a great procession of successive “world” empires, and concerning the course of history. Indeed, as noted, the Scriptures had already long been cast into the form of a history of the world.

In this connection it is certainly very noteworthy that some of the Bible’s prophecies had expressly raised the question concerning who shall govern the world, and also that they had expressly designated Jehovah’s Christ as the destined ruler over the nations of mankind. For example, **Psalms** 2:6-9, **Daniel** 7:13f.,27, and **Psalms** 110:2,5f. And in 29 A. D. in our Lord’s Temptation the same question had arisen in a more sharply defined form (**Matthew** 4:6-10 and **Luke** 4:5-8):

How will Jehovah’s Christ rule the world: as a worshipper of Satan under Satanic authorization, or as a worshipper of Jehovah and under His auspices?

In the ways just indicated and many others the Bible’s earlier, Pre-**Revelation** writings certainly related very many instances in which Jehovah’s divine interventions directly changed and sometimes reversed “the course of human events.”

In all of this, therefore, the Bible had been busily at work interpreting history long before John wrote **Revelation**. Its writers had been dealing with what is sometimes called “General History”; that is, with the history of some of the nations of mankind. Its prophets had been dealing with what the Professors of History at Tübingen in the nineteenth century and Lord Acton liked to call “Universal History”; for they had told

how Jehovah's divine providence has ordered the rise, development, and the fall, of the nations of mankind.

If we duly consider this, and if for the moment we leave the wider Cosmos and its events out of view and confine our attention to earthly events, we perceive that the Bible, by means of its statements, and especially by means of its long-range prophecies, had already **opened up all the questions that those who seek to find the key to history** — such as Hegel, the Tübingen Historiker, Lord Acton, Wells, Durant, Spengler, Butterfield, Toynbee, Dawson, the proponents of General History, Universal History, Metahistory, and many others — **have long been trying** (with very little success) **to answer**. They were not content to regard the answers that the so-called “pure” historians offer as the be-all and end-all of historical investigations. Instead, they asked:

What is the nature of history? What doeth it? What is the cause and significance of historical change? Why was the past different from the present? Why does the present differ from the past? Where is history going? Where will it end up? What is the meaning of history as a whole?

These are very high priority questions. Jehovah wanted men — **all** men — to have true answers to them. Therefore, in the Bible, as was just said, He had opened up all the questions that thoughtful historians have pondered.

Indeed, the Bible had done far more than open them up, for it had very clearly **pointed out many answers** to them. Jehovah had not only demonstrated that He controls history, but **He had revealed many keys to history** in the sense that He had showed how He deals with individuals, and how He deals with nations and their governments. And as for the latter, He had stated that He regards them as vanity, and as less than nothing. Religiously, morally, politically, and intellectually they were incapable of taking root in the earth. They produce only so many short-lived bubbles. None of them had been capable of giving Him anything useful at all! “With whom took He counsel? and who instructed Him?” (**Isaiah** 40:14,15-17;23f.)! And indeed, none of them will have any future, for it is written:

Behold, is it not of Jehovah of Hosts that the peoples labor for the fire, and the nations weary themselves for vanity? For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. (**Habakkuk** 2:13f.)

In revealing such beginnings of an interpretation of history Jehovah had already given the writers of Scripture many things which the proponents of “Universal History” (*a la* Tübingen *et al.*) would seek to discover eighteen hundred years later, and would fail to find. For **they** sought the key to history in vain. Indeed, they were hard put to it to produce a feasible suggestion that history may have an iota of meaning.

Moreover, besides opening up questions concerning an interpretation of history, the Bible's prophecies had done three other things before John wrote **Revelation**. First, they had foretold that Jehovah would give the world an assured future under His own personal righteous government; that is, in a Kingdom of Jehovah the God of Heaven. Second, they had offered some important keys to **Cosmic** History. In short, they had added a new dimension to history. They had planted "the (entire) course of human events" squarely within a framework of cosmic processes, developments, and events, which, however, as of the time before John wrote **Revelation**, were still only partly revealed. And third, they had offered God's people **the true key to history** — to **all** of history! Yes! in the beginnings of the Bible's interpretation of history Jehovah had revealed it, because, as we just said, He wanted men — **all** men — to have true answers to their questions about history.

The true key to history is that Jehovah the Possessor of Heaven and Earth has a great comprehensive plan which He is executing. Therefore, He wanted

to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery  
which for ages hath been hid in the God who created all things  
(ΦΩΤΙΣΑΙ ΠΑΝΤΑΣ ΤΙΣ Η ΟΙΚΟΝΟΜΙΑ, Κ. Τ. Λ., **Ephesians** 3:9).

Therefore, He gave them His great key to history, His βουλη that is, He revealed His "plan" or "counsel." And He commanded that His Apostles should publish it everywhere. It was a plan for the "economy" or "dispensation" of the fulness of the times (εις οικονομιαν του πληρωματος των καιρων). And it was a plan

to put all things together for Himself under a single headship in  
the Messiah, both the things upon the heavens and the things  
upon the earth  
(ανακεφαλαιωσασθαι τα παντα εν τω Χριστω τα επι τοις ο  
υρανοις και τα επι τη γη (**Ephesians** 1:10)).

It was a plan to confer all the very highest honors and prerogatives upon His Son: all wisdom, honor, glory, and blessing, plus all authority, government, power, and wealth, as **Revelation** 5:11 told us later when it came.

Thus, before John wrote **Revelation** Jehovah had revealed much of this great plan in many long-range prophecies; that is, to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, Paul, and other prophets and apostles. Their prophecies had already begun to make it clear that the Bible's history is a **Cosmic Epic** — the **true** Cosmic Epic. However, much of what He revealed to them had only been mysterious adumbrations of epochal future events. In **Revelation**, however, He elucidated the earlier adumbrations. He revealed many of the same things — for example, the nature and events of the Great Day of the Lord — fully with unmistakable clarity in the long-range prophecies which His Seven-Sealed Book revealed to the Lamb when He opened it, and which He revealed to John by sending His angel to show the contents of that Book to John and us.

Thus, the Old Testament had established an interpretation of history, but it had remained a torso. And the earlier documents of the New Testament had added a great deal to it when they foretold the coming of a messianic Kingdom of God. Even so it was still incomplete. So that it was left to **Revelation**'s interpretation of history to put the head on the torso; that is, to elucidate many earlier prophecies and to add some crucially important new ones.

In this connection it is especially necessary to point out that some prophecies which were crucially important for Scripture's interpretation of history had been fulfilled before John wrote **Revelation**, but many crucially important prophecies had not. They had been defined and partly elucidated, but neither completed nor fulfilled. However, only their completions and fulfillments can ever demonstrate their truth. When John wrote **Revelation**, a **large backlog of still unfulfilled prophecies** stood waiting for further elucidations, additions, and fulfillments. **Revelation** elucidated many, and added some crucially important prophecies. They, and those which **Revelation** added, still await fulfillments today 1,900 years later. Moreover, those which **Revelation** added are **absolutely essential** because the fulfillment of the events which they foretell will provide sufficient time for adequate fulfillments of the backlog of still unfulfilled prophecies to occur concurrently with them.

Finally, before we leave the subject of the Bible's interpretation of history as it stood before John wrote **Revelation**, we will offer a clear idea of how it revealed comprehensive frameworks of Jehovah's plan for history, as follows.

Before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees, the Gentiles, the world of the nations (τα εθνη), had been set up and their religions had functioned for centuries under the chief God of the Sumerian Pantheon ("The Great Mountain"). The times were a "time of the Gentiles." They were having their "inning" and it continued to 1446 B. C.

Then, in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of Jehovah, His prophet Moses formed Israel into a nation on the night of the Passover in 1446 B. C.

At midnight Jehovah redeemed His "Son," and Israel was born as a nation. That night a new nation had made its debut in the world of the nations (τα εθνη). Its entrée was sudden, electrifying, and explosive. For example, within days Jehovah overthrew Pharaoh. The King of Egypt and his army were "sunk in the Red Sea," but the women in Israel were dancing and singing:

Jehovah is a man of war: Jehovah is his name. Pharaoh's chariots  
and his host hath he cast into the sea; and his chosen captains are  
sunk in the Red Sea. (**Exodus** 15:3)

Moses and Jethro were neither sight deaf nor hearing blind. They perceived and understood that Jehovah had demonstrated that He was mightier than all the Gods of Egypt:

And Moses told his father-in-law all that Jehovah had done unto Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the travail that had come upon them by the way, and how Jehovah delivered them. And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel, in that he had delivered them out of the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh; who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. **Now I know** that Jehovah is greater than all gods; yea, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them. And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. (**Exodus** 18:8-12)

The significance of these events was plain for all to understand. The shot which Jehovah had fired was heard around the then world:

The peoples have heard, they tremble: Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia. Then were the chiefs of Edom dismayed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away. Terror and dread falleth upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they are as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Jehovah, till the people pass over that thou hast purchased. Thou wilt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, the place, O Jehovah, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever. (**Exodus** 15:14-18)

Within three months Israel stood before Mount Sinai and heard the Great I-AM use His powerful voice to announce for all Israel to hear — and along with them for all men and angels then and ever since to know unmistakably — how He will deal with all those who love Him (**Exodus** 20:6) and with all those who hate Him (**Exodus** 20:5).

Clearly, Israel was under a government, and the government was a **divine** sovereignty.

Moreover, Jehovah must be worshipped with no use of idols, or else. And exactly what the “or else” meant became unmistakably clear when Moses turned the golden calf into powder and interred its dust in a river.

Jehovah's great Blitzkrieg had struck and He – no less – was at war against Gentile religion and kings.

Moreover, Israel now had a flood of **new knowledge**. It was **revealed** knowledge of the will of Jehovah which “the mouth of Jehovah” had spoken. It was contained in genuine oracles in the form of spoken words in a propositional revelation. Clearly, Israel’s “time” was beginning. His “inning” had begun.

Many other things happened quickly which we cannot stop here even to mention. Within a year Israel was fully equipped with an establishment of government, with a tabernacle and an established religion, with a hereditary priesthood, a “church calendar” of holy seasons, and more. Within a year Israel was ready to invade Palestine, and might have done so if they had not behaved like fools and Jehovah had not sentenced them to perish in the wilderness until He had prepared another generation for Joshua and Caleb to lead.

At once, after Jehovah’s prophet Moses had explicitly stated that His plan for Israel included a program of continual confrontations *vis-à-vis* the Gentiles; and after Jehovah had foretold His program of incessantly successive, severe but measured punishments for Israel’s disobedience and apostasies (**Leviticus** 25-26 and **Deuteronomy** 28:1ff.); and after Jehovah’s prophet Balaam the son of Beor had confirmed this plan for history by foretelling that Israel was to be a people who would dwell alone as a nation set apart from all the Gentiles (**Numbers** 23:9); and finally, after Israel’s rôle and his relations to them and their religions throughout history was thoroughly defined, and Moses and Balaam had foretold Israel’s eventual recovery and Israel’s victory over all enemies; then (in 1406 B. C.) Israel under Joshua made a sudden, electrifying, and explosive onslaught upon Canaan and Jehovah had planted Israel solidly in Abraham’s land where it would remain until 586 B. C. Certainly, “the times of Israel” — Israel’s “inning” — had indeed begun.

A few centuries later David’s empire crystalized in Hebron (**II. Samuel** 5ff.), and then grew and spread to the River, and finally flourished in Solomonic wealth and splendor. It soon fell apart and became two kingdoms which Gentiles conquered and dispersed. When Jerusalem fell in 586 all Israel was in captivity in its so-called “Dispersion.” Israel had no king, no land, no capital, no temple, etc. Nevertheless, it still had its Aaronic priests, as well as prophets, and scribes who preserved its written revelation of Jehovah’s covenants, His promises, His words, and the records of His mighty works. Principal among the oracles was a divine covenant and its connected promises which had established a hereditary kingship over **all** Israel. Therefore, many Israelites knew that Jehovan had spoken. They believed the promises because they knew that the mouth of Jehovah had spoken them. They knew assuredly that Israel would have a future as a nation. Their prophets told them that the Gentiles would have no future and that their religions were doomed religions. They unabashedly confronted Gentiles and Gentile religions everywhere.

Next, just at this juncture of world history Jehovah revealed the major part of His great program for the Gentiles. It was to consist of successive empires. He revealed it to Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign in a dream which Daniel interpreted

**(Daniel 2).** It outlined “the times of the Gentiles.” A Babylonian empire would be followed by a Persian empire. Then Alexander’s Greek empire, would be followed by one last empire different from all the preceding. All of them would be demolished.

Jehovah revealed the same program a second time to Daniel in the first year of Belshazzar. He saw a Lion, a Bear, a Leopard, and finally

a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. **(Daniel 7)**

Each in its turn would be weighed, found wanting, and divided.

I beheld even till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed, and it was given to be burned with fire. And as for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

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. **(Daniel 7)**

Meanwhile, keeping always in mind these unforgettable prophecies, fallen Israel carried on. They knew that their temporarily fallen nation was divinely destined to triumph over Gentile power and Gentile religion. Had not Jehovah’s prophets foretold a future condition in which

... Jehovah shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto Jehovah, and shall perform it. And Jehovah will smite Egypt, smiting and healing; and they shall return unto Jehovah, and he will be entreated of them, and will heal them. 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 worship with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance. **(Isaiah 19:21-25)**

Zion would have a future empire **(Isaiah 60)**. Jehovah had spoken it. They believed it.

A remnant had returned to Palestine in 538 B. C., but only to be exiled, first, in 70 A. D., and again in 134 A. D. The rest of Israel carried on in worldwide dispersion.

Meanwhile, in 29-32 A. D. two prophets had appeared in fallen Israel. They were John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, and they had a command from Jehovah for Israel: Repent!

Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.” (**Mark** 1:14f.)

Israel then began to receive another great flood of **new knowledge**. It was a **revealed** knowledge of Jehovah’s will, a knowledge of **His** “salvation” and of **His** “righteousness.” **He** had promised it centuries before through the prophet Isaiah, saying:

Thus saith Jehovah, Keep ye justice, and do righteousness; for **my** salvation is near to come, and **my** righteousness to be revealed. (**Isaiah** 56:1)

Jesus proclaimed Jehovah’s **ratzon** to Israel and in the same breath implied that it would apply to Gentiles (**Luke** 4:19):

<sup>14</sup>And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee ...  
<sup>16</sup>And he came to Nazareth ... on the sabbath day ... <sup>17</sup>And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim ... the acceptable year of the Lord. <sup>20</sup>And he closed the book ... (**Luke** 4:14-20)

The “good tidings” included doctrines of the coming apocalyptic Kingdom of God, and of “the acceptable year of the Lord” (= Jehovah’s **ratzon** to Israel and Gentiles), and of the work of the Holy Spirit, and of a baptism in the Spirit, and of an implanted word, and of an implanted life, and of a propitiation for sins, and of an atonement for sin, and of His own divine Sonship and Messiahship, and so on.

Jesus appointed twelve disciples, whom He called “Apostles.” He gave them power to heal and cast out evil spirits. He bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them. He gave them authority to forgive and refuse forgiveness. In short, He constituted them a government. He particularly commanded them to make Gentile disciples who would obey Him. At first only Jews, but a few years later many Gentiles became disciples. Gentile adherents who became disciples of Jesus *ipso facto* became Messianic Jews.

They had become naturalized and fully accredited citizens of the “state” (πολιτεία) of Israel, as the authorized Apostle of the Gentiles wrote:

... the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; *to wit*, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, whereof I was made a minister ... (**Ephesians** 3:4b-7a).

That original status was never changed. They remained “Messianic Jews” even when they lost track of their real identity and ceased to think of themselves as Jews. As Gentiles, they had been

alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

But now, St. Paul told them, they were no longer sojourners but fellow-citizens:

But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, *so* making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father. So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. (**Ephesians** 2:14-22)

They had been grafted into the good olive tree.

Jesus’ “sect” of “Messianic Jews” — or His “heresy,” as the Pharisees called it — flourished and spread around the world. They existed in a perpetual confrontation with the heathen Gentiles and with the “Anti-messianic Jews,” who could repent at any time and the prophet Zechariah had foretold that they would repent and be rejuvenated (**Zechariah** 12-14).

In 32 A. D. Jesus had foretold that the Gentiles would trample Jerusalem until “the Times of the Gentiles” were fully ended.

Woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress upon the land, and wrath unto this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led captive into all the nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (**Luke 21:23-24**)

Ever since that time the world had only to wait for the event which will end the times of the Gentiles. At present in 2004 A. D. the world still awaits the Second Coming in which Jesus Christ, as David’s greater Son, will return in the glory of His Heavenly Father and the holy angels and will begin to reign on His father David’s throne in a reprimed House of David over a revived and rejuvenated Israel. He will then end “Jacob’s time of trouble” and the Gentiles’ “inning.” He will introduce messianic Israel’s “inning” in the coming age of the days of the Messiah.

All of this was already in the Bible and was pretty well understood by very many before Jesus gave **Revelation** to John in 96 A. D.

Such in bare outline is one revealed comprehensive framework in Jehovah’s plan for history.

The confrontations of Israel *vis-à-vis* Gentiles and *vice versa* have been continuous from 1446 B. C. to 2004 A.D.

The confrontations of Israel *vis-à-vis* Gentiles has been continuous from 1446 B. C. to 2004 A.D.

The confrontations of the old Israel *vis-à-vis* old Gentiles and other Gentiles who had become “Messianic Jews,” namely, the so-called “Christians,” has been continuous from 32 to 2004 A.D.

If anyone asks, “Why these confrontations?” The Bible’s answer is writ large and all know it. They have been processes of testing to show purity of heart, or lack thereof, in the worship of Jehovah and in the worship of Jesus. They tested whether or not nominal worshippers would accept or reject new knowledge when Jehovah speaks and reveals it, or whether they would reject “the way of Jehovah” when they did not like it. Jehovah had said, “Love me, love My Son, and love My People, or else.”

Such in bare outline was the torso of Jehovah’s plan for history which the Bible contained before 96 A. D. when Jesus gave **Revelation** to John. It was clear for all to understand that something had been going on for a long while — something radically

supernatural — something was in processes of coming to birth — something was crying out for future developing and perfecting — something that was a millennia-long attempt to get Israel and the world at large to recognize that Jehovah did speak, and that His people and the world must worship Him only, and obey, or else.

The preceding resume will give a clear idea concerning the beginnings of an interpretation of history which the Bible had contained before John wrote **Revelation**.

Now we shall describe the nature of **Revelation**'s interpretation of history and the relation of its prophecies to those which existed before 96 A. D.

### iii. **Revelation**'s Interpretation of History

**Revelation**'s interpretation of history is a continuation of the Bible's previously existing interpretation of history, which it broadens, deepens, extends, and exalts. It elucidates many features of earlier prophecies. It also foretells some crucially important events not previously foretold. In order to discover how **Revelation** has enriched the Bible's interpretation of history by prophesying new things and in other ways, it is necessary, first, to have clear ideas of what Jehovah had foretold before John wrote **Revelation**, and then to note distinctly what **Revelation**'s oracles have added to that previously existing body of divine oracles. When an interpreter makes such an (*offenbarungsgeschichtliche*) comparison he perceives at once that **Revelation**'s oracles have introduced many new features and that not a few of them were great surprises. For example, to name only a few:

- 1) **Revelation**'s eschatological "Babylon" — its identity and its fate;
- 2) **Revelation**'s Seven-Headed and Ten-Horned Great Red Dragon — his identity and his fate;
- 3) **Revelation**'s eschatological resumption of Temple Worship in Jerusalem, and the forty-two months' trampling of the city.
- 4) **Revelation**'s eschatological Seven-Headed and Ten-Horned Beast — its identity and its fate;
- 5) **Revelation**'s eschatological Two-Horned Beast — its False Prophet;
- 6) **Revelation**'s pre-Millennial consignment of the Beast and the False Prophet to the Lake of Fire;
- 7) **Revelation**'s pre-Millennial imprisonment of Satan;
- 8) **Revelation**'s First Resurrection;
- 9) **Revelation**'s Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Saints, the so-called Millennium;

- 10) **Revelation**'s post-Millennial release of Satan from prison;
- 11) **Revelation**'s post-Millennial revolt of Gog and Magog and Jehovah's summary destruction of them;
- 12) **Revelation**'s consignment of Satan to the Lake of Fire;
- 13) **Revelation**'s Great White Throne Theophany;
- 14) **Revelation**'s revelation of the Face of Jehovah;
- 15) **Revelation**'s Second Resurrection of all the dead and Last Judgment;
- 16) **Revelation**'s consignment of Death and Hades to the Lake of Fire;
- 17) **Revelation**'s prophecies of the New Jerusalem's arrival, etc.

The preceding list is not at all complete, for **Revelation** introduces many other new things. In this Introduction we shall mention only a few of the foregoing features.

### **Revelation's Eight Major Eschatological Events**

Of all the new things that **Revelation** foretells probably the most important from the standpoint of the Bible's interpretation of history is one feature of its new conception of end-time events. We refer to **a prophecy which foretells eight principal eschatological events and incorporates them into a very meaningful eightfold development**. At present we shall only describe its nature and mention one very helpful thing that it does.

In his Wilderness Vision (**Revelation** 17:1—21:8) John saw eight major eschatological events occur in succession. He beheld Jehovah and His Christ defeat and destroy one after another four evil entities which supernatural evil beings had empowered and upheld. He also watched as Jehovah and His Christ established four distinct parts of Jehovah's everlasting righteousness. John saw these eight events occur in a certain alternation: first, a defeat of a supernaturally empowered evil; second, an establishment of one part of Jehovah's everlasting righteousness; third, another defeat of evil; fourth, the establishment of another part of Jehovah's eternal righteousness; and so on. Such is the general **nature** of the eightfold development.

By foretelling this series of eight of the greatest eschatological events, including the chronological order of their future occurrence, **Revelation** certainly contributed one of the most significant features of the Bible's divinely revealed interpretation of history. This very meaningful eightfold development is explained in Chapter One. Here we shall only point out one result of **Revelation**'s revelation of this newly revealed eightfold development, as follows.

### One Result

The Bible's earlier documents had foretold many end-time events. In fact, they contained a large backlog of unfulfilled prophecies. Some were eschatological, others were not, but all awaited fulfillments. They stood in great disarray, for the Bible's earlier documents had not clearly indicated the order in which their fulfillments would occur. Moreover, most **Christian** interpreters of Scripture, and those who wrote many of the churches' confessions and catechisms, have made the already inevitable confusion worse by adopting overly simplified views of end-time events. Very early they had focused their attention on the return of Christ, and had made it the be-all and the end-all of their (revised) versions of Biblical eschatology. This centuries-long practice had made it impossible for many to conceive of any way in which the Bible's unfulfilled prophecies could ever possibly be fulfilled — least of all those which would require considerable lengths of time for their fulfillments. And consequently, at such an impasse, most **Christian** interpreters have usually been contented simply to believe that our Lord will return, and that He will judge the living and the dead. Period! They settled for that. That much they could believe and would, but very little or no more. In short, they rewrote prophecy and wrote off the backlog of the Bible's unfulfilled prophecies — including **Isaiah** 9:6-7, **Luke** 1:32-33, and **Revelation** 20:4-6. Imagine it! In doing this they failed to notice that the eightfold development which **Revelation** foretells made it unnecessary for anyone ever to assume that the unfulfilled prophecies could never be fulfilled. In fact, it ends the uncertainty and confusion which embarrassed the Christian interpreters, first, because it puts eight of the chief eschatological events into their chronological order; and also because, second, it explicitly foretells the future Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and His risen saints, a kingdom which will last for a thousand years, the so-called Millennium. It also explicitly foretells future events which will happen before, during, and following that thousand years. This means, of course, that there will be plenty of time in which the Bible's still unfulfilled prophecies can be fulfilled, and will. Thus, the new conception of end-time events in **Revelation**'s eightfold development ends a great impasse.

### Three Comments

Before leaving this subject I will make three comments. **The first** is that an interpreter of **Revelation** should realize that the eightfold development which it foretells, and of which we have been speaking, embodies **the masterful strategy which Jehovah will use to eradicate the greatest works of evil supernatural beings from the Earth and from the Universe**. And he should also realize that it contains **the masterful program which Jehovah will use to establish foundations of consummate righteousness not only in the Earth for mankind, but also for the Universe at large**.

**Our second comment** is that every student of prophecy, and certainly every interpreter of **Revelation**, should realize that for the purpose of establishing the credibility of Jehovah and His holy prophets and apostles everything depends upon creating **a deposit of unquestionably veracious historical facts which can demonstrate the rule of God “in the course of human events.”** Such absolutely essential historical facts are of two kinds, namely: first, facts which establish the dates of the Bible’s alleged prophecies and their integrity; and second, facts which establish the dates and the natures of alleged fulfillments of those prophecies. Facts of those two kinds are the only evidences which **can** demonstrate the reality of the Bible’s alleged prophecies *quâ* prophecies, the actuality of their alleged fulfillments *quâ* fulfillments, and the truth of legitimate inferences concerning Jehovah’s Lordship over history as inferences which are solidly based upon well established, historically trustworthy facts. **Such is the essential nature of the most necessary foundations.**

Upon **such** foundations Jehovah can build the most powerful and utterly irrefragable evidences for demonstrating His great power as the Lord of cosmic and earthly history. He can, and He has and will. For the purpose of creating such mouth-stopping demonstrations no evidences are half so powerful as those which very late-in-the-day fulfillments of very early-in-the-day prophecies have power to create. And they are greatly needed because writers of so-called “Biblical Theology” have claimed that there have never been any actual fulfillments of truly predictive prophecies. In other words, they have asserted that the Bible’s alleged prophecies were contrived by writers who cooked them up to make them fit events which had already occurred before they were “predicted.” Therefore, what is needed, and what Jehovah therefore has to create, is one or more arrangements that can and will do two things: first, that will create the most impressive demonstrations of His divine Lordship over all of history; and second, that will make it impossible for any intellectuals (or others) ever to slander Him and His holy prophets, or Christ and His holy Apostles, by accusations of this particular kind. Consequently, the great question is:

What can meet this need? What can effectively  
prevent such slanders?

The answer is that a certain kind of situation can falsify their contentions. Jehovah can create situations of that kind, and He has.

The essential feature of such a situation is the unquestionable existence of a very long span of years — of centuries or even of millennia — between one of the Bible's obvious alleged prophecies and its plain alleged fulfillment (or fulfillments). For example, the essential feature is the great time-gap between the latest date that any scholar — even the most determined anti-supernaturalist and anti-revelationist Biblical Theologian — can ever possibly assign to an Old Testament document such as **Isaiah** or **Daniel**, on the one hand, and the earliest date that anybody can ever possibly assign to any New Testament event.

One example, in the case of an Old Testament prophecy, is the time-gap between the latest Maccabean date any scholar could dare to assign to the writing of **Daniel**, on the one hand, and the date of any alleged fulfillment of a prophecy in **Daniel** in New Testament times, or during a post-twentieth-century end-time, on the other. An example, in the case of a New Testament prophecy, is the time-interval between the latest date that any scholar can ever possibly assign to a prophecy in a New Testament document and the earliest date that anyone can ever possibly assign to any end-time event. By the way in which He conducts the course of human and cosmic events, Jehovah has the power to insert such extended time-gaps between prophecies and their fulfillments, thus creating such situations. He can make the fulfillment of a prophecy occur within minutes, or within a day or two, or within a year or two, or within a generation or two, a century or two, a millennium or two, or more. He **has** already created the kind of situations we have described, and He is now in the process of creating more of them.

In order to see the great need and the value of building His prophecies and their fulfillments upon such foundations as we have described, an interpreter should perceive how the evidences which have been founded upon such time-gap-situations will never lose their force. They will astound men with unfailing power throughout the Millennium, and following Satan's temporary release, and throughout the ensuing eternity.

If an interpreter will view these things from a standpoint at the close of the future Millennium, he will easily understand the great need. Satan will then have been released. He can get the whole world to question everything. He will then have deceived Gog and Magog and the nations of mankind, probably as never before. However, the time-gaps which we have described will have made the evidences of the dates of the Biblical prophecies absolutely incontrovertible. They will also have made their priority in time to the end-time events which immediately preceded the commencement of the Millennium 1,000 years previously absolutely incontrovertible. Those as of then absolutely incontrovertible evidences of Jehovah's Lordship of history will have left Satan and Gog and Magog totally without any possible rational justification for their great post-Millennial folly — nay, madness. For they will have been fully aware of pre-Millennial dates of the prophecy in **Revelation** 20:6-10 and of the prophecy in **Ezekiel** 38 and 39 which foretell their doom in words of unmistakable plainness.

Or, if an interpreter will view these matters from the standpoint of one who will be living in the New Jerusalem after it has come down to Earth from God out of Heaven,

he will easily understand that these mouth-stopping evidences will confront men and angels throughout the Millennium, and following Satan's temporary release, and throughout eternity: for they will never — nay, **can** never — lose their force.

Therefore, it is in connection with possibilities of the kind just described that an interpreter of **Revelation** ought to perceive the great positive importance of the backlog of the Bible's unfulfilled prophecies. They are potential foundations. Jehovah can create very late-in-the-day fulfillments for them. And when He does, those fulfillments will stand forever as unquestionable evidences of His unquestionably veracious prophecies and of His unquestionably adequate fulfillments of His prophecies. With just such undeniable demonstrations He will confront the human intellectual enterprise. No interpreter of **Revelation** should ever presume to put it past the power of Jehovah to foresee such possibilities of establishing His glory and exploiting them to the full.

**Our third comment** is made in the light of the preceding two. It is upon the centuries-long failure of **Christian** interpreters to deal competently with the Bible's eschatology. As many of our readers well know, there is evidence galore to show that many of those who rewrote prophecy were very willing to do it because they greatly disliked many of the things which they knew that the unfulfilled prophecies clearly foretold. They were strongly biased against them. They not only did not love Jehovah, the God of Heaven, and His people Israel, but they scorned Him and many of the things which His prophecies foretold. They congratulated themselves that they had emancipated themselves from Biblical superstitions, from primitive Biblical religiosity, and from unworthy Biblical hopes. So that if Jehovah should use His despised prophecies to confound **them**, who would have any right to complain of an injustice?

#### **Four Surprises: "Babylon," (First) Beast, Dragon, and Temple Worship.**

**Revelation**, as was said, contains several great surprises. One is the appearance out of nowhere of its eschatological Babylon, and especially the interpreting angel's explanation of her great rôle in the dynamics of world history. The first great evil entity which Jehovah will destroy in that eightfold development which we just described is called "Babylon" — "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." The interpreting angel tells John that the historical reality, which this enigmatical representation depicts as a city, will be a world-controlling, international power of some kind. It dominates the Beast, for it controls kings and its mercantile interests control the maritime industry. In Chapter One this writer has identified it with Jerusalem. **Revelation** 11:8 had previously called Jerusalem "Sodom" and "Egypt." It is therefore not altogether without any parallel case to suppose that in its prophecy of the eightfold development it has called her "Babylon." Indeed, **Revelation** states that when Jehovah shall have destroyed this "Babylon," He will thereby have vindicated and avenged the prophets and the Christians whom she had murdered. Certainly this fully harmonizes with many of our Lord's statements concerning Jerusalem.

A second great surprise is the appearance of **Revelation**'s Seven-Headed, Ten-Horned, Great Red Dragon, whose "tail drags (present tense) the third part of the stars of heaven and hurled (aorist tense) them to the earth." **Revelation** reveals his fierce determination to prevent Jehovah's Messiah-Son from ruling over the nations of mankind, and his consequently great rôle in the dynamics of world history both before the Kingdom of God comes in power, and again, though only briefly, after it has stood firm for a thousand years.

A third great surprise is the appearance of **Revelation**'s eschatological Beast. Daniel had seen this same Beast over six hundred years before John saw it. He had described it in **Daniel** 7:7-8, 11, 19-26. However, John was the first to see its Seven Heads, its composite makeup, its color, and other features which make it the spitting image of the Great Red Dragon. It had also been left to him to hear the interpreting angel identify its Seven Heads and its Ten Horns, and to hear him describe the rôles of the Ten Horns in the dynamics of world history; that is, their rôle in their war upon the Great Whore during the final forty-two months which will immediately precede our Lord's Second Coming, and also their rôle in the war which they will wage against Christ and His armies immediately following His return. In **Revelation**'s account of the eightfold development this Beast is the second great evil entity which Jehovah will destroy, and in it the interpreting angel takes great pains to show John the identities of its Seven Heads, as was said.

A fourth great surprise to many, but by no means to all, is **Revelation**'s prophecy foretelling an eschatological resumption of Temple worship in Jerusalem. A thoughtful interpreter might have expected this because **Daniel** contains a still unfulfilled prophecy of a great struggle over the continual burnt-offering, a struggle in which it will be removed for 2,300 mornings and evenings (= 1,150 days) and then re-instituted. In this struggle Gentile armies will wage a war to prevent the Jews from sacrificing the continual burnt-offering which Jehovah commanded them to offer twice each day; and Israelites will fight for their right to sacrifice and offer it in obedience to Jehovah's command.

An interpreter of **Revelation** should focus his attention upon what is at issue in a struggle of this particular kind, and upon the fact that struggles of this kind have occurred repeatedly throughout the centuries. This particular kind of struggle began in deadly earnest when Moses and Aaron confronted Pharaoh in Egypt. It will culminate in the last days when Christ's Two Witnesses confront the whole world. From the days of Moses until the days of our Lord's Two Witnesses, and even a thousand years later still, the single great issue at stake has been and will be this:

Will Jehovah's enemies permit Israel to worship Him in the place He chooses and in the way He directs, or not?

Will they not do everything in their power to prevent His people from establishing His mandated worship, and to overthrow it whenever they put it back into operation?

**Revelation** foretells that in their determined attempts to prevent that worship, or to overthrow it, the **supernatural** enemies of Jehovah and His Son — the god of this world and his now exiled angels — will cause the kings of the world to muster all their armies, and to bring them against Jerusalem. Indeed, **Revelation** foretells three such attacks upon Jerusalem which are still future, as follows.

### 1) Three Attacks upon Jerusalem

In the last days the enemies of the worship of Jehovah the God of Heaven will launch the first of their three attacks the moment His worshippers begin once again to offer the continual burnt-offering. Their initial effort to remove it will succeed. In this first war, foretold in **Revelation** 11:1-2 and 17:12-13, 16-17, the Ten Horns will conquer and burn Jerusalem, which they will then trample for forty-two months. Nevertheless, after they have removed the continual burnt-offering it will be restored; that is, 1,150 days (= 2,300 evenings and mornings) later. Therefore, they will wage a second war in a new but vain effort to overthrow it. In this second war, foretold in **Revelation** 17:14 and 19:11-21, the Ten Horns will be fighting against Christ and His armies. The Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet — or rather the three froglike unclean spirits of demons working signs which proceed out of their three mouths — will draw the armies of the world to the staging area (not the battle site) at Armageddon. In the ensuing battle Christ and His armies will defeat them. In doing so He will then indeed have become *de facto* “the Prince (ο αρχων) of the kings of the earth” (**Revelation** 1:5). His great Theocratic, Christocratic Kingdom will last a thousand years. Following this period Satan will be “loosed out of his prison.” He will “go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog.” They will attack Jerusalem. Their attack will be the third and last of the three future attacks upon Jerusalem that **Revelation** has foretold.

### 2) Two Evaluations

Obviously, these three future wars against Jerusalem are key events in **Revelation**'s and the Bible's interpretation of history. Therefore, the great question is:

How should an interpreter of **Revelation** evaluate them?

He should evaluate them in **two ways** in connection with two closely related sets of phenomena: **first**, in the light of a comprehensive survey of a long list of previous attacks upon Jerusalem; and **second**, in the light of five great future successes of evil which, according to **Revelation**, the supernatural enemies of Jehovah and His Christ are still destined to achieve in the future. (See the following paragraphs.)

**First**, he should interpret them in the light of a comprehensive view of all of the preceding, centuries-long series of repeated attacks upon Jerusalem. If he does so, he can hardly fail to perceive that all three of them are plainly an extended continuation of a single great process or development which had previously been going on for over three millenniums. They will be three more of the same old thing. This means that they will be a culminating part of the unceasing, ages-long war which evil supernatural beings — Satan, Death, Abaddon-Apollyon, Hades, and others — have been waging against Jehovah and His Christ. It also means that that unceasing, ages-long war has been and now is and will yet be one of the central, most important features in the dynamics of world history. And why so? Because those evil beings instantly mobilize powerful human opposition to and resistance against everything Jehovah begins to do. They launch endless very successful attacks against Him and His Son and His people. There is a long

history of their past successes. One great objective of theirs is to prevent men from worshipping Jehovah, or His Son. If they cannot prevent such worship, they attempt to corrupt it; for example, by changing it into the worship of a golden calf, or in some other equally blasphemous and degrading way. Another great objective of theirs is to render men and women evil. Of course, they have had great success, and history testifies to many of their triumphs.

For example, they triumphed in the days before Noah's flood and in the days of the Tower of Babel. And only recently has the world become able to see — thanks to the discovery and decipherment of many very ancient inscriptions, tablets, and literary texts — how they triumphed when idol worship became rampant everywhere in the Near East long before the God of Glory appeared to our father Abraham in Mesopotamia or Jehovah had ever destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. Among notorious later examples of this same opposition to Jehovah and His worship were: 1) Pharaoh's opposition to Moses; 2) Sennacherib's religious imperialism and his raging against Hezekiah's reforms; 3) Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, his capture of the Temple's vessels, and his deportations of the Jews; 4) Ptolemy Philopator's attempt to enter the Temple; 5) Antiochus Epiphanes' attempt to wipe out the Jewish worship, in which Atheneas dedicated the Temple of Jehovah to Jupiter Olympus, and placed a statue of Jupiter upon its altar of burnt-offering; 6) Pompey's capture of Jerusalem and his penetration, with his officers, into the Sanctuary; 7) Caligula's order to the governor of Syria that he erect a statue of the emperor in the Temple; 8) Titus' and Vespasian's destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem; 9) Hadrian's reconstruction of Jerusalem as a pagan city (*Aelia Capitolina*), and his erection of a temple of Jupiter upon the site of Jehovah's Temple, etc. Or consider the perpetual infestation of Christ's churches with "the sons of the Evil One," of which He had forewarned us in His Parable of the Tares. All these and many other historical processes, developments, and events have been the work of men who were consciously or unconsciously doing the will of the evil supernatural beings who were at war with Jehovah and His Christ. Such is the nature of many of their triumphs that history has recorded.

Evaluated in the light of such facts as the foregoing the three attacks upon Jerusalem which **Revelation** foretells will be the last in the long series. Moreover, only one of those last three will succeed. The success of even that one will be short-lived — forty-two months or three and a half years. It will have a very happy outcome, for it will be the long foretold final "desolations" of Jerusalem and Judah (**Luke 21:24** and **Daniel 9:2, 24**). At its close one will "cry" unto Jerusalem

that her warfare (צבאָה) is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received from Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. (**Isaiah 40:2**)

Jerusalem will finally be ready to rise and shine for the glory of Jehovah will arise upon her (**Isaiah 60:1**).

**Second**, an interpreter should also evaluate the three future attacks upon Jerusalem in connection with the fact that **Revelation** foretells **five great future successes** that the evil supernatural beings are still destined to have in their relentless war against Jehovah.

**First, Revelation 9:20f.** foretells a future high tide of evil — a triumph of idolatry, murders, sorceries, fornication, and thefts. It says that all who still remain alive in the days following the plague of the first part of the Sixth Trumpet will worship idols and practice murders, sorceries, fornication, and thefts. This triumph of evil will be world-wide. It will also be cosmic because the idolatrous worship will be the worship of demons. It will have two principal aspects: first, an evil side in the form of a temporary total victory of **undeniably supernatural** false religion and of the worst kinds of moral evils; and second, a good side in the form of an elimination from the earth of **all** anti-supernaturalism as something which developments will then have rendered utterly untenable.

**Second**, it foretells a great future triumph of evil in the form of an eschatological “Babylon.” She is the great whore who sitteth upon many waters.

Upon her forehead is a name written:

Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.

She is a great overflowing fountain of many evils. She is loaded with wealth, and she is also loaded “with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” She will be riding high, arrogantly dominating the world in some way or other. She will reach the height of her great power and influence, and will be exulting triumphantly in her impunity and her invulnerability. **Revelation** certainly highlights its description of this Great Whore, and of her varied and far-reaching activities, and of her destruction, and of its world-shaking effects. Judging by the great number of verses which **Revelation** devotes to portraying her, to expounding the mystery of her identity, to describing her extensive and far-flung commerce, to foretelling how God will incite those who are destroying her to “lay it on” unmercifully, to relating the wails of various prominent mourners at her demise, to foretelling the dreadful perpetual doom which Heaven will pronounce upon her, to describing the great joy in Heaven and Heaven’s applause in three great Hallelujahs, and so on — we say, judging by the great number of verses devoted to these matters, the portraiture of this Whore and her destruction could be considered the *pièce de résistance* of **Revelation**. Now, **Revelation** makes it clear that this eschatological “Babylon” is Jerusalem. In any case, our Lord had said:

Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled (**Luke 21:24**).

The expression “the times of the Gentiles” is His. And in speaking of that same Gentile capture of Jerusalem He had also said:

For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled ... there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations ... ; that is, as Zechariah had foretold (Zechariah 14:1-2).

**Revelation** says that the extent of the influence of this particular triumph of evil will be world-wide. It also says that in it a heaven-defying arrogance (υβρις) will have reached its all-time high. For this great city says:

**Καθημαι βασιλισσα, κ. τ. λ.**, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

Her undercover activities and workings will be hidden. And therefore, kingdoms may rise and wane but the evil empire of this “Queen” would continue to pollute the world forever unless someone discovers her works and destroys them and her. Only Jehovah’s all-seeing eye and the all-piercing gaze of the Seven-Eyed Lamb in His throne will have detected her operations. And therefore, Jehovah will “cause” the Ten Horns to wage war against her. They will destroy and burn her, but only after she has already reached the height of her great power and has long exulted triumphantly in her seeming impunity and invulnerability.

Thus, this particular triumph of evil will have several principal aspects: first, a complex of great evils in its multifarious undercover operations, which will be world-wide; second, its God-tempting υβρις, boasted impunity, and invulnerability; third, its murderous persecutions of God’s people; and fourth, its usefulness to Satan for his purposes. Connected with this is the fact that its sudden and total destruction will have the most momentous consequences.

Finally, this triumph of evil will not only be world-wide, but it will have a cosmic aspect, as follows. There is an authority structure. This Queen will ride mounted upon the great, Seven-Headed, Ten-Horned, scarlet Beast. She will have much of the wisdom of the snake, and she will be able to manipulate kings. But, then, who will control and manipulate her? Who else but only the Serpent himself, whose work she performs!

**Third**, it foretells a great future triumph of evil in which the Ten Horns of the Beast will capture Jerusalem and will trample the Holy City for forty-two months. This will be a high tide of evil because they will remove the continual burnt-offering for 1,150 days; they will trample Jerusalem for forty-two months; they will commit the outrages which **Zechariah** 14:1-2 foretells; and they will murder Christ’s Two Witnesses. Nevertheless, it will be the beginning of the end for Jehovah’s enemies, as follows. First, because He will give the Ten Horns the ability to agree temporarily. This will make it possible for them to destroy and burn the Great Whore. Then, in the midst of their capture of Jerusalem, Jehovah will directly intervene; that is, He will step onto the stage of history as **Zechariah** 14:3 foretells. He will rend the Mount of Olives in order to

enable the beleaguered Jews to escape from Jerusalem. Incidentally, it is very likely that at this juncture Jehovah will destroy a very large part of the invading armies. For **Revelation** 12:14-16 says:

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. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

In any case, however, He will then enable the Jews who remain in Jerusalem together with the Jews in the rest of the country to roll back the invaders, as Zechariah foretold, thus ending the final trampling of Jerusalem. In the process of driving out the Gentile trampers several processes of healing will occur. A fountain for sin and for uncleanness will be opened to the House of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Indeed, Jehovah will pour upon the House of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they will look upon Him whom they had pierced and will mourn for him (**Zechariah** 12:10-14). Jehovah will also cut off the names of the idols out of the land. He will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land (**Zechariah** 13:1-2). And finally a solid and permanent reunification of Israel will occur. It will heal the Great Disruption which had occurred in the days of Rehoboam, and will end immemorial intertribal jealousies and harassments, Ephraim envying Judah and Judah vexing Ephraim (**Isaiah** 11:13). Finally, our Lord Jesus Christ will raise His Two Witnesses to life. Thus, the end of the trampling will be the final end of the so-called “desolations” of Jerusalem and Judah. It will also be the end of what our Lord had called “the times of the Gentiles” (**Luke** 21:24).

**Fourth**, it foretells a future triumph of evil in which the Dragon, and the Beast, and the False Prophet, will inveigle the kings of the earth and all their armies to assemble at Armageddon and join in attacking Jerusalem. This will be a great and very impressive high tide of evil, but only in the sense that its promoters had preached a crusade — a **jihad** — and had recruited a great host and mustered them at an appointed staging area in readiness for a battle in which they would be wiped out. It will be very short-lived. It will be a mere flash in the pan, for the assembled warriors, like Sennacherib’s ill-fated army, will not even get to Jerusalem. A short-lived “triumph” of evil as the prelude to their total destruction! **Revelation** 16:13ff. and 19:17-21 make it very clear that the triumph of evil in this particular episode is a trap of Jehovah. He will set it and spring it in order that His Christ may be able to destroy the assembled armies of the world with one fell stroke. The Beast and the False Prophet will end up in the Lake of Fire. And Satan will be nailed and jailed for a thousand years.

**Fifth**, **Revelation** 20:8f. foretells the success of Satan’s seduction of “the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog”; that is, after the 1,000 years

when Christ and His saints will reign over the kings of the earth. This triumph of evil will be very short-lived. It will be a third war against Jerusalem, and will end in a disastrous destruction of the assembled armies and a trip to the Lake of Fire for Satan. Following it Christ will raise all the dead in the great final General Resurrection, the Last Judgment will take place, and the victory over Death and Hades will ensue, in which both of them will be consigned to the Lake of Fire, there to remain forever with the Beast, the False Prophet, and Satan.

What do the three future attacks upon Jerusalem which **Revelation** foretells show us? That is: when we evaluate them in the light of the nature of the long series of earlier attacks against Jerusalem; and when we evaluate them in the light of the nature of the five future successes of evil? Evaluated in the light of those successes of evil, the three future attacks upon Jerusalem which **Revelation** foretells will be a progressive *denouement*. In it a victorious Jehovah and His conquering Christ by means of three swift strokes of sudden destruction will have swept the cosmos clear of the supernatural evil beings, who were the great fountainheads of evil, and of their works. They also show that the Bible and especially **Revelation** made no mistake when they highlighted the work of supernatural evil beings as **one** great dynamic force in world history.

Moreover, at the same time the Bible and especially **Revelation** have also made it clear that there are **two other** great dynamics of world history. One is the centuries-long work of Jehovah and His Son in countering and destroying the works of the Devil and Co. The other is the centuries-long work of Jehovah and His Son in establishing Jehovah's everlasting righteousness. For Jehovah and His Christ have certain great purposes, and they have taken several **sets** of measures to achieve them. **One great purpose of Jehovah** is "to bring in His everlasting righteousness" (**Isaiah** 51:5, 6, and 8 and **Daniel** 9:24). This means that He has to create it, and reveal it, and create a people who **can** and **will** receive it. **A second great purpose** of Jehovah is to deal effectively in continuance with the evil supernatural beings who would surely wreck everything that He begins to establish if they could. "Dealing effectively" with them means two things: first, bringing good out of the evil that they do; that is, by making their evil activities produce many results which He can take and use to great advantage in His work to accomplish His good purposes; and second, it means defeating their endeavors, destroying their works, and sooner or later disposing of them *quâ* incorrigibly evil. These two sets of measures which Jehovah and His Christ-Son take in order to achieve their purposes are two additional, very important, central dynamics of world history. And thus, according to the Bible's interpretation of history all three great dynamics have been simultaneously at work in world history, and still are, and will still be in the future. For the supernatural evil beings by their activities have functioned as one great dynamic of world history, and Jehovah and His Christ, by their activities have functioned in two ways as two other great dynamics of world history; that is, first, by the measures they have had to take in order to counter the actions of the evil agents and to bring them to book, and, second, by the arrangements they have made to establish Jehovah's everlasting righteousness and in order to make other truly good things triumph gloriously. So that it is not too much to say that the Bible and **Revelation** have given historians **three great key insights into the dynamics of the course of world history throughout the ages.**

Now, the nature of the situation just described has very important **practical implications**. If the case really is as we have described it, then the great and prime necessity is not simply for Jehovah and His Son to create His everlasting righteousness, and His great salvation which is “ready to be revealed in the last time” (**I. Peter** 1:4f.), and other great good things, and then to reveal them to men. Not at all! For the fountainheads of evil are evil supernatural beings. They are zealous wreckers. They use human beings as their cat’s-paws. And they can get their cat’s-paws to corrupt and destroy Jehovah’s great works either before He can complete them and establish them, or after He has completed and established them. This means that He must devise and take adequate steps to insure that His enemies and their agents will not be able to corrupt and destroy His great works either before He has completed and established them, or after. In short, He must devise ways and means to defeat all the machinations of the evil supernatural beings who are His enemies and to prevent all the wrecking that their human cat’s-paws can attempt. Indeed, He must do far more; for He must put an end to their great power to deceive and manipulate men. Now, the only really sound way to accomplish all such purposes as these is to create a people who **can** reject **all** evil suggestions, and who **will**, and then to change **them** into an undying, indefectible race. And of course, this is the very thing that the prophets and **Revelation** say that He will indeed do, as follows.

The Bible and **Revelation** foretell the coming of an apocalyptic Kingdom of God to earth — the great Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. It will be “an everlasting kingdom” in which “all dominions shall serve and obey him.” And at the same time it is a kingdom that “shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High” (**Daniel** 7:27). Two features of this kingdom are unique. First, it will have an undying, indefectible race of men. Second, it will have an establishment of religion, including a divinely instituted cult and a divinely erected Temple. Its establishment of religion will have two undying, indefectible priesthoods. One of them will be a Levitical priesthood; that is, the priesthood of a tribe which Jehovah had long before redeemed from death by His divinely mandated substitution of persons at the time when Israel left Egypt. In this connection, **Ezekiel** had explained that there will be two classes of Levitical priests: first, those who had not apostatized when the nation had apostatized, and second, those who had apostatized but had subsequently repented. This means that all of them will have to be raised from the dead before they can ever begin to function as servitors in the Millennial Temple on “the Mountain of Jehovah’s House.” The second priesthood will consist of Christians; that is, of the dead in Christ whom He will have raised to life, and of living saints whom He will have translated to be with Him and them. They will reign with Christ and function as priests, a second priesthood redeemed from death by means of another divinely mandated arrangement, Jehovah’s divinely established plan of salvation from sin and death.

Now it is absolutely necessary to keep Jehovah’s Temple and its furniture unpolluted and unprofaned. Therefore, one feature of the Millennial reign of Christ will be to have a Temple worship which can never again be defiled or polluted. One effect of this provision for undying, indefectible priesthoods, when Jehovah has established it, will be that His true religion will thenceforth be represented by those who will prevent it from

ever again being polluted or profaned. Another result will be that He will then have created a single center of worship for His true religion — a Jerusalem-center. Unto it “all nations shall flow.” Then “out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem” (**Isaiah** 2:3). And this arrangement will prepare the people of God for the time when the City of God shall come, that Holy City New Jerusalem, in which John indeed saw “the throne of God and of the Lamb,” but in which he saw no Temple at all.

Meanwhile, however, before the Kingdom of God comes, it is also necessary both to bring the present operations of the supernatural evil beings to an end as quickly as possible, and to purge the Cosmos. For this purpose Jehovah will have to ferret out **all** of the supernatural evil agents, and expose the full extent of all their carefully concealed operations. Therefore, He must create and manage **an historical process which will enable him to uncover and destroy all the fountainheads of evil**. He must draw them out of hiding into overt action; for example, by means of the great high tides of evil previously mentioned, and as **Revelation**’s Second Beast ascends out of the abyss to murder our Lord’s Two Witnesses. He must bring them to book, and then dispose of them suitably *quâ* incorrigibly evil, and along with them those whom they have rendered incorrigibly evil. And in doing this, His control of history will of course be determined by the necessities of the case as **He** understands them; for after all He **is** the Supreme Intelligence in the universe. And this means that no one can ever realistically discuss the question as to what is the best of all possible worlds without discussing it in terms of adequate measures to put away incorrigibly evil agents, especially supernatural evil agents, and to establish righteousness both on Earth among men and among angels in a purged Cosmos.

Therefore, the Bible, and especially **Revelation**, had performed one indispensable service when they revealed this perpetual transmillennial warfare from long before the days of Pharaoh to the Post-Millennial times of Gog and Magog; and another when they highlighted its prime importance and its essential nature as a supernaturally empowered warfare against Jehovah and His Christ; and a third when they even foreshowed its final consummations in the Pre-Millennial incarceration of Satan and the Post-Millennial consignment of Satan, Death, and Hades to the Lake of Fire.

### **The First Resurrection and the Millennium**

Perhaps the most unexpected surprises were **Revelation**’s prophecy of what it calls “the First Resurrection” and its closely connected prophecy of the thereupon ensuing Theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and His saints, the so-called Millennium. However, there is nothing really new about this “first” resurrection itself or its location; for Christ had long before referred to it as “the Resurrection of the Just,” and Paul had previously referred to it as “the Revelation of the sons of God.” What is new is the explicit assertion that it will not be a resurrection of all the dead, and the further explicit assertion that the then resurrected saints will live and reign with Christ as kings and priests during the thousand-years-long apocalyptic Kingdom which He will then establish on the Earth.

Unfortunately, the novelty and unexpectedness of **Revelation**'s revealment of the First Resurrection and the Millennium have produced far more emotional reactions than rational reflections. They so engrossed the attention of theologians that they caused many of them to fail to recognize the value of the functions they perform. For example, if Jehovah intends to honor and glorify His Son, then few ways to do so could be better than to give Him the apocalyptic Millennial Kingdom and to call it "The Days of the Messiah." Moreover, if Jehovah intends to increase His own glory it will also have surpassingly great value as a way in which to honor and glorify Himself by manifesting His own lordship over human history for over a thousand years plus the years of the post-Millennial events which He has foretold.

In addition, as we pointed out earlier, when Jehovah caused **Revelation** to introduce the Millennium into the picture, He had eliminated the seemingly insuperable problem which the existence of a backlog of unfulfilled prophecies seemed to create. In this same connection we even showed that the existence of those unfulfilled prophecies had created a situation which has great potential advantages. And, as we also pointed out a moment ago, **Revelation** foretells that Christ and His risen and translated saints will be the undying personnel in the indefectible establishment of government which He intends to plant on the Earth.

We may also mention several other important consequences of **Revelation**'s introduction of its prophecy of the Millennium.

**Revelation** has excellent credentials. Its prophecy of the Millennium is a very straightforward prediction. It simply states that Christ will return to the Earth where He will reign as Lord of lords and King of kings. It also states that at that time He will raise the dead in Christ and they will reign on the Earth with Him. It implies, too, that He will translate His then living saints, and they will also reign with Him. In all of this so far there is nothing essentially new. For Daniel had foretold the establishment of the throne of the Ancient of Days on the Earth; and the coming of the Son of Man with the clouds to Him; and the donation of the eternal dominion by the Ancient of Days to the Son of Man and to the People of the Saints of the Most High. Gabriel had promised that the Most High would give Jesus the throne of His father David, and that He would reign over the House of Jacob for ever. And Jesus had spoken saying:

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory ...  
Then shall the King say ... And the King shall answer ...  
(**Matthew** 25:31, 34, 40)

Moreover, He had promised His Apostles that they would sit on twelve thrones "judging" (= governing) the twelve tribes of Israel. If so, was there anything really new in **Revelation**'s prophecy of the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord and His risen Saints? Yet if there was nothing really new in it, why have so many Christians broken their teeth and choked to death on it? The promise certainly was for nothing but good — long-enduring, solid good — especially with Satan in prison for the duration. Nevertheless, from the

fourth century and on Christians rejected it. From any even halfway detached and objective point of view it is very difficult to understand why it has been that century after century so many in the churches should have reacted to it as they have; that is, without a good deal of prompting by the Evil One.

In any case, however, the anti-chiliastic heresies of the fourth century did cause the churches to lose the true Dominical and Apostolic doctrines of a coming apocalyptic Kingdom of God and many ever since then, Christians and others, have held fuzzy notions about the events of the so-called “last days.” Unlike the Jews, they had lost their grip on the Old Testament and no longer believed that masses of its prophecies would receive anything at all like literal fulfillments. They had also lost their grip on many features of New Testament prophecy, so that many no longer believed that the things foretold in **Romans 9-11**, **I. Thessalonians 4**, **II. Thessalonians 2**, and **I. Corinthians 15**, for example, would receive anything like literal fulfillments. These were tragic defections from apostolic teachings. In place of Biblical views such defectors had adopted vague ideas that when Christ returns a single, quick, crash-bang, history-ending fulfillment will occur — a fulfillment which will translate all Christians into Heaven and send all others off to Hell. Their overly simplified views were vague. They used confusing terminology. They lumped together all of the Bible’s eschatological processes, developments, and events into a confused jumble.

To make things worse the anti-revelation propaganda of the leaders of the so-called “Enlightenment” infected leading lights in the churches and produced an unending series of anti-revelation and anti-biblical heresies with more heretical defections from apostolic teachings.

Things grew worse still in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially in the years since 1865 when the new ideas of organic evolution began to spread like wildfire and anti-supernaturalist and anti-creationist heresies spread like wildfire everywhere throughout the churches. The latest batch of defections from apostolic teachings have even produced anti-theistic heresies and “Christian Atheism.” All of these developments left masses of so-called “Christians” carrying an empty basket and with only ashes as an inheritance.

Then, amid all of this great confusion the theologians and scholars discussed the nature of end-time events. They produced more unnecessary confusion in several ways but especially by introducing three sets of unwarrantable ideas: one concerning “history,” another concerning “time,” and a third concerning “realized eschatology.”

Scholars and theologians have confused themselves and created widespread confusion by speaking of “the end of history,” and “the rim of history,” and also by speaking of “the beginning of time” and “the end of time.” Some have said that “history” will “end” when our Lord comes again in His Parousia. In **Revelation**, however, the advent of the Kingdom of God in power will not be “the end of history.” Of course, it will involve a supernatural divine invasion of Planet Earth, but there is no reason to think that

it will not be another historical event in “the (so-called) course of human events.” It will alter the historical process. It will introduce a new “monarchy” — a Fifth Monarchy, or a Sixth, or whatever — into human history. But it is certainly not necessary to think that it will disrupt the ongoing course of history or put an “end” to time.

If anyone thinks that the creation of the present Heavens and the present Earth was the “beginning of time,” or the “beginning of history”; or if anyone thinks that the Kingdom of God will be the “end of history,” or “the end of time”; then **Revelation**’s prophecy of the Millennium does foretell a great extension of “history,” a prolongation of “time.” Its extension of “history” will make room for surpassingly great Millennial and Post-Millennial developments. It will contain the Kingdom of Christ and of His saints. It will contain the Messianic Kingdom of our Lord, who will then reign over Israel on David’s throne. It will contain the time in which the Servant of Jehovah will bring Jacob back to Him, and gather Israel unto Him; and the time in which He will raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel; and the time in which He will really become a light to the Gentiles and Jehovah’s salvation unto the ends of the earth as never before; and the time in which He will raise up the land, and make His people inherit the desolate heritages. It will contain that great time in which the nations of mankind will finally take up the worship of Jehovah, as foretold, for example, in **Isaiah** 19 and **Zechariah** 14. It will be the period of time in which Christ will subjugate all the world’s governments (**I. Corinthians** 15:24-25 and **Romans** 15:12). For that Millennium which the Bible’s prophecies foretell will not be a reign of unbroken peace as so many assume. It will begin with a war in which our Lord and the armies which are with him will defeat the armies of the kings of the whole Earth and destroy their weapons. Thereafter Christ must reign until He shall have subjugated all of the Earth’s governments. In short it will be a transition period in which men will become prepared for their future existence in the New Jerusalem in the final arrangement.

To all who have adopted fuzzy views in place of what the Old and New Testament prophecies actually say **Revelation**’s meaningful eightfold development, which we have already described, will seem quite bizarre. For one thing it expressly foretells two resurrections, thus making the entire work of raising the dead a series of three successive but widely separated resurrections. However, this addition was fully consistent with what Paul had previously written:

Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end ... (**I. Corinthians** 15:23f.).

**Revelation**’s eightfold series, by introducing and explicitly foretelling the so-called Millennium, and by explicitly foretelling two future resurrections, one pre-Millennial and another post-Millennial, opens up the way for a series of future developments, processes, and events in what will be a truly meaningful extension of history.

### **Two Cardinal Functions**

When an interpreter considers Biblical prophecy as a whole he sees at once that **Revelation**'s interpretation of history performs a unifying function, and a consolidating function, as follows.

**Revelation** makes it obvious, first, that Jehovah has planned to perform a large number of His most meaningful works in direct connection with His Son's Second Coming.

**Revelation** also makes it equally obvious that He has planned to perform a second batch of His most meaningful works during the Days of His Son's Kingdom, the future theocratic Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; that is, during the thousand years of the Millennium, and during the concurrent thousand years of Satan's imprisonment.

And it is clear, lastly, that He has planned to perform a third series of His most meaningful works in a grand climax following the days of the Millennial Kingdom when God takes up His residence with men upon the Earth.

The excellence of this arrangement is clear. It arises from the fact that Jehovah can thus insure that men will always have ahead of them a prospect of seeing great things which are worth living for, worth working for, and worth waiting for. In short, they will always live in hope.

Its excellence is further evident in that this arrangement removes evils in three successive stages thus securing a continuing betterment of conditions with more time and greater opportunities for more men to learn and grow.

The first great excision of evils will occur when Christ goes to work upon His Second Coming. The second will occur at the close of the Millennium. The fullest development of potentials will occur in the final stage with the fullest revelation of those things which "eye saw not, and ear heard not, and *which* entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him" (**I. Corinthians** 2:9f.).

This kind of unifying and consolidating along worldwide, universe-wide, cosmos-wide, and millennia-long lines has a majestic quality. It reveals the thinking of a Supreme Systems Engineer. It is thus that **Revelation**'s interpretation of history unifies and consolidates "the whole counsel of God."

Or take another example, the occasional piecemeal utterances and writings of the prophets do not seem to form parts of a coherent system of oracles, as they should if a single person, namely, Jehovah, had given them to His prophets. Worse still, he sees that large numbers of the crucially important promises and prophecies have not been fulfilled. For example, he asks: Where are: (1) the events which fulfill what the end of Nebuchadnezzar's dream foretells; (2) the end-time events of **Daniel** 7; (3) the end-time events of **Daniel** 8; (4) the end-time events of **Daniel** 9-12; (5) the events foretold in

**Jeremiah** 30-33; (6) the events foretold in **Ezekiel** 36-48; (7) the events which Daniel's prophecies foretold concerning the removal and restoration of the continual burnt-offering; (8) the events which Amos's prophecy foretold concerning the restoration of David's fallen tabernacle; (9) the events which fulfill the angel Gabriel's promise that Christ will receive David's Throne, and will reign over the House of Jacob; (10) and the events which fulfill the predictions and promises in **Isaiah** 2 and **Micah** 4; **Isaiah** 19 and **Zechariah** 14? The spectacle of these many unfulfilled promises and prophecies daunts faint hearts. It is certainly true that fulfillments of many promises and prophecies had frequently occurred, for example, in the days of the First Advent of our Lord and at various other times before it and since. There were also germinant fulfillments of many promises and prophecies. Nevertheless, the existence of the backlog of as yet still unfulfilled prophecies, and especially considering the nature of what many of them had promised and foretold, was disheartening. Then, in 96 A. D., **Revelation's** prophecies came to the rescue. Fulfillments of them will create adequate time and thus set the stage for great, crucial, late-in-the-day fulfillments. Some will occur at the time of our Lord's Second Advent; still others during the Millennial Kingdom of God; and still others at the close of the Millennium and following it.

Thus, of the most important functions of **Revelation's** interpretation of history, one is that it had new predictions which would take a good deal of time to fulfill and which therefore would open up plenty of time for fulfillments of the backlog of unfulfilled prophecies.

Another such feature of **Revelation's** interpretation of history is that it opens up the possibility of suggesting a scenario of the foretold events of the last days. Such a scenario ought to have a niche for every one of the aforementioned still future events. It should indicate how possible future fulfillments can be incorporated in a comprehensive series of events that will not only include all still unfulfilled prophecies harmoniously, but will show how they supplement and complement all earlier features of Jehovah's work. See our suggested scenario in Chapter Seven below.

Such late-in-the-day fulfillments, when they finally occur and men have to acknowledge them to be indubitable fulfillments of notorious predictions, will be facts which demonstrate that a Supreme Intelligence has planned the course of human history. They will be the most unanswerable of all evidences that He has done so because it will then be impossible for rational beings to deny their existence as well as impossible for them to account for them in any other way than as divinely wrought fulfillments of genuine, historically attested, divinely given ancient oracles. They also have teleological features which imply the greatness of Jehovah's foresight and powers, and intervals of time between predictions and promises and their fulfillments which will make it impossible for writers of Biblical Theologies to claim that there is no predictive prophecy.

A most remarkable example of how **Revelation's** interpretation of history unifies and consolidates earlier piecemeal prophecies is in the interpreting angel's explanation of the Seven-Headed, Ten-Horned Beast — the Beast's composite body, and its diadem-

crowned Horns. This explanation rounds out the succession of the great world empires by integrating the remnants of the four which Daniel saw to produce a finally appearing, supremely evil, eschatological Beast; and also by extending the number of empires backward to include Pharaoh's Egypt and Sennacherib's Assyria, as well as forward to the great Evil Empire of the still future end of the present age. It also integrates Rome into the list.

**Revelation's** hybrid beast represents the final form of the ever-recurring attack by earthly governments on the people of Jehovah and on the religious establishment of Jehovah. First, Egypt (Pharaoh); second, Assyria (Sennacherib); third, Babylon (Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar); fourth, Persia (Cyrus and Haman); fifth, Greece (Antiochus Epiphanes); sixth, Rome (Caligula, Julian, *et alii*); seventh, an as yet unidentified eschatological Beast. This interpretation thus uses and develops the Bible's own perspective.

Another example of how **Revelation's** interpretation of history unifies and consolidates occurred when it radically changed the entire perspective of Scripture on the entire course of history as well as on the eschatological developments and events. It did this by its fuller revelation of the immense rôles of powerful evil supernatural enemies — Satan, Death, Hades, Angel of the Abyss, Abaddon-Apollyon, and others — as they manipulate historical developments, and of powerful good angels as they counter them and control historical developments.

In all these ways and many others **Revelation's** interpretation of history unifies and consolidates the entire panorama of Jehovah's prophecy.

### Concluding Statement

In closing this section on how **Revelation** reveals Jehovah's plan of history, we wish to emphasize the fact that there is only one sound standpoint for an interpreter of **Revelation** to take. He must create this sound standpoint in his own mind, first, by taking into consideration all Jehovah's promises and predictions including especially the long-range prophecies. Then, second, he must conceive in his mind a future situation in which they have all been completed and their truth has been demonstrated by unquestionable fulfillments. Having achieved such a standpoint, he will be able to examine all the words and the works of Jehovah and His Son and to evaluate them justly in the light of his conceptions of their future final developments, outcomes, and effects. For example, he can start from a probable calendar date for Abraham's departure from Ur; and he can continue his survey of developments and events to the calendar date of the present year; and then he can end with a conjectural minimum calendar date of future Pre-millennial, Millennial, and Post-Millennial developments and events. Unusual as this procedure may seem, it is nevertheless the only sound way in which any rational being can form a just conception of Jehovah's thoughts and ways. In a similar case, if anyone has seen only a few of an architect's blueprints plus a few preliminary sketches, how can he envision and evaluate a construction? Or, if a composer shows a critic only a few of his scores and even whistles a few airs, how can the critic "hear" his music? Imagine, too, a case in which the composer also has to construct the instruments which the orchestra will use to render the music of a Bach. Even so is the case of Jehovah's promises and prophecies. "Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill He treasures up His bright designs and works His sovereign will." (Cowper).

The Bible's prophecies have various purposes and perform various functions. Many of them foretell future events. And —what is most significant — very many of them have foretold extremely distant future events; so that no one can ever reasonably assert that the prophets *quâ* mere pundits or gifted sages were able to foretell the things which they have foretold because within their historical horizons they could see indications and signs which had enabled them to do so.

As a result, the Bible's predictions of far-off, future events are great treasures. This is especially true of those which foretell events that have not occurred, or will not, until centuries, and in some cases even millennia, have first elapsed. We refer especially to the prophecies which have foretold a parade of mighty empires and their providentially ordained pre-Parousia and pre-Millennial destinies. Closely related to these are the prophecies which foretell post-Millennial developments and events. These all show the immense temporal extent of Jehovah's conceptions and planning and the immense wisdom and power needed to construct the developments and events which will fulfill them in due time. The fulfillments of such promises and predictions, when they finally occur, will not merely be completions but will also be demonstrations of their sterling truth and of Jehovah's sterling trustworthiness. The implications of facts of this kind evince and evidence various excellences of Jehovah: His intelligence, His knowledge, His understandings, His wisdom, and His power. Therefore, every interpreter of **Revelation** should be especially interested in ferreting out all the implications of the essential nature

of what he conceives as the finally resulting situation, including especially its millennial-long features. If we mistake not, those implications will demonstrate to him that Jehovah the God of Abraham is of right and undoubtedly “the only true God” (Jesus of Nazareth), as well as “the only wise God,” and “the Supreme Intelligence” in the universe, and its “Supreme Majesty.”

In the field of prophecy the glory of God arises chiefly from two accomplishments, namely, from creating the prophecies and from creating a series of future events which He divinely “manufactures” to fit the predictions which He had revealed to His holy prophets many long ages previously.

Some scholars have made feeble attempts to save Scripture’s predictive prophecies by ignoring the long-range ones and then arguing that the Bible’s prophets might have based their conjectures concerning future developments and events upon signs and indications, or “leads,” which they descried in the historical horizon in their day; that is, in reality, upon those signs which the historians who lived in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and whose knowledge of ancient history was at best very limited, have conjectured might possibly have existed in the days of the prophets; that is, for them to be aware of so as to make it possible for them to make some short-range predictions which have happened to find fulfillments. Thus, would they fain totally misrepresent the nature of Biblical prophecies and deprive Jehovah of all the glory of some of His very greatest achievements. The pitiful attempt was very misguided and harmful.

Enough has now been said to show that **Revelation**’s interpretation of history does broaden, deepen, extend, exalt, and crown the Bible’s previously existing interpretation of history. It not only supplements and elucidates many features of earlier prophecies, but it also foretells some crucially important events not previously foretold. We have shown how it exalted them by incorporating them into its sublime, supremely meaningful, full-fledged, comprehensive revealed interpretation of history.