

When ye therefore shall see The Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet ... whoso readeth, let him understand. (Matt 24:15)

The Abomination of Desolation

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THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION SPOKEN OF BY DANIEL THE PROPHET¹

Shortly before His Crucifixion, the Lord Jesus was asked by His disciples, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matt 24: 3) The Lord then started to give them a discourse about the end of the world.

The discourse alluded to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in the year A.D. 70, as a type for the destruction of the world, at the time of the end. Exegetes agree that the prophecies of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, have been partially fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, but will find their complete fulfillment in the destruction of the world at the end of time.

One of the “signs” of the Lord’s second coming is given to us in these verses, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” (Matt 24: 15-18)

There is no doubt that these words of Jesus found their partial fulfillment when Titus placed an idol on the site of the burned Temple after destroying Jerusalem², however, it is equally doubtless that the Lord was also alluding to the end of the world, for the following reasons:

First, the whole discourse in Matthew 24 is in response to the disciples’ inquiry regarding the signs of His coming and the end of the world.

Second, the information concerning the **Abomination Of Desolation**, and the following instructions to flee it in an urgent manner, are immediately followed by this verse, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt 24:21)

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²Life Application Bible: notes on Mat 24.

From this, it is safe to assume that the **Abomination Of Desolation** will be manifested standing in the “holy place” during the “**Great Tribulation**” mentioned in the Book of Daniel 12:1, as well as the Book of Revelation 7:14.

Then we are told, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Matt 24:29-30)

It is evident from this that the “**Great Tribulation**” will immediately precede the second coming of the Lord Jesus. And, since the “**Great Tribulation**” will coincide with the manifestation of the **Abomination Of Desolation**, standing in the holy place, it follows that the latter is an important sign that will immediately precede the *Parousia* of the Lord (His second coming).

The importance of this “sign” of the second coming of Christ becomes apparent if we carefully examine the words of Christ concerning it, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand). This clearly indicates to the reader that the **Abomination Of Desolation** is a “code name” for something or someone, and that the reader has to attempt to “decode” this expression, and understand what it stands for, so that he (or she) can follow the Lord’s urgent demand to flee it.

Yet, in spite of this admonition to the reader that he (or she) must strive to understand, only few of those who are reading this chapter actually understand what the Lord means by the **Abomination Of Desolation** *standing in the holy place*.

Now, hopefully, we have aroused enough interest, so let us answer the question, “What is (or who is) the **Abomination Of Desolation** spoken of by Daniel the prophet?” To find the answer, we have to go to the writings of the Fathers of the Church, who wrote on the subject.

According to Irenaeus, Hippolytus of Rome, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, and Cassian, the “**Abomination Of Desolation** spoken of by Daniel the prophet” is none other than **Antichrist**, who must appear

before the second coming of Christ, seduce the world by his false miracles, causing the final apostasy, and who will “sit in the temple of God (the holy place), showing himself that he is God.” (II Thes 2:4)

Now, we will present a brief survey of the main scriptural passages that refer or allude to the “**Abomination Of Desolation** spoken of by Daniel the prophet,” also known as **Antichrist**.

The Book of Daniel has 12 chapters, the first six of which are *narrative* while the last six are *apocalyptic*, sometimes referred to as the “Apocalypse of Daniel.” An “*apocalypse*” is a scriptural passage that deals with prediction of future events, but, unlike a prophecy which concerns the future of one land or one nation (e.g., Israel or Edom), an apocalypse has cosmic dimensions involving the whole universe, and usually alludes to the end of the world. There are generally four recognized passages in Daniel that concern the topic at hand. Chapters 7 and 8 speak of him under the *code name* **The Little Horn**. Here are some excerpts of the passages concerning **The Little Horn**.

After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them **another little horn**, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of **that horn** that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom Thus he said, the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he

shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. (Dan 7:7-27)

And out of one of them came forth **a little horn**, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for **at the time of the end shall be the vision ...** And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, **a king of fierce countenance**, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.” (Dan 8:9-25)

Most of the ancient writers agree that the **Little Horn** who is also described as a **king of fierce countenance** is **Antichrist**. Jerome wrote

a book about the subject¹, a book that was already known to Saint Augustine:

Daniel prophesies of the last judgment in such a way as to indicate that **Antichrist** shall first come, and to carry on his description to the eternal reign of the saints. For when in prophetic vision he had seen four beasts, signifying four kingdoms, and the fourth conquered by a certain king, who is recognized as **Antichrist**, and after this the eternal kingdom of the Son of man, that is to say, of Christ, he says, ‘My spirit was terrified, I Daniel in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me,’ etc. . . . They who desire to understand the fitness of this interpretation may read Jerome's book on Daniel, which is written with a sufficiency of care and erudition. But he who reads this passage, even half asleep, cannot fail to see that the kingdom of **Antichrist** shall fiercely, though for a short time, assail the Church before the last judgment of God shall introduce the eternal reign of the saints. For it is patent from the context that the time, times, and half a time, means a year, and two years, and half a year, that is to say, three years and a half.²

Hippolytus of Rome wrote three treatises about the same subject. Here is a sample of his writings:

As Daniel says, “I considered the beast; and, lo, (there were) ten horns behind, among which shall come up **another little horn springing from them;**” **by which none other is meant than Antichrist that is to rise** And when he has conquered all, he will prove himself a terrible and savage tyrant, and will cause tribulation and persecution to the saints, exalting himself against them.³

Origen also recognized these passages as referring to **Antichrist**:

The prophecy also regarding **Antichrist** is stated in the book of Daniel, and is fitted to make an intelligent and candid reader admire

¹Jerome's Commentary on Daniel.

²Augustin of Hippo: City of God.

³Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel.

the words as truly divine and prophetic; for in them are mentioned the things relating to the coming kingdom, beginning with the times of Daniel, and continuing to the destruction of the world. And any one who chooses may read it. Observe, however, whether the prophecy regarding **Antichrist** be not as follows: “And at the latter time of their kingdom, when their sins are coming to the full, there shall arise a king, bold in countenance, and understanding riddles. And his power shall be great, and he shall destroy wonderfully, and prosper, and practise; and shall destroy mighty men, and the holy people. And the yoke of his chain shall prosper: there is craft in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by craft shall destroy many; and he shall stand up for the destruction of many, and shall crush them as eggs in his hand.”¹

The Book of Daniel has two more passages dealing with **Antichrist**, the **Great Tribulation** and the end of the world: Daniel 11: 31-45 and the whole of chapter 12.

Saint Paul’s second epistle to the Thessalonians contains a major passage about the early Church’s tradition concerning **Antichrist**:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the

¹Origen: Against Celsus.

love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thes 2:1-12)

It is unanimously accepted that the **Man of Sin** mentioned by Saint Paul in this passage is none other than **Antichrist**. Here are some of the sayings of the early Church writers about this passage:

I see that I must omit many of the statements of the gospels and epistles about this last judgment, that this volume may not become unduly long; but I can on no account omit what the Apostle Paul says, in writing to the Thessalonians, “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc. **No one can doubt that he wrote this of Antichrist and of the day of judgment**, which he here calls the day of the Lord, nor that he declared that this day should not come unless he first came who is called the apostate --apostate, to wit, from the Lord God. And if this may justly be said of all the ungodly, how much more of him? But it is uncertain in what temple he shall sit, whether in that ruin of the temple which was built by Solomon, or in the Church; for the apostle would not call the temple of any idol or demon the temple of God.¹

“Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshiped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.” **Here he discourses concerning the Antichrist**, and reveals great mysteries. What is the falling away? He calls him “Apostasy”, as being about to destroy many, and make them fall away. So that if it were possible, He says, the very elect should be offended. (From Matt. xxiv. 24.) And he calls him “the man of sin.” For he shall do numberless mischiefs, and shall cause others to do them. But he calls him “the son of perdition,” because he is also to be destroyed. But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. “And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshipped.” For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of

¹Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel.

opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church. “Setting himself forth,” he says; he does not say, “saying it”, but endeavouring to show it. For he will perform great works, and will show wonderful signs.¹

Paul, indeed, speaks of him who is called **Antichrist**, describing, though with a certain reserve, both the manner, and time, and cause of his coming to the human race. And notice whether his language on this subject is not most becoming, and undeserving of being treated with even the slightest degree of ridicule. It is thus that the apostle expresses himself: “We beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” To explain each particular here referred to does not belong to our present purpose.²

Well, but who is the man of sin, the son of perdition, who must first be revealed before the Lord comes; “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; who is to sit in the temple of God, and boast himself as being God?” According indeed to our view, he is **Antichrist**; as it is taught us in both the ancient and the new prophecies.³

The Book of Revelation is, of course, one of the most important sources of information on the subject of **Antichrist** and the end of the world. Chapter 13 is devoted to describing him under the code name the **Beast**.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a **beast** rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the **beast** which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was

¹Origen: Against Celsus.

²Origen: Against Celsus.

³Tertullian: Against Marcion.

healed: and all the world wondered after the **beast**. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the **beast**: and they worshipped the **beast**, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first **beast** before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first **beast**, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the **beast**; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the **beast**, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life unto the image of the **beast**, that the image of the **beast** should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the **beast** should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the **beast**, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the **beast**: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Those who object to the authenticity of the Book of Revelation or do not take it as speaking of things to come in the future should read the testimony of Irenaeus about it:

Such, then, being the state of the case, and this number being found in all the most approved and ancient copies [of the Apocalypse], and those men who saw John face to face bearing their testimony [to it]; while reason also leads us to conclude that the number of the name of the **beast**, [if reckoned] according to the Greek mode of calculation by the [value of] the letters contained in it, will amount to six hundred and sixty and six.¹

In a still clearer light has John, in the Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last times, and concerning the ten kings who shall then arise, among whom the empire which now rules [the earth] shall be partitioned. He teaches us what the ten horns shall be which were seen by Daniel, telling us that thus it had been said to him: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet, but shall receive power as if kings one hour with the **beast**. These have one mind, and give their strength and power to the **beast**. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of lords and the King of kings." (Rev 17: 12-14) It is manifest, therefore, that of these [potentates], he who is to come shall slay three, and subject the remainder to his power, and that he shall be himself the eighth among them. And they shall lay Babylon waste, and burn her with fire, and shall give their kingdom to the **beast**, and put the Church to flight. After that they shall be destroyed by the coming of our Lord.²

The saying of the Lord in John 5:43 is considered by most of the Fathers as pertaining to **Antichrist**:

It is said of **Antichrist**, and all understand of him what the Lord said, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye have not received Me; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."³

"I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive." Who is it that He

¹Irenaeus: Against heresies.

²Augustin of Hippo: Sermon LXXIX

³Augustin of Hippo: Sermon LXXIX

here saith shall come “in his own name”? He alludeth here to **Antichrist**.¹

The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: “I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive,” calling **Antichrist** “the other,” because he is alienated from the Lord.²

That the Lord meant **Antichrist** when He spoke of the **Abomination of Desolation**, will become quite obvious when we read the following excerpts from the writings of the early Fathers:

This Jesus Christ who is gone up shall come again, not from earth but from heaven: and I say, “not from earth,” because there are many Antichrists to come at this time from earth. For already, as thou hast seen, many have begun to say, I am the Christ: and the **abomination of desolation** is yet to come, assuming to himself the false title of Christ.³

For at that time there shall be great trouble, such as has not been from the foundation of the world, when some in one way, and others in another, shall be sent through every city and country to destroy the faithful; and the saints shall travel from the west to the east, and shall be driven in persecution from the east to the south, while others shall conceal themselves in the mountains and caves; and the **abomination** shall war against them everywhere, and shall cut them off by sea and by land by his decree, and shall endeavour by every means to destroy them out of the world; and they shall not be able any longer to sell their own property, nor to buy from strangers, unless one keeps and carries with him the name of the beast, or bears its mark upon his forehead. For then they shall all be driven out from every place, and dragged from their own homes and haled into prison, and punished with all manner of punishment, and cast

¹John Chrysostom: Homily on John V.

²Irenaeus: Against heresies.

³Cyril Of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures.

out from the whole world.¹

He who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking [the saints], having a name containing the aforesaid number [666], is truly the **abomination of desolation**.²

What is stated by Paul in the words quoted from him, where he says, “so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,” is in Daniel referred to in the following fashion: “And on the temple shall be the **abomination of desolations**,” So many, out of a greater number of passages, have I thought it right to adduce, that the hearer may understand in some slight degree the meaning of holy Scripture, when it gives us information concerning the devil and **Antichrist**.³

Elias came in the person of John [the Baptist], and is again to be the precursor of the Lord's Advent: and in the matter of the “**Abomination of Desolation**” which “stood in the holy place,” by means of that idol of Jupiter which, as we read, was placed in the temple in Jerusalem, and which is again to stand in the Church through the coming of **Antichrist**, and all those things which follow in the gospel, which we take as having been fulfilled before the captivity of Jerusalem and still to be fulfilled at the end of this world. In which matters neither view is opposed to the other, nor does the first interpretation interfere with the second.⁴

¹Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel.

²Irenaeus: Against heresies

³Origen: Against Celsus.

⁴Abbot Serenus: in Cassian; Conferences.

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING¹

The revelations given to Daniel the prophet in chapters 7 - 12, tell us a great deal about the **Abomination of Desolation**, however, information about the things that have to happen before his advent are very sketchy.

In chapter 7, Daniel saw a vision of “four great beasts, coming out of the sea, diverse one from another.” He also saw ten horns on the fourth beast, and “another little horn” that came among them. (Dan 7:3-8)

Daniel was troubled by what he saw, so he went and asked one of the angels about the meaning of the vision. The angel interpreted the vision in the following manner, “These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.” (Dan 7:17) Concerning the ten horns coming out of the fourth beast (the fourth kingdom), and the “**little horn**” that came among them, the angel said, “The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise; and another shall arise after them; and shall be diverse from the first [kings].” (Dan 7:24)

If we read the rest of the Book of Daniel, and consult the Fathers who wrote on the subject, we will learn the following.

Concerning the four kingdoms, all are agreed that these are the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek and the Roman Empires. The ten horns represent ten kingdoms that will arise after the fall of the Roman Empire, and after them will come the **Abomination of Desolation**. One may be tempted to count the empires that came after the fall of Rome like the Germanic, the Moslem, Mongolian, Ottoman, the French, British . . . and the greatest kingdom of them all; the mighty U.S.A.! And, perhaps convince oneself that the ten horns have already come and that the little horn is around the corner! But, before we go any further, let us have a word about the use of numbers in prophetic and apocalyptic Scripture.

Numbers in these types of Scriptural passages are usually symbolic and not literal, e.g., “The seven Spirits of God” (Rev 4:5), are not to be interpreted literally, but could mean the “perfect” Spirit of God, since the number seven symbolizes perfection. Similarly, the number three and a half symbolizes imperfection, so, when we are told that the **Great**

¹Published: November, 1997

Tribulation, or the duration of the reign of the **Abomination of Desolation** shall be three and a half years, this means that it will be a time that will not be completed but rather suddenly cut short by the glorious coming of our Lord. The Lord Himself told us so, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt 24:22) Similarly, the ten horns (or ten kingdoms) that should arise after the Romans, and after which comes the **Abomination of Desolation**, may very well be a symbolic number. Here is what Saint Augustine says about this:

As for the ten kings, whom, as it seems, **Antichrist** is to find in the person of ten individuals when he comes, I own I am afraid we may be deceived in this, and that he may come unexpectedly while there are not ten kings living in the Roman world. For what if this number, ten signifies the whole number of kings who are to precede his coming, as totality is frequently symbolized by a thousand, or a hundred, or seven, or other numbers, which it is not necessary to recount?¹

In chapters 8, 11, and 12, Daniel is given more revelations but is instructed by one of the angels, “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” (Dan 12:4) When Daniel tries to get more information, he is told, “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” (Dan 12:9)

From this, one can deduce that the prophecy was kept deliberately obscure until the “time of the end,” when the seals of the book shall be opened.

If we read Revelation, chapter 5, we find mention of “A book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.” (Rev 5:1) Later on, we are told that only Christ can open the seals of the book. (Rev 5:5-9) Hippolytus of Rome comments on this saying:

And that the things spoken of old by the law and the prophets were all sealed, and that they were unknown to men, Isaiah declares when he says: ‘And they will deliver the book that is sealed to one that is

¹Augustin of Hippo: City of God, XX: Ch. 23.

learned, and will say to him, Read this; and he will say, I cannot read it, for it is sealed.' (Isa 19:11) It was meet and necessary that the things spoken of old by the prophets should be sealed to the unbelieving Pharisees, who thought that they understood the letter of the law, and be opened to the believing. The things, therefore, which of old were sealed, are now by the grace of God the Lord all open to the saints . . . He took the book, therefore, and loosed it, in order that the things spoken concerning Him of old in secret, might now be proclaimed with boldness upon the housetops. For this reason, then, the angel says to Daniel, "Seal the words, for the vision is until the end of the time." But to Christ it was not said "seal," but "loose" the things bound of old; in order that, by His grace, we might know the will of the Father, and believe upon Him whom He has sent for the salvation of men, Jesus our Lord.¹

So, let us leave the Apocalypse of Daniel for the time being and turn to the Book of Revelation, in order to loose the seals of the mysteries spoken of by Daniel.

Chapters 6-12 of Revelation speak of things that should happen before the **Abomination of Desolation** is manifested, while chapters 13 and on speak about his reign, his tyranny and his end.

The prophecies in Revelation are arranged in three heptads of events that resemble a telescope with three sections, as each section is extended, another unfolds. So, we have seven seals, the last one of them leads to the seven trumpets and these in turn lead to the seven bowls. Interspersed between these are heavenly scenes that depict the victorious church in heaven, or the striving church on earth.

THE SEVEN SEALS:

When the first seal was opened, John saw "a white horse; and he that sat on it had a bow, and a crown was given to him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer." (Rev 6:1-2) The same scene is repeated in Revelation 19:11-16, where the identity of the rider is revealed. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." (Rev 19:16)

The first seal depicts the triumph of Christianity and its spread in the world, as a prelude to the events that will follow.

¹ Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel.

The second seal reveals a red horse, “And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given unto him a great sword.” (Rev 6:4) This represents war.

The third and fourth seals represent famine and pestilence. We are then told that these three plagues (war, famine and pestilence) will kill one fourth of the world. (Rev 6:8) This agrees with what the Lord told His disciples in Matthew 24, “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matt 24:6-8)

Wars, famine and pestilence are probably as old as civilization itself, however, recently, they have been escalating at an alarming rate.

The first half of the twentieth century has given us a new concept of war; the world war. Yet, as brutal as the two world wars were, they seem like child’s play compared with what mankind is capable of inflicting on itself should another world war arise.

The second half of the twentieth century gave us the concept of ethnic war; where ethnic groups within a country fight each other. The ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia and the war between the Hutus and the Tutsis, in which close to a quarter of a million died, are examples of what the Lord meant by “nation arising against nation.”

The world has known famines since the time of the Patriarchs, but the extent of famine has probably never matched what has been happening in Somalia and the Sudan. Recently, North Korea, a country with major war capability, has joined the ranks with thousands dying of hunger, as the newscasts tell us.

Even in highly industrialized countries like Canada and the U.S.A., food banks are faced with major challenges to feed the hungry in the lands of plenty!

As far as disease is concerned, in spite of all the advances in medicine, yet all is not well in today’s world. New diseases like AIDS and Ebola are causing major threats to man’s life, with no cure in sight. Old diseases that medicine is supposed to have conquered are making a frightening come back. TB is rampant among aboriginals as well as in prison populations, and newer drug-resistant strains are emerging.

Many of the bacteria that cause diseases are becoming antibiotic-resistant. Sleeping sickness is rampant in Somalia and Lyme disease is making a come back in the USA.

The incidence of skin cancer has doubled in Caucasian females. Malaria, a disease that was supposed to have been eradicated, is becoming endemic in the tropics, with new drug-resistant strains appearing. Prophylactic drugs given to travellers going to these areas are becoming useless. Recently, Canadians coming from these areas are increasingly being diagnosed with a malignant strain of Malaria that attacks the brain, and several fatalities have occurred.

In a recent article in Time Magazine (September 8, 1997) titled "Mosquitoes get deadly," we are told that, "The virus causing the deadly brain disease [Encephalitis] is at large and that nature's most loathed insect was carrying it." Outbreaks were reported in Florida, New York's Long Island, Massachusetts, North Dakota and Georgia. West Nile Virus, another deadly virus carried by mosquitoes is now commonly found in both the USA and Canada.

THE FIFTH SEAL:

The fifth seal depicts the persecution of the faithful, again predicted by the Lord in the next verse, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." (Matt 24:9)

When the sixth seal is opened, the scene is that of the end of the world:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev 6:12-17)

Again we notice the similarity to Matthew 24:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matt 24:29-30)

Although the prophecy leaps from the “beginning of sorrows” to the coming of the Son of Man, the second heptad of the seven trumpets will fill the void left by the seven seals:

We must not regard the order of what is said, because frequently the Holy Spirit, when He has traversed even to the end of the last times, returns again to the same times, and fills up what He had before failed to say. Nor must we look for order in the Apocalypse; but we must follow the meaning of those things which are prophesied.¹

THE SEALING OF THE ELECT:

Before the plagues of the seven trumpets, John saw an angel putting the seal of the living God on the foreheads of the servants of God. Then he tells us the number of those sealed; one hundred and forty-four thousand. (Rev 7:1-3) This number symbolizes the total number of the elect, who will be given protection against the remaining plagues. Here, the Holy Spirit gives us assurance that even if we happen to be around during the **Great Tribulation**, we will enjoy God’s protection. The number is a composite one (12 X 12 X 1000). The number twelve is symbolic of being chosen by God. The Tribes of God’s chosen people, Israel, were twelve and so was the number of His chosen disciples. When 12 is multiplied by 12, that means God’s elect from among the converted Jews as well as from among the Gentiles. St. Paul assures us that from among the Jews a remnant shall be saved, (Rom 9:27) and later on in Revelation 11, there is allusion to a mass conversion of the Jews to Christianity. The number one thousand symbolizes a great number. So, 144,000 symbolizes the large number of

¹Victorinus: Commentary on the Apocalypse.

God's elect from both Jews and Gentiles. The reference to the Tribes of Israel is here to be understood as referring to the New Israel, which is the totality of God's elect, for whose sake the days will be shortened. This point becomes clear when we read on:

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev 7:9-14)

Here the picture becomes clear; a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues. And who are they? They are the elect that have come out of the **Great Tribulation**, victorious, the same that were sealed and protected by God's own seal. Their number, no man could count, for only God knows the number of His elect, the number that is symbolically given to us as 144,000.

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS:

When the seventh seal is opened, we are told that there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. (Rev 8:1) I could not find any satisfactory explanation for this. Perhaps what it means is that the plagues already mentioned, wars, famine, pestilence and persecutions, will be separated from the coming plagues by a time interval (symbolized by half an hour.) This really makes sense, for the Lord tells us that "all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." (Matt 24:6) The plagues announced by the seven trumpets being closer to the end, may be better indications that the end is near.

Before the first trumpet sounds, St. John sees an angel offering incense, together with the prayers of the saints. Here is a reminder that the prayers of the Church on earth are not forgotten before God.

“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.” (Rev 8:7)

Many are of the view that this represents an environmental plague. God is using man’s failure to protect the earth as a warning sign that the end is near. We are all aware of the menace of acid rain and its devastating effects on the trees and vegetation.

The problem of acid rain originated with the Industrial Revolution, and it has been growing ever since. The severity of its effects has long been recognized in local settings, as exemplified by the spells of acid smog in heavily industrialized areas. The widespread destructiveness of acid rain, however, has become evident only in recent decades. One large area that has been studied extensively is northern Europe, where acid rain has eroded structures, injured crops and forests, and threatened or depleted life in freshwater lakes. In 1984, for example, environmental reports showed that almost half of the trees in Germany's Black Forest had been damaged by acid rain. The northeastern United States and eastern Canada have also been particularly affected by this form of pollution; damage has also been detected in other areas of these countries and other regions of the world.¹

The latest report on the condition of the European forests, published in 1996, shows that one quarter of Europe’s trees is either sick or dying, and that acid rain is among the chief causes of the death of Europe’s forests.² A recent radio newscast tells us that the planet has already lost one third of its trees because of environmental mismanagement.

THE SECOND TRUMPET:

“And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea

¹Encarta Encyclopedia.

²Time Magazine: Special Report, November 1997.

became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.” (Rev 8:8-9)

I was watching the news one day in March 1989, the tanker *EXXON VALDEZ* was shown spilling oil in the Gulf of Alaska. The whole sea was covered with the red crude and thousands of dead fish were floating on the surface. The moment I saw this, Revelation 8 immediately came into my mind! Here is what TIME magazine reports about pollution of our seas:

The life-support functions of earth's oceans are burdened with oil ballast and other wastes dumped overboard from millions of motorized vessels and pollution flowing from the land and air into the sea, along with millions of tons of hard trash. Oil spills are among the most obvious forms of pollution.¹

No one can deny that oil spills and other forms of pollution are depleting the seas from fish. Cod is disappearing from Canada's east coast and salmon from the west coast. The recent closures of the fisheries in Atlantic Canada, and the ongoing quarrel with the U.S.A. about salmon fishing are indications that the second trumpet may have sounded already!

THE THIRD TRUMPET:

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.” (Rev 8:10) Again, here we can make a case for pollution of rivers and springs. According to the United Nations, in 1995, 20% of the world population had no access to clean drinking water.

Rivers and streams that run through human settlements are increasingly contaminated with pesticides from agriculture, industrial waste from manufacturing plants and, of course, untreated

¹Time Magazine: Special Report, November 1997

sewage. That makes water both the giver of life and the bearer of disease and death. The report declared that at any given time, half the people in the developing world are suffering from a water related sickness. Another recent U.N. report noted that every day 25,000 of the afflicted die.¹

Poor countries are not the only ones concerned about the safety of drinking water. In the U.S.A., no less than 25% of all underground water sources are polluted, the ratio is 75% in Latin American countries.²

A 1996 report by China's National Environmental Protection Agency concluded that 78% of the water in rivers flowing through Chinese cities is no longer drinkable. The Yangtze river, for example, is being polluted with 40 million tons of industrial and sewage waste a day. A report by the U.N. Development Program estimates that 79% of the planet's most populous country (China) are drinking contaminated water.³

THE FOURTH TRUMPET:

“And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.” (Rev 8:12)

Two recent events may help us understand the meaning of this plague, the volcano eruption on the island of Montserrat, and the smog that blanketed South East Asia. Anyone who had watched these two events on T.V. will not fail to see how in both cases the amount of sunshine reaching the earth was significantly reduced.

“The sky in Southeast Asia has turned yellow, and people are dying,” Dr. Claude Martin, director General of the World Wide

¹Time Magazine: Special report, November 1997

²Encarta Encyclopedia

³Time Magazine: Special Report, November 1997

Fund for Nature, said in a statement released from the fund headquarters in Switzerland. “There is no sunrise or sunset,” said a resident of Kuala Lumpur. Time Magazine reported that people in the region drove at noon with lights ablaze because of the haze. A Jet crash that killed 234 people in Sumatra was also blamed on the poor visibility.¹

Even in industrialized nations in the West, smog created by emissions from cars and industry often makes the day seem shorter than usual. And, with governments reluctant to enforce what they agreed upon concerning emission levels, it is likely that these problems will continue, and even worsen.

The problem with emission levels is not confined to the smog that covers many of the major cities of the world, but leads to a more serious problem; Global Warming. The much talked about “greenhouse effect” is now recognized as a possible threat to Man’s existence on this planet.

There is ample evidence that global warming is accelerating:

The sultriest three years in the century have occurred in the last decade, and the hottest year ever recorded was 1995. The change is evident not just in thermometer readings. Spring is arriving a week earlier in the Northern hemisphere than it did a decade ago, and strange things are happening with wild life. A butterfly in the American West has moved 200 km north of where it used to live. Cold water brook trout have disappeared in some areas of North America as streams warm up. Mountain ice caps in tropical zones are melting fast, as are glaciers in northern climes. Then there are the unusually frequent bouts of nasty weather: flooding in central Europe, vicious cyclones in South Asia, freak spring snowstorms in the American plains. Scientists have found that the amount of moisture in the air has gone up 10% in the last 20 years. The extra moisture could disrupt weather patterns, producing stronger, more frequent storms in some areas and drought in other places.²

¹Time Magazine, October 6, 1997

²Time Magazine: Special Report, November 1997

The disastrous results of unchecked global warming are probably alluded to in the plague of the fourth vial (Rev 16:8-9), but even the changes that are already happening have been predicted by an early Church writer in the second century:

There will be earthquakes in every city, and plagues in every country; and monstrous thunderings and frightful lightnings will burn up both houses and fields. Storms of winds will disturb both sea and land excessively; and there will be unfruitfulness on the earth, and a roaring in the sea, and an intolerable agitation on account of souls and the destruction of men. There will be signs in the sun, and signs in the moon, deflections in the stars, distresses of nations, intemperateness in the atmosphere, discharges of hail upon the face of the earth, winters of excessive severity, different frosts, inexorable scorching winds, unexpected thunderings, unlooked-for conflagrations.¹

THE FIFTH TRUMPET:

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world

tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. (Rev 9:1-11)

The star that fell from heaven is probably a fallen angel who was given permission to open the bottomless pit. In apocalyptic literature, the bottomless pit is a place where evil spirits are temporarily detained and punished. When Christ exorcized the man that had a legion of demons, the evil spirits besought the Lord not to send them to the bottomless pit, but rather give them permission to enter into the swine. (Luke 8:31)

Most commentators are agreed that the locusts symbolize demons that are unleashed to torture the people who do not have the seal of God (the elect).

Most likely, those locusts are demons; evil spirits ruled by Satan. They are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion. God limits what they can do; they can do nothing without His permission. Their main purpose on earth is to destroy, prevent or distort people's relationship with God. Because they are in a corrupt and degenerate state, their appearance reflects the distortion of their spirits. In the Old Testament, locusts were symbols of destruction because they destroyed vegetation, here, however, they symbolize an invasion of demons, called to torture people who do not believe in God.¹

The context shows that the plague is an eschatological calamity that transcends the familiar plagues of locusts. John lists eight characteristics that show that these locusts are fantastic diabolical creatures; demons that will torture people that do not have the seal of God.²

The locusts symbolize spiritual torments inflicted by demons.³

¹Life Application Bible: Footnotes on Revelation

²The Jerome Biblical Commentary

³Jerusalem Study Bible: Footnotes on Revelation

A foretaste of hell is given to mankind before the great day of reckoning.¹

Having spent 19 years as a physician before being ordained, I cannot get rid of the part in my gray matter that still thinks like a physician! So, when I meditate on the phrases, “spiritual torment,” “foretaste of hell,” and “men shall seek death and shall not find it,” one word keeps flashing in my mind, *DEPRESSION!*

Depression is the closest thing to being in hell. It is a state of utter hopelessness, where the present is worse than the past, and the future is even worse than the present. The torment and mental agony are so overpowering that the only deliverance often seems to be death. And, indeed, in spite of the major advances in medical treatment, some depressed people commit suicide to escape the torment.

A patient once told me, “I know that if I kill myself I’ll go to hell, but, I am already in hell!” It is for this that I personally believe that the fifth trumpet will usher an epidemic of depression, the like of which the world has not seen.

But, can this really happen? Some people think it is already happening. A recent article in Air Canada’s in-flight magazine “En Route” tells us that we live in a period in which depression seems rampant. One in five Canadians experiences some form of mental illness. Last year, pharmacists filled more than five million prescriptions in Canada for Prozac or other antidepressants. This represents a fivefold increase in the prescriptions written in 1996 over those written in 1991, according to IMS Canada, a supplier of information and analysis to the health care sector, and, there is nothing to suggest a slowdown. Four percent of those prescriptions are dispensed to those between the ages of 10 and 19. Prozac now even comes in a liquid form, and between 10 and 15 percent attending a children’s clinic at the Clarke Institute of Toronto receive it, including one patient who is six. We are also told in the same article that even veterinarians dish them out to snarling dogs!

About a year ago, Time Magazine reported that in one small town in NY, the whole population is on Prozac. They claim it increases their productivity and competitiveness!

¹Culleton R. : The Reign of Antichrist

Worldwide, it is estimated that more than 24 million people swallow Prozac daily. The article asks, “What accounts for this apparent depression epidemic as we enter the 21st century?” Some believe that the explanation is in modern life itself; the fraying of the social fabric.

Respondents to a Daniel Yankelovitch poll conducted in the U.S. at the end of 1996 isolated five factors accounting for our general malaise: weakened family values, the erosion of respect, the impersonality of day to day life, individualism at the expense of personal responsibility, and a lack of community.¹

“Society has a psyche and ours is unhappy at the moment,” says Margaret Sommerville, of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law in Montreal. “I think depression is an infectious disease. There is truth to the old saying ‘misery loves company’ and there’s a huge sense of sadness out there now.”²

The main reason, however for this epidemic is that people are increasingly estranged from the Grace of God. “Medicine has become our substitute religion,” says McGill’s Sommerville and then she adds, “If you’re treating your spiritual yearnings with Prozac, you have a problem, haven’t you?”

A recent CBC radio news item tells us the results of a survey done by some researchers in Georgia. People who go to church are healthier than those who do not, especially when it comes to mental health. This is especially true in the case of depression. Depression is a state of utter hopelessness, and hope is one of the three major Christian virtues: Faith, Hope and Love.

There is no doubt that there are cases of genuine depression that need drug treatment even among church goers, but depression we are speaking about is a demonic manifestation permitted by God. We are told that those demons that sting like scorpions, only sting those who have not the seal of God, because to those who have accepted the seal of God and have become His own, He has said, “Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10:19)

¹En Route, Air Canada’s in flight magazine: October 1997

²En Route, Air Canada’s in flight magazine: October 1997

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING II¹

THE APOSTASY:

Saint Paul tells us in his second letter to the Thessalonians, that Christ cannot come "... except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (II Thes 2:3) That man of sin is none other than the **Abomination of Desolation**, also known as **Antichrist**. The Lord Jesus confirms this when He tells us, "When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 15:8)

Although the apostasy or falling away will be completed only after the **Abomination of Desolation** sits in the temple of God (the Church), showing himself to be God, (II Thes 2:4) and when "All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev 13:8), yet the seeds of that apostasy have been sown everywhere. Beginning with the last half of the last century, the seeds of disbelief have been growing into pernicious weeds and thistles that are choking "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 1:3)

The roots of apostasy have even been firmly planted among people who claim to be Christian. The recent declarations of the Rev. Bill Phipps, moderator of the United Church of Canada, the largest Protestant denomination in the country, are proof of this. Mr. Phipps, who was elected as moderator in August of this year, wasted no time. He called a press conference in which he delineated his "Creed":

- I don't believe Jesus is God.
- I don't believe in heaven or hell.
- I don't accept the Bible as a valid historical record.
- I don't accept the traditional Christian concept of Jesus as the Son of God.
- I don't believe that Jesus is the only way to God.
- I don't believe that He rose from the dead.

In the beginning, there were some faint voices of protest, but every thing is quiet now in Canada's largest Protestant church.

¹Published: December, 1998

Some people may be surprised at this, but I am not! To me, Mr. Phipps is not a “fluke,” he is the product of the “system,” that system of Theology that, for the last 30 years, had been taught in seminaries all over the world.

Here are some quotations from the world’s leading “Theologians” who teach in world-class seminaries, whose purpose is to graduate “ministers” of the word of God:

As modern people, we have to abandon Theological realism ..., the idea that God actually exists as the Creator of the Universe, and that Christ was actually raised from the dead.¹

Belief in God is ... fiction, a myth!²

We must now learn to view Christianity, like Buddhism or any other religion, as a historical human construction. All of our beliefs originate in the human imagination.³

A serious mistake was made when the Church began to fix its dogma in creeds. The Protestant Reformation was a help, but fell far short of its proper goal, when it failed to liberate the Church completely from inherited dogma.⁴

The subject that has received the most attacks by these “Theologians” is the Divinity of Christ, His virginal birth and His Resurrection. The current opinion on all three aspects is in the negative. John Hicks of Birmingham U.K. writes:

Theology must learn to center itself around God, rather than on Christ, and learn to regard the other faiths as honest responses to the One God of us all. Traditional Christianity tends to divide Christians from

¹Don Cuppit, Dean, Emmanuel College, Cambridge U.K.

²Lonnie Kliever, professor, Southern Methodist University, Texas

³Gordon Kaufman, Professor of Theology, Harvard School of Divinity

⁴Edward Farley, Vanderbilt Divinity School

sincere believers of other religions by reason of the absolute claims it makes for Jesus. Christian Theology must not continue to maintain that Christ is the only Saviour of sinners, but recognize that He is one saviour among many.

S. M. Ogden further tells us:

Christian Theology will need re-thinking so that Jesus will be perceived as the challenge of God's love for people. There will be no need of a unique incarnation or bodily Resurrection.

A recent series of books about the "real Jesus" are now filling the shelves of bookstores everywhere. Here are some quotations:

He was a good Jewish lad with a brilliant flair for shrewd moral teaching, and he would have been horrified to think of a 'church,' let alone people worshiping him as if he were 'divine.' He certainly did not rise from the dead; that was all a mistake.¹

He was part of the sect living at Qumran in Palestine; he was married and had three children; then he divorced and remarried. He did not die on the cross, but lived on and went with Paul on his missionary travels. It was in Philippi that he met his second wife.²

The madness goes on, with John Shelby Spong, bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Newark, New Jersey, who appeared on a CBC talk show with Ann Petrie, in which he attacked the divinity of Christ, denied the virginal birth, and the bodily Resurrection.

What do these Theologians, pastors, bishops and the like advocate then? The new gospel that is being preached now is summarized in the following points:

- This world and not another is the only legitimate concern of Christians. Peace marches and not prayer are the preferred way of expressing faith.
- Our knowledge and judgment should be based on our experience in

¹A. N. Wilson: Jesus (Best seller)

²Barbara Thiering: Jesus and the riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls

this world and not on Divine revelation or Church authority.

- Jesus can be held up as the paradigm of the liberated individual, but not the incarnate Son of God.
- Belief in God is not essential.¹

This is the gospel that Mr. Phipps preaches! In an interview with the “Ottawa Citizen,” he had this to say:

The divinity of Jesus and the reality of heaven are irrelevant, what really matters is mending a broken world. Jesus was more interested in life on earth than the afterlife, and had more to say about poverty than any other subject.

The same newspaper tells us that he developed his views as a student in the mid 1960s, who observed civil-right marches in New York and Chicago, and that later on as a minister, he has been quick to demonstrate against everything from nuclear arms to Canada’s treatment of its aboriginals. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, writing 16 centuries ago, describes what is happening now in the Church:

Formerly the heretics were manifest; but now the Church is filled with heretics in disguise. For men have fallen away from the truth, and have itching ears. Is it a plausible discourse? all listen to it gladly. Is it a word of correction? all turn away from it. Most have departed from right words, and rather choose the evil, than desire the good. This therefore is the falling away, and the enemy is soon to be looked for: and meanwhile he has in part begun to send forth his own forerunners, that he may then come prepared upon the prey. Look therefore to thyself, O man, and make safe thy soul. The Church now charges thee before the Living God; she declares to thee the things concerning **Antichrist** before they arrive. Whether they will happen in thy time we know not, or whether they will happen after thee we know not; but it is well that, knowing these things, thou shouldest make thyself secure beforehand.²

The effect of this on the ordinary man, the average member of the

¹The Gospel of Humanism (page 128)

²Catechetical Lectures: Lecture XV

congregation, became apparent to me two months after Mr. Phipps made his “Declaration of lack of faith!” During a visit to Eastern Canada, I had a most sobering discussion with a bright young man from Nova Scotia. He was a brilliant university student, studying to become a professional. He told me that he was a member of the United church, and, sooner or later, I brought up the subject of Mr. Phipps. He calmly told me that he totally agreed with Rev. Phipps. “As a matter of fact, the majority of our congregation supports him.” I asked him, where does his minister stand on this, and he told me, “He leaves it up to every individual to make up his/her mind on these matters. He tactfully avoids discussing these controversial issues on the pulpit!” When I asked him, “Do you believe in God?” He said “No!” I asked him again, “What do you believe in?” His answer was, “I believe in helping others, and hurting no one.” He thought that the Bible was a forgery, that it was written at least half a century after the fact, and that no one with brains should take it seriously.

Isn't this what St. Paul wrote about to his disciple Timothy? “ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” (II Tim 4:3-4)

Allow me now to add some anecdotes to elaborate on this point, mainly that the apostasy is indeed in the world in a way that most Christians are not aware of. One of our youths came to ask my advice about taking a course in “Theology.” He had two spare courses and he thought that it was a good idea to take Theology. The first shock came when he did not find the word “Theology” in the calendar. When he inquired, he was told, “We now call it ‘Religious Studies.’” So, he looked under “Religious studies 101.” The second shock came when he read under course description, “The way we create and name gods.” It was most appropriate that they changed the name from “Theology,” which means the study of God, to religious studies, because today's religion can be practiced without the need for God.

I asked the same young man to give me a guesstimate of how many persons in his class believed in God. After a short pause, he told me, “About 15% believe that there is ‘someone up there,’ but those who believe in Christ, the virginal birth, the Resurrection, the after-life and so, are no more than 2%!”

I thought that this is peculiar to the province where we live, so, during a visit to Newfoundland, I posed the same question to one of the youth in our Church there, who attends the University of Saint John's. I was shocked to find that he gave me exactly the same figures I have received in Waterloo, Ontario. The Apostasy is not completely here, but its roots are firmly grounded everywhere.

WHEN TRANSGRESSORS ARE COME TO THE FULL:

The prophet Daniel was told by the angel Gabriel many things concerning the end of the world and the **Abomination of Desolation**. The angel told him that the vision he saw was for the "Time of the end." (Dan 8:17) The angel then told him, "When the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences shall stand up." (Dan 8:23) That the "king" referred to here is the **Abomination of Desolation**, there is no dispute among the ancient writers. The same writers tell us that what Daniel has been told means that before **Antichrist** comes, there shall be an abundance of sin and sinners. The fullness of sin will have been accomplished!

The same is foretold by the Lord, "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt 24:12) St. Paul gives us an idea about the kind of sins that will prevail in the world at the last times:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (II Tim 3:1-5)

Saint John Chrysostom echoes the words of Saint Paul, in his "Homily on Matthew 24,":

When **Antichrist** is come, the pursuit of unlawful pleasures shall be more eager among the transgressors, and those that have learnt to despair of their own salvation. Then shall be gluttony, then revellings, and drunkenness. For like as when the ark was amaking, they believed not, saith He; but while it was set in the midst of them, proclaiming beforehand the evils that are to come, they, when they saw it, lived in

pleasure, just as though nothing dreadful were about to take place; so also now, **Antichrist** indeed shall appear, after whom is the end, and the punishments at the end, and vengeance intolerable; but they that are held by the intoxication of wickedness shall not so much as perceive the dreadful nature of the things that are on the point of being done.

Anyone who watches the daily news on TV or listens to the Radio, will surely notice that sin has become the norm today. Sexual immorality has become tolerated, even encouraged. With the recent revelations about Mr. Clinton's affair, we are told that his popularity has never been higher. We are even told that what he has been doing is actually good! A recent study by some "Psychologist" concludes that extra-marital relations are actually good for marriage! In another "study," we are told that "office sex" is also good! It releases tension and increases productivity, explains the author. No wonder the sexual behaviour of children all over the world has been constantly deteriorating.

According to the Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health (U.S.A.), more than half of the females and three quarters of the males aged 15-19 have experienced sexual intercourse. A survey in Florida found that 75% of the kids had sexual experience by the time they reached 12th grade, and 20% have had six or more sexual partners.

Sexual harassment has become so common in schools that programs to deal with it are initiated in many places. Sex has become so prevalent among school children that some Christian Schools are now asking students to sign "vows" not to have sex before they marry.

The reasons for this permissiveness are many. TV is probably the most prominent among these. Sex is glorified by TV. It is portrayed as a normal requirement of life like food and clothes. According to Time Magazine, kids today as young as 7 are picking up the first details of sex even in Saturday morning cartoons! (June 15, 1998) A 14 year old told the reporter, "If you watch TV, they've got everything you want to know. That's how I learned how to kiss, when I was eight. And the girl told me, 'Oh, you sure know how to do it.'"

TV is now overshadowed by the Net! It is more discrete, and, unlike TV, where you have to wait for a certain show to be aired, it is readily available on demand! There are more than one thousand sites that offer pornography on the Net. Kids receive unsolicited pornographic E-mails according to Time Magazine. (December 15, 1997)

The attitude of parents is also another factor in this sexual revolution

among children. In a recent survey by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, only one third of the adults thought adolescent sexual activity is wrong, while the great majority of adults thought it was O.K. and, under certain conditions, normal, healthy behaviour.

A few weeks ago, an item on the news disgusted me utterly. A single mother celebrated her daughter's 15th birthday by inviting twenty of her friends (all girls of the same age,) and "treating" them to a male stripper! The stripper not only exposed himself to the girls, but even fondled them, to the delight of the mother. Both mother and stripper were charged when the matter became public.

No wonder that the attitude of children towards sex reflects the distorted opinions of their parents.

One ugly side effect is a presumption among many adolescents is that sex is an entitlement, an attitude that fosters a break-down of respect for self and others. A Rhode Island Rape Centre study of 1700 sixth-ninth graders found 65% of the boys and 57% of the girls believing it acceptable for a male to force a female to have sex if they have been dating for six months.¹

An insight into how teens view sex now is given by Time Magazine, in a conversation with a 13 year old from Denver. She told Time Magazine, that she is glad that sex isn't so taboo now! When she tried discouraging a classmate from having sex for the first time, the friend turned to her and said, "My God Shana. It's just sex!"

The attitude of Governments is even more pathetic. The emphasis is on "safe sex" rather than on abstinence. In the U.K., it was proposed that the age of consent for sex should be reduced to 13, in order to reduce the number of teen pregnancies. It was reasoned that if this was done, 13 years old children could legally obtain birth control pills, and the pregnancies among 13-15 years would be drastically reduced!

Homosexuality has now become accepted as a "life style." Gay pride parades are all over the place, and Mayors and other officials are clamoring to attend them. A public TV station in the Kitchener-Waterloo area broadcast a two hour program featuring a Lutheran minister, who teaches in a seminary, proclaims that homosexuality is a

¹Time Magazine, June 15, 1998

gift from God that should be cherished! He claims that he got this view after watching a video showing homosexual sex! According to him, the video has become essential viewing for 4th year seminarians, so that they graduate with a healthy attitude towards gays.

Same sex “marriages” are now performed in many “churches.” And legislation to recognize these “marriages” as legal and binding are gaining acceptance almost everywhere. The most mystifying phenomenon, however, is the militancy and zeal with which “ministers” of the “church” are defending these “marriages,”

In Nashville, Tenn., some local churches decided that until the United Methodist Church allows gay marriages, no marriage ceremonies of any kind will be allowed! Similar acts of protest are reported elsewhere. The Rev. Jan Nunly, rector of St. Peter and St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Providence, R.I., will preside over church weddings for straight couples. But she won’t sign marriage licenses for them. She complies with her bishop’s wishes by conducting gay weddings off church property. The Rev. Robert Warren of Trinity Episcopal Church in San Francisco performs gay weddings, though his bishop opposes them. “I don’t obey a bad law,” he says.¹

Gay rights have become the topic of the hour, and under the pretext of protecting the rights of gays, the rights of everyone else is trampled upon. A case in point is the Church in Vancouver, that published an ad in their Newsletter offering counseling to Gays who want to amend their ways. The Church was taken to the Human Rights Commission, on the grounds that the ad constituted “Hate Literature!”

In the province of Newfoundland, in a Catholic School, 9th Grade children are taught by a nun-turned-lesbian. She told the girls in her class that she had found out that her calling from God was not actually to virginity but to lesbianism.

In another Catholic School in Ontario, where a member of my congregation used to teach, an in-class discussion about homosexuality took place. The teacher simply told the children that according to the Bible, homosexuality is a sin. The whole class went up in arms, and one of the children screamed at her saying, “How dare you call yourself a

¹The Houston Chronicle, November 22, 1997

Christian and say this!”

No wonder that the view of the younger generation towards sexuality has become very skewed. According to Time Magazine, in certain parts of suburbia, gay is becoming more than O.K., it's cool! (Dec 8, 1997) A recent study shows that 18% of the teens in the San Francisco Bay area are gay. In the same area, gay kids have two Webzines, dozens of on-line chat rooms and some 500 community support groups, usually run by social workers not affiliated with local schools.

The myth that sexual orientation is something one is born with has now become “scientific fact!” In September 1997, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S.A.) urged parents of gay children to recognize that, “generally, homosexual orientation is experienced as a given, not as something freely chosen.”

Acts of violence are shown every day on TV, and yet no one cares. People have become de-sensitized towards the daily news. As a matter of fact, people's appetite towards watching violence has become insatiable. As if movies that depict gore and blood are not enough, the trend now is towards real-life shots that show real people drowning or being burnt to death. A currently advertized video called “Revenge of the Bulls,” shows actual footage of bull fights, where the bulls win!

The most disgusting piece of news I recently read, was what the Globe and Mail reported about a Catholic church in the USA. The church celebrated “Halloween” by exhibiting in one of its halls a horror chamber, complete with scenes of real people being tortured! In an adjacent room, a husband-wife team (members of the congregation) were simulating “date-rape,” while in a third room, a teenager was enacting a scene of teen suicide!

Satanism and human sacrifice are commonly reported, and yet they fail to produce any outrage in the viewers or readers. A friend of mine, a psychiatrist, is treating a woman who used to be a surrogate mother, getting pregnant through prostitution, delivering her babies, only to be sacrificed to the Devil. She lost 3 babies this way. Now she has nightmares for which she seeks treatment. This happened recently in a small Ontario town. It is probably happening now in your own town.

Satanic sex abuse of children was the theme of a conference held in the Durham region, and reported on in the Toronto Star. “If you think that this is something that happens in the medieval era, think again. It exists very much today,” said Robert Tucker, an expert on cults. “The

phenomenon right now is exploding. It's not just a bunch of malarkey," he added. Detective James Bradley, a consultant on satanic cults for U.S. police forces told the same conference, "You're hearing it from hundreds of hundreds of kids, you're hearing it from juvenile workers' social workers, teachers and psychiatrists." Bradley said that sexual abuse of children is one of the "purest forms" of satanic sacrifices. Unfortunately society is reluctant to deal with many of these allegations.

Today, ordinary people are afraid that others may think that they are "religious!" In a completely secularized society, everyone's rights are protected except the right of the religious. Yale University professor Stephen Carter calls this "the culture of disbelief, the oppressive assumption that no one of any learning or sophistication could possibly be a religious believer." Carter notes, for example, that one is allowed to have any view on abortion so long as it derives from ethical or practical or sociological or medical considerations. But should someone stand up and oppose abortion for reasons of faith, he is accused of trying to impose his religious beliefs on others!

Churches today are more like entertainment outlets than houses of prayer. I am sure that you heard about drive-in communion and confession on the Net. But this next piece of information is the ultimate! In an article in the New York Time Magazine dated June 22, 1997 and titled, "Raving My Religion," we are given a picture of the latest trend in church services.

The article describes the "Techno Cosmic Mass," created by Matthew Fox, a former Dominican Priest from California. Fox started holding his own rave-inspired masses, drawing young and old alike. In a mass called "Gaia Our Mother," this is what happened. The crowd enters, ethereal music is playing as slides of mountains, clouds and women flash on the four walls above makeshift altars to fire, water, earth and air. While worshipers sit in concentric circles around a central altar, a young rapper leaps on stage to sing about the "Big Bang!" Then Fox exhorts the group to "cry out to the mother with real feeling and grief." As voices rise in a collective wail of "Ma!" the walls flash with graphics of screaming women.

Pressing palm to palm, the audience sways as Fox administers the Eucharist: chunks of whole wheat bread, served with wine or grape juice. Finally, the speakers blast house music and worshipers dance

together. Fox explains his method by saying, “the old forms of worship are boring,” arguing that his mass can help prevent social ills like teenage pregnancy! On the way out, one middle aged woman turns to her friend. “I haven’t been to church in years. That was such a moving experience.”

Writing in the second century, Hippolytus wrote the following about evil that will abound before the coming of **Antichrist**:

The temples of God will be like houses, and there will be overturnings of the churches everywhere. The Scriptures will be despised, and everywhere they will sing the songs of the adversary. Fornications, and adulteries, and perjuries will fill the land; sorceries, and incantations, and divinations will follow after these with all force and zeal. And, on the whole, from among those who profess to be Christians will rise up then false prophets, false apostles, impostors, mischief-makers, evil-doers, liars against each other, adulterers, fornicators, robbers, grasping, perjured, mendacious, hating each other. The shepherds will be like wolves; the priests will embrace falsehood; the monks will lust after the things of the world; the rich will assume hardness of heart; the rulers will not help the poor; the powerful will cast off all pity; the judges will remove justice from the just, and, blinded with bribes, they will call in unrighteousness.¹

DISTRESS OF NATIONS WITH PERPLEXITY:

Luke 21 is the equivalent of Matthew 24. It speaks about signs of the end. One of these signs is the “distress of nations with perplexity.” (Luke 21:25) Never did I understand the meaning of these words until recently! Watching the daily news over the last several months, I became acquainted with these newly coined phrases, “Asian contagion,” “Russian melt-down,” “South American collapse,” “financial market roller coaster,” and “World-wide recession.” I watched in amazement as the world’s greatest brains tried to make sense of what was happening in the global financial circles. The word most often used by the “experts” was: confusion. The markets are confused! the investors are confused, even the experts became confused. Governments tried to intervene, only to find that the results are opposite to what the interventions were designed to achieve. Conflicting advice came from

¹Treatise on the end of the world and on Antichrist

different self proclaimed “gurus.” Rumors turned into major losses. If Alan Greenspan sneezed or Yeltsin had a hiccup, the financial markets reacted hysterically. We became familiar with newspaper captions reading like this:

Unhappy investors bail out

Miffed by Greenspan’s comments
global markets sell off dramatically
loonie gets caught in the crossfire¹

Even though now, the situation has stabilized, many believe that this is the calm before the tempest, and that a global recession is unavoidable. A recent article in the Globe and Mail titled, “Fear and loathing of a global recession,” had the following to say:

A deadly financial virus continues to wreak havoc in markets around the world, fears are growing that the global economy will soon be plunged into a devastating worldwide recession. Billionaire speculator George Soros, who has made and lost billions betting on stock, currency and commodities, likened the financial markets to a wrecking ball ‘knocking over one economy after another.’ The global capitalist system, he warned, ‘is coming apart at the seams, and the United States, at the centre of the system, cannot remain unscathed.’ The United Nations issued a stark warning of global recession if the three main economic engines; the United States, Europe and Japan don’t take quick action to drag Asia out of its deflationary funnel.

Could this state of affairs be the one predicted in Luke 21: 26, where we are told, “Men’s hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth?”

One may wonder, what could this financial crisis have to do with the coming of the **Abomination of Desolation**? In a well-researched article we published in “Parousia” Vol III, No 8 (December, 1992), entitled, “The Reign of Antichrist,” we wrote the following:

THE SECOND PERIOD of the life of **Antichrist** will be opened with

¹The Toronto Star, September 18, 1998

his conspicuous entry into the role of universal teacher or "prophet". It is very possible that he will begin his activity under the conditions of a world war, or a great international financial crisis, when man will not see any way out of his calamitous blind alley, because all the means for the resolution of it will be in the hands of **Antichrist**. He will offer a plan for the successful resolution of the world crisis, based on social and political wisdom - the establishing of a uniform political and social structure over the whole world. Mankind, being spiritually blind, will not recognize this project as a cunning snare luring it into the most merciless, continual slavery. To the contrary, man will hail **Antichrist's** manifestations of great erudition, wisdom and genius.

What we are witnessing now is such a situation where a "Universal teacher" would be welcomed by everyone. Actually influential newspapers are advocating this "new leader" with a new plan for rescuing the world through a new, unified global financial order! Under the heading, "A global central bank could help," the *Globe and Mail* of September 28, 1998, wrote:

Even as emerging markets sink into depression and stocks plunge from Montreal to Melbourne, a global economy is slowly emerging. But governments seem paralyzed, unable to deal with both the crisis and the opportunity. The world needs an institution that has a hand on the economic rudder when the seas become stormy. It needs a global central bank. The sad fact is that we cannot rely on existing institutions or on national leaders for global economic stability. An independent central bank with responsibility for maintaining global financial stability is the only way out. No one else can do what is needed.

The paper ended its article by quoting what the eminent economic historian Charles Kindleberger said in examining the causes of the Depression: "For the world economy to be stabilized, there has to be a stabilizer, one stabilizer." Will the **Abomination of Desolation** turn out to be that one stabilizer?

In the article "The Reign of Antichrist" referred to above and which was published in *Parousia* six years ago, it was mentioned that **Antichrist** will be introduced as a "universal teacher." A few days ago, while on the plane back from St. John's, NF, I read this ad in the *Globe and Mail* (December 12, 1998):

AS THE BUDDHA of Compassion, Messiah, Imam Mahdi and Christ, Maitreya the World Teacher is now here. All humanity will see him soon. How will we recognize him? What is he saying? Free info: 1-888-278-TARA.

THE SEA AND THE WAVES ROARING:

The same verse in Luke 21:25, which tells us about the “distress of nations with perplexity,” gives us another important sign, the sea and the waves roaring. I have to admit that I read this part of the verse many a time without understanding its meaning. I came to realize what it means only in the last six month or so. During these months, it seemed that the one thing that competed with the financial market crisis on the daily news were the floods! Floods were everywhere, in Asia, in Europe, in Australia, in America. The floods we have been witnessing lately are such that the like of them was not seen since Noah’s time. Ten meter waves were reported in some of the storms that caused these floods. The recent tropical storm Mitch caused destruction that defies the imagination. As I sat watching these storms I kept wondering, could this be what the Gospel meant by “the sea and the waves roaring?”

THE FLIGHT OF THE CHURCH: (Revelation 12)

Revelation 12 is a very intriguing chapter in a very intriguing book! It speaks about a “woman clothed by the Sun” (the Church) and a “red dragon.” (Satan) That the woman is the Church is evident from the sayings of Victorinus in his “Commentary on the Apocalypse”:

The woman clothed with the sun, and having the moon under her feet, and wearing a crown of twelve stars upon her head, and travailing in her pains, is the ancient Church of fathers, and prophets, and saints, and apostles.

Hippolytus of Rome is also of the same opinion:

By “the woman then clothed with the sun,” he meant most manifestly the Church, endowed with the Father’s Word, whose brightness is above the sun. And by the “moon under her feet” he referred to her being adorned, like the moon, with heavenly glory. And the words, “upon her

head a crown of twelve stars,” refer to the twelve apostles by whom the Church was founded. And those, “she, being with child, cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered,” mean that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world. “And she brought forth,” he says, “a man-child, who is to rule all the nations;” by which is meant that the Church, always bringing forth Christ, the perfect man-child of God, who is declared to be God and man, becomes the instructor of all the nations. And the words, “her child was caught up unto God and to His throne,” signify that he who is always born of her is a heavenly king, and not an earthly; even as David also declared of old when he said, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”¹

The “red dragon” is defined for us in verse 9 as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” In verse 4, we are told that the dragon’s tail “drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” This is understood as referring to the fact that, “of the angels that were subject to him, since he was still a prince when he descended from his estate, he seduced the third part.”²

In verse 7, we are told about a battle that takes place in heaven, where Michael and his angels fight against Satan (the dragon) and his angels. Michael wins, and as a result, Satan and his angels are driven out of heaven and into the earth. Satan can no more stand before God to accuse His children, as he did with Job (Job 1:9-11) and Joshua the high priest, (Zech 3:1-3) and as he still does to all of us. Satan means the “accuser.” He is the prosecutor of God’s children. That is why the inhabitants of heaven rejoice, “for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” But, in the same time, they pity the inhabitants of the earth, “for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

The coming down of Satan into earth after being banished from heaven marks the beginning of the reign of **Antichrist**, which is also

¹Discourse on Christ and Antichrist

²Discourse on Christ and Antichrist

called the **Great Tribulation**.

“ There was a battle in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they prevailed not; nor was their place found any more in heaven. And that great dragon was cast forth, that old serpent: he was cast forth into the earth.” This is the beginning of **Antichrist**.¹

During the **Great Tribulation**, “Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.” (Rev 20:7-8)

Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless **Antichrist**, His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul; although their seduction is a result of God's secret judgment already passed. For, as it is said "his presence shall be after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all seduction of unrighteousness in them that perish." **For then shall Satan be loosed**, and by means of that **Antichrist** shall work with all power in a lying though a wonderful manner.²

Satan's power is currently restricted, he cannot hurt people as he wishes, as is evident from reading chapters 1-2 of the Book of Job. When **Antichrist** comes, Satan will have the power to act directly through **Antichrist** to inflict on humanity the perils of the **Great Tribulation**, the like of which has not been since the creation of the world. (Matt 24:21) This, however should not disturb us, since the Church, according to God's plan, shall be carried away into a place prepared for her by God, where neither the dragon, nor his agent **Antichrist**, can hurt her. Revelation 9:13-19 tells us more about what will happen when Satan and his angels are unleashed on the inhabitants of the earth:

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which

¹Victorinus: Commentary on the Apocalypse

²Augustin of Hippo: City of God, chapter 19

had the trumpet, Loose **the four angels** which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And **the four angels** were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

The sixth trumpet corresponds to the unleashing of Satan and his four “Generals,” which command the whole army of the fallen angels, which Saint John tells us number two hundred million! The description of the creatures is as grotesque as the other creatures which were unleashed by the fifth trumpet, because both are demonic creatures. But, as we were told in Revelation 7: 2-3, those sealed by the seal of the living God cannot be hurt by the “four angels,” or by any of the plagues that will come after that.

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to **the four angels**, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The “woman clothed by the sun” is the sum total of those sealed by the seal of the living God, who will be allowed to escape to a safe haven, away from harm’s way. For when the dragon tries to persecute the woman, we are told, “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” (Rev 12:14) The time, times and half a time, are the three and half years, the same as the “thousand two hundred and threescore days,” the symbolic time of the **Great Tribulation**.

“And the dragon,” he says, saw and persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child. “And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.” That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city.¹

This flight of the Church during the reign of **Antichrist**, is attested to by many of the Fathers of the Church. Our Lord Jesus Christ, instructs us to do the same, “When ye therefore shall see the **Abomination of Desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” (Matt 24:15-16) St. Cyril of Jerusalem comments on this passage by saying:

For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, Then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains. But if any man is conscious that he is very stout-hearted, to encounter Satan, let him stand (for I do not despair of the Church's nerves), and let him say, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the rest? But, let those of us who are fearful provide for our own safety; and those who are of a good courage, stand fast: for then shall be **Great Tribulation**, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. But thanks be to God who hath confined the greatness of that tribulation to a few days; for He says, But for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened and **Antichrist** shall reign for three years and a half only. We speak not from apocryphal books, but from Daniel; for he says, And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and half a time. A time is the one year in which his coming shall for a while have increase; and the times are the remaining two years of iniquity, making up the sum of the three years; and the half a time is the six months. And again in another place Daniel says the same thing, And he swear by Him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, and times, and half a time.²

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on Christ and Antichrist

²Cyril Of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

Hippolytus of Rome sees this flight of the elect as foretold in the Old Testament, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Isa 26:20)

The three and half years is, as we said earlier, a symbol and should not be taken literally. It means a time that shall be shortened, according to the promise of the Lord, “But for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt 24:22)

Revelation 12:14-15, tell us that when Satan saw that the woman fled, he, “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.” Water, in the apocalyptic language refers to people. This means that when Satan tries to attack the Church, using the multitudes at his command, she will be miraculously rescued by God. “He signifies by the water which the serpent cast out of his mouth, the people who at his command would persecute her.”¹

The problem we have with Revelation 12, is that it speaks of two flights of the Church, the one is mentioned in verse 6, and the other is mentioned in verse 14. Both flights are to a “place prepared by God,” and both are of the same duration, three and a half year; the apocalyptic symbol of the duration of the **Great Tribulation**. The difference between the two is that one happens before the battle in heaven and the casting of Satan and his angels into the earth, and the other happens after this. That means that the first flight is before the manifestation of **Antichrist**, and the other one after it. I could not find any satisfactory interpretation for this in the writing of the Fathers, but, allow me to offer my own interpretation.

I think the two incidents described represent two phases of the flight of the Church. The first one is a leisurely emigration of the Church, where the Church flees to the “wilderness.” The second, however, is an urgent flight, where the Church is given the two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness. In the first phase, the Church **flees**, while in the second phase she **flies**. It is this second phase that the

¹Victorinus: Commentary on the Apocalypse

Lord refers to when he says, “Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” (Matt 24:17-18) This will be the case when the **Abomination of Desolation** shall be seen in the holy place, *i.e.*, when **Antichrist** is worshiped in the Church as god.

A few years ago, the Toronto Star published a news item under the heading, “Christianity is dying in the land of its birth.” Quoting the “Economist” magazine, the Star said,

Christians are leaving Palestine and Lebanon in such numbers that local churches fear for their future. Arab Christians have long suffered an identity crisis in the strife-torn Middle East and have sought passage to the West, but those numbers have risen dramatically. In the Israeli-occupied territories, the 45,000-strong Palestinian Christians are losing more 2,000 people a year. There were 30,00 Christians in Jerusalem in 1944; today there are 11,000. In Lebanon, it is estimated that 125,000 of the Lebanese Christians have emigrated in the past six month alone.

What the Star did not report is that the Christians of the Sudan have now joined the trend, so did the Christians of Syria and Iraq. The 11,000 Christians in Jerusalem reported when the article appeared, few years ago, have now dwindled to less than 3,000. Among the Christians of Egypt, it is estimated that two million have emigrated, 25-30% of the total number of Christians in Egypt.

Could this be phase I of the flight of the “woman clothed by the sun?” The orderly emigration that precedes the appearance of **Antichrist**, to prepare the “place in the wilderness” for phase II of the flight, which will be completed once the **Great Tribulation** is visited upon this earth? Have we been sent here to the West in order to be protected from the tyranny of the one that will come, persecuting the elect, who will remain faithful to Christ and defy him? Are we going to be among those who will overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony? (Rev 12:11)

The last verses of Revelation 12 tell us that when the dragon saw that the woman had succeeded in fleeing his tyranny, he became wroth and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. It is obvious that not all the Christians will flee from the **Abomination of Desolation**. Those who will be called to martyrdom will stay and earn

their crowns. Some will also remain of their own will, having been seduced by the imposter.

In Revelation 11:1-2, Saint John is given a measuring reed and was told by an angel “Rise up and measure the temple of God and the altar and them that worship therein. But the court which is without leave it out and measure it not.” In the Apocalyptic literature, measuring an object means assured protection of that object by God.¹

The temple is most likely a symbol of the Church (all true believers.) John measured the temple to show that God is building walls of protection around His people, to spare them from spiritual harm, and that there is a place reserved for all believers who remain faithful to God. Those worshiping inside the temple will be protected but those outside will face great suffering. This is a way to say that true believers will be protected through the persecution, but those who refuse to believe will not.²

¹The Jerome Biblical Commentary

²Life Application Bible: Footnotes on Revelation 11

THE UNHOLY TRINITY¹

Chapter 12 of the book of Revelation introduces us to the great red dragon (Rev 12:3). We are later told that the great dragon is none other than "that old serpent the Devil and Satan which deceiveth the whole world" (Rev 12:9). We are also told that at the time of the end the Dragon will be cast out from heaven. That means he will be no longer allowed to appear before God to accuse God's children. (Job 1:6, Job 2:1, Rev 12:10, Zech 3:1)

When Satan loses his position as **accuser** (the word *Satan* literally means accuser) having been cast into the earth, he starts the final phase of his career as **persecutor** of the children of God. Revelation 12: 13-16 tells us that the children of God will escape this by fleeing into the wilderness where God will protect and nourish them for the duration of the **Great Tribulation**, *i.e.*, the time period that starts with the casting out of Satan from heaven into earth and ends with the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus to take His children to Heaven as He promised.

When Satan is cast into the earth, the **Great Tribulation** starts and thus commences the Reign of the **Antichrist** (also known as the **Abomination of Desolation**). The coming of Satan to earth is also the time when he is "loosed" for a little season (Rev 20:3). Revelation 13 resumes the story started in Revelation 12. As soon as Satan was cast into earth, St. John saw a "**beast** rise out of the Sea." That **beast** is none other than the **Abomination of Desolation**, also known as **Antichrist, the Man of Sin, the little horn ...**

The **beast** comes out of the sea, for the sea in apocalyptic literature symbolizes sin and chaos. It is for this reason that the new heaven and the new earth which St. John saw (Rev 21:1) had no sea.

THE SEVEN HEADS:

The beast that St. John saw had seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:10 tells us that the seven heads symbolize seven kings;

¹Published: December, 1999

five are fallen, one *is*, the other is yet to come. These seven kings are prototypes of the **Abomination of Desolation**, little Antichrists installed by the devil as "rehearsals" for the time of the end when the real **Antichrist** will be revealed.

The first head represents Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who persecuted the Israelites, the children of God at the time of Moses. God saved His children from the tyranny of Pharaoh by taking them into the wilderness of Sinai, where God nourished and protected them for forty years. Many see in this a figure for the end of times, when the Church, being threatened by **Antichrist**, will be saved by God when she will fly into the wilderness, where God will nourish and protect her for the duration of the reign of **Antichrist** (the **Great Tribulation**). (Rev 12)

When Pharaoh went after the People of Israel, God defended them by drowning Pharaoh and all his host in the Red Sea. Similarly, Revelation 12 tells us that when the Dragon will follow the Church with all the people that are at his command, God will defend the Church by making the earth open its mouth to swallow the flood that the Dragon cast out of his mouth (Rev 12:16)

The second head is the Assyrian, King Sennacherib (Isa 36, II Chr 32). Sennacherib took on all the strongholds of Judah and set siege to Jerusalem, vowing to destroy it. Hezekiah, the king of Judah at that time sent messages to Isaiah the prophet asking him to intercede on behalf of Jerusalem. The Lord indeed heard the prayers of Isaiah and all the people and saved Jerusalem by sending an angel who "went forth and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand." (Isa 37:36)

The parallelism cannot escape anyone, for in the time of the end, Satan acting through **Antichrist** will surround the Church trying to destroy her, using all the people under his command, but God will miraculously defend His Church (Rev 12:15-16).

The third head is the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar (II Chr 36:6-9, Dan 3). Nebuchadnezzar set up an image and ordered the people to worship it. He decreed that anyone who does not worship the image, will be thrown into the fiery furnace. When the Three Children refused to worship the image they were thrown into the

fiery furnace, but the Lord sent His angel to save them. In the last days, an image of **Antichrist** will be set up and “as many as would not worship the image of the **beast** should be killed.” (Rev 13:15)

Christians who will refuse to follow **Antichrist** or worship his image will be thrown into the fiery furnace (the **Great Tribulation**) but as in the times of old, they will be saved from the Tribulation by the Lord even as He saved the Three Children from the fiery furnace. The size of the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up bears semblance to the number of the beast (Rev 13:18):

For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men. Thus, then, the six hundred years of Noah, in whose time the deluge occurred because of the apostasy, and the number of the cubits of the image for which these just men were sent into the fiery furnace, do indicate the number of the name of that man in whom is concentrated the whole apostasy of six thousand years, and unrighteousness, and wickedness, and false prophecy, and deception; for which things' sake a cataclysm of fire shall also come [upon the earth].²

Note the symbolism that the destruction of the world in the time of Noah bears to the destruction of the world under the reign of **Antichrist**; only those inside the Ark (the Church) will be saved from the destruction in the “cataclysm of fire which shall come upon the earth.” (II Thes 1:7-8, II Pet 3:6-10)

The fourth head represents the Persians which followed the Babylonians.

The fifth head is the Greek tyrant Antiochus Epiphanes who destroyed the Temple built by Ezra.

²Irenaeus: Against heresies, book V

The book of Maccabees tells us that Antiochus put an "abominable idol of desolation" upon the altar of God and ordered people to burn incense and offer sacrifices to it. Antiochus' persecution of the children of God and his claims to be God make him a very close type of **Antichrist**.

These are the five kings that *were*, that is, those who had already gone by the time Revelation was written.

The "one that is," or the sixth head represents the Roman Empire which reigned at the time of Revelation's writing, and which banished St. John (to the Island of Patmos.) The Emperor Nero had persecuted God's children and so became another type of **Antichrist**.

The seventh head, or the one that is to come, represents a future politico-religious movement that was not yet present at the time St. John wrote Revelation; but was to come five centuries later.

The **beast**, coming out of the sea, **Antichrist**, **Abomination of Desolation**, will be a summation of all the characteristics of the seven heads: a compilation of the tyranny and craftiness of all seven prototypes, a perfected version after many trials. For with each of the seven heads Satan gained increasingly more experience that he will use in equipping the final **Antichrist** with. In other words, he will include all the evil traits of the seven little or minor Antichrists that preceded him.

And there is therefore in this **beast**, when he comes, a recapitulation made of all sorts of iniquity and of every deceit, in order that all apostate power, flowing into and being shut up in him, may be sent into the furnace of fire. Fittingly, therefore, shall his name possess the number six hundred and sixty-six, since he sums up in his own person all the commixture of wickedness which took place previous to the deluge, due to the apostasy of the angels. For Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came upon the earth, sweeping away the rebellious world, for the sake of that most infamous generation which lived in the times of Noah. And [**Antichrist**] also sums up every error of devised idols since the flood, together with

the slaying of the prophets and the cutting off of the just.¹

THE WOUNDED HEAD:

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” (Rev 13:3) This head, which we are later told was “wounded by a sword, and did live.” (Rev 13:14) is thought by some to be the same politico-religious movement that arose to power five centuries after Revelations was written. To be wounded by a sword, in apocalyptic language, signifies a military defeat. Some see this fulfilled in the lack of military success of nations that follow this politico-religious system, over the last 50 years. But, in spite of the mortal wounds these nations experienced, many of these countries have recovered their military might (the deadly wound is healed.) At least one of these countries is known to have nuclear capabilities while three others are suspected of having the same.

THE TEN HORNS OF THE BEAST:

Revelation 17 tells us that the ten horns are “ten kings that will receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast and make war with the Lamb.” These will be ten nations that will enter into a military alliance with **Antichrist**. Hippolytus, writing 18 centuries ago, describes these ten nations as ten “Democracies.”² This is a very intriguing prophecy, since democracies did not exist at the time of Hippolytus.

The number 10 does not have to be taken literally, but figuratively, to mean a certain number of nations. The fact that they are described by the Book of Revelation as “having one mind” coupled with Hippolytus’ prophetic description of these nations as “democracies” makes one wonder whether these nations that will be allied to the future **Antichrist** are not those nations that form the

¹Irenaeus: Against heresies, Book V

²Hippolytus of Rome: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

European Union. It is a fact that these nations have “one mind” represented by the European Parliament which sets the policies and speaks for all of these nations. It is also a fact that they are “democracies.”

RELATION TO THE DRAGON:

Revelation 12:2 tells us that the Dragon (Satan) gave the beast (**Antichrist**) his power, his throne, and his great authority. This means that he will be a man endowed with all the power and authority of Satan (now that Satan has been loosed for the period of the **Great Tribulation**). This agrees with what the Book of Daniel tells us, “And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.” (Dan 8:24) What is meant here is that his power is not his own, because it actually comes from Satan (the Dragon.)

A WONDERFUL BEAST:

“And all the world wondered after the beast.” (Rev 12:3) What is meant here is that the whole world will admire the beast. He will be an instant “idol” with the majority of people. The reasons for this admiration by people of the world has been the subject of much speculation by the ancients. These reasons can be summarized as follows:

FALSE PIETY:

Most of the Fathers believe that **Antichrist** will present to the world a false facade of piety and righteousness that will make him look blameless to the eyes of the naive and unspiritual. Faced with corrupt politicians and money-crazed tele-evangelists, the world will see in the beast (**Antichrist**) a fresh leader, whose reputation is so impeccable, that any one trying to warn people against his deceiving exterior will be looked upon as a raving fanatic or even a lunatic!

But in his first steps he will be gentle, loveable, quiet, pious, pacific, hating injustice, detesting gifts, not allowing idolatry; loving, says he, the Scriptures, reverencing priests, honouring his elders, repudiating fornication, detesting adultery, giving no heed to slanders, not

admitting oaths, kind to strangers, kind to the poor, compassionate... helping widows, defending orphans, loving all, reconciling in love men who contend, and saying to such, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;" and he will not acquire gold, nor love silver, nor seek riches.¹

And in the beginning of his rule, or rather tyranny, he assumes the role of sanctity.²

Evil spirits dispersed over the universe will excite in men a universal, most exalted opinion of **Antichrist**; a general rapture and irresistible attraction to him ... he will come in such a manner as to deceive all. He will appear humble, meek, a hater (as he will say himself) of unrighteousness, shunning idols, showing a preference to piety, good, a lover of the poor, beautiful to the extreme, steadfast, affable to all ... He will take cunning measures to please everyone in order that the people will quickly come to love him; he will not accept gifts nor speak in anger, nor show a gloomy appearance, but with a decent exterior he will set about deceiving the world, until he is enthroned.³

ORATORICAL SKILLS:

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking **great things**.” (Rev 13:5) This agrees almost word for word with Daniel’s description of the “little horn,” “And, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking **great things**.” (Dan 7:8) In Daniel 7:11, we also read, “I beheld then because of the voice of the **great words** which the horn spake.” Again, in Daniel 7:20 he refers to the “**Horn**” as, “the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake **very great things**, whose look was more stout than his fellows.

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist

²John Damascene: Expounding the Orthodox faith

³St. Ephraim the Syrian (Word 16)

What this means is that the **beast (Antichrist, Abomination of Desolation, little horn, Man of sin** etc ...) will be a great orator, a charismatic speaker able to move the multitudes with his words, just as Hitler and Nasser did before him, but only on a grander scale. A very eloquent rhetorician that will appeal to everyone: young and old, male, female, Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Hindu alike. He will be so persuasive that people will believe his claims that he is actually God!

HIS REIGN:

This false facade of righteousness, together with his “great words” that is his great ability to dupe people by his speeches, will lead to the great majority of people demanding that he is to be proclaimed king or universal ruler.

And all this he will do corruptly and deceitfully, and with the purpose of deluding all to make him king. For when the peoples and tribes see so great virtues and so great powers in him, they will all with one mind meet together to make him king. And above all others shall the nation of the Hebrews be dear to the tyrant himself, while they say one to another, Is there found indeed in our generation such a man, so good and just? That shall be the way with the race of the Jews pre-eminently, as I said before, who, thinking, as they do, that they shall behold the king himself in such power, will approach him to say, We all confide in thee, and acknowledge thee to be just upon the whole earth; we all hope to be saved by thee; and by thy mouth we have received just and incorruptible judgment. And at first, indeed, that deceitful and lawless one, with crafty deceitfulness, will refuse such glory; but the men persisting, and holding by him, will declare him king.¹

Some writers believe that **Antichrist** will begin his activity under the conditions of a world war, or a great international financial crisis:

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist.

When man will not see any way out of his calamitous blind alley, because all the means for the resolution of it will be in the hands of **Antichrist**. He will offer a plan for the successful resolution of the world crisis, based on social and political wisdom - the establishing of a uniform political and social structure over the whole world. Mankind, being spiritually blind, will not recognize this project as a cunning snare luring it into the most merciless, continual slavery. To the contrary, man will hail **Antichrist's** manifestations of great erudition, wisdom and genius. Worldwide publicity of **Antichrist** as a genius-thinker, a new leader and a saviour of all peoples will flash throughout all nations in the shortest period of time.¹

The result of this deceit will be that, from mankind, there "will arise a demand for an invitation to **Antichrist**. A voice of appeal will issue forth in human society, expressing the urgent need for a 'genius of geniuses', who would elevate material development and progress to a higher plane and bring about prosperity on earth."¹

If indeed, he comes at a time of a world-wide recession, and miraculously turns things around, filling every pocket with money, then people will want to make him king. When the Lord Jesus fed the multitudes with the two loaves and two fishes, the multitudes wanted to seize Him by force and make Him a king! (John 6:15-16)

The Book of Daniel gives us some insight into other ways this imposter will use to convince people to make him ruler in a short time. "And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom, but he shall come in peaceably and obtain the kingdom by **flatteries**." (Dan 11:21) "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by **flatteries**: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." (Dan 11:32) "Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with **flatteries**." (Dan 11:34) The preceding passages from Daniel 11 tell us that **Antichrist** will use **flatteries** to deceive or corrupt people. Flattery is a very potent weapon, for it plays on people's desire to be

¹The Reign of Antichrist II: in Parousia, December 1992

praised and “appreciated,” and it seems that **Antichrist** will perfect this potent weapon, becoming a master of **flatteries** in order to deceive all and “obtain the kingdom by **flatteries**.”

Another weapon he will use is money and worldly possessions which he will shower on his followers. “But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt.” (Dan 11:43) He will use the vast riches at his disposal to reward his followers. He will also entice people by giving them gifts of land and good positions in his government. “And he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.” (Dan 11:39)

He lieth in ambush with the rich" (ver. 8). What rich, but those whom he will load with this world's gifts? And he is therefore said to lie in ambush with them, because he will display their false happiness to deceive men; who, when with a perverted will they desire to be such as they, and seek not the good things eternal, will fall into his snares.¹

DURATION OF HIS REIGN:

“And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.” (Rev 13:5) Forty two months is three and a half years, the same as “A thousand two hundred and threescore days,” of Revelation 12:6, and “A time, and times, and half a time,” of Revelation 12:14.

The Book of Daniel also predicts that the reign of **Antichrist** will be for, “A time, times and a half,” (Dan 12:7) the Apocalyptic three and a half years which is interpreted as a time that will be cut short, according to the promise of the Lord that, “For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt 24:22)

HIS WORSHIP:

“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the

¹Augustin of Hippo: Commentary on the Psalms

foundation of the world.” (Rev 13:8)

That **Antichrist** will be worshiped as God is most certain from the scripture as understood by the Fathers of the Church:

But who is he? Is it then Satan? By no means; but some man, that admits his fully working in him. For he is a man. ‘And exalteth himself against all that is called God or is worshiped.’ For he will not introduce idolatry, but will be a kind of opponent to God; he will abolish all the gods, and will order men to worship him instead of God, and he will be seated in the temple of God, not that in Jerusalem only, but also in every Church.¹

These things, then, shall be in the future, beloved; and when the three horns are cut off, he will begin to show himself as God, as Ezekiel has said aforetime: “Because thy heart has been lifted up, and thou hast said, I am God.” (Ezek 28:2) And to the like effect Isaiah says: “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven: I will be like the Most High. Yet now thou shall be brought down to hell, to the foundations of the earth.” (Isa 14:13) In like manner also Ezekiel: “Wilt thou yet say to those who slay thee, I am God? But thou (shall be) a man, and no God.” (Ezek 28:9)²

But, to worship the **beast** is really worshipping Satan, for this reason we are told in chapter 12:13, “all the world marvelled after the **beast** and they worshipped the dragon that gave power unto the **beast.**” This means that people worshipping **Antichrist** as God will be worshipping Satan.

For he (**Antichrist**) being endued with all the power of the devil, shall come, not as a righteous king, nor as a legitimate king, [i.e., one] in subjection to God, but an impious, unjust, and lawless one; as an apostate, iniquitous and murderous; as a robber, concentrating in himself [all] satanic apostasy, and setting aside idols to persuade

¹St. John Chrysostom: Homily on II Thessalonians

²Hippolytus: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

[men] that he himself is God, raising up himself as the only idol, having in himself the multifarious errors of the other idols. This he does, in order that they who do [now] worship the devil by means of many abominations, may serve himself by this one idol, of whom the apostle thus speaks in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians: ‘Unless there shall come a failing away first, and the man of sin shall be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself as if he were God.’ The apostle therefore clearly points out his apostasy, and that he is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped--that is, above every idol--for these are indeed so called by men, but are not [really] gods; and that he will endeavour in a tyrannical manner to set himself forth as God.¹

One may wonder, how can he fool almost the whole world into believing that he is God. There are many reasons for this. Foremost among those is his deceiving exterior.

Antichrist will seem to man blessed to that degree, that he will even be thought God.²

HIS MIRACLES:

Another reason for his worship by people of the world is the many miracles he will make in order to deceive all into believing that he is God.

Christ will not come to judge quick and dead unless **Antichrist**, His adversary, first come to seduce those who are dead in soul; although their seduction is a result of God's secret judgment already passed. For, as it is said, ‘whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.’ (II Thes 2:9-10) **For then shall Satan be loosed, and by means of that Antichrist shall work with all power in a lying**

¹Irenaeus: Against heresies, book V

²Augustine of Hippo: Commentary on the Psalms

though a wonderful manner. It is commonly questioned whether these works are called "signs and lying wonders" because he is to deceive men's senses by false appearances, or because the things he does, though they be true prodigies, shall be a lie to those who shall believe that such things could be done only by God, being ignorant of the devil's power, and especially of such unexampled power as he shall then for the first time put forth. For when he fell from heaven as fire, and at a stroke swept away from the holy Job his numerous household and his vast flocks, and then as a whirlwind rushed upon and smote the house and killed his children, these were not deceitful appearances, and yet they were the works of Satan to whom God had given this power.¹

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem has another point of view:

And who is this, and from what sort of working? Interpret to us, O Paul. Whose coming, he says, is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders; implying, that Satan has used him as an instrument, working in his own person through him; for knowing that his judgment shall now no longer have respite, he wages war no more by his ministers, as is his wont, but henceforth by himself more openly. And with all signs and lying wonders; for the father of falsehood will make a show of the works of falsehood, that the multitudes may think that they see a dead man raised, who is not raised, and lame men walking, and blind men seeing, when the cure has not been wrought.²

He will work signs and terrible wonders, false wonders and not true, in order to deceive his impious equals. For if it were possible, he would seduce even the elect from the love of Christ Under the eye of the spectators he will remove mountains from their places, he will walk on the sea with dry feet, he will bring down fire from heaven, he will turn the day into darkness and the night into day, he will turn the sun about wheresoever he pleases; and, in short, in presence of those who behold him, he will show all the elements of earth and sea to be subject to him in the power of his specious manifestation what machinations and deceits and delusions will he not bring into play, with the purpose of seducing all men, and leading them off from the way of truth, and from

¹Augustine of Hippo: City of God

²St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures, Lecture XV

the gate of the kingdom? ... Behold the deceit of the enemy, know the machinations of the beguiler, how he seeks to darken the mind of men utterly. For he will show forth his demons brilliant like angels, and he will bring in hosts of the incorporeal without number. And in the presence of all he exhibits himself as taken up into heaven with trumpets and sounds, and the mighty shouting of those who hail him with indescribable hymns; the heir of darkness himself shining like light, and at one time soaring to the heavens, and at another descending to the earth with great glory, and again charging the demons, like angels, to execute his behests with much fear and trembling.¹

But he will come with signs and lying wonders, fictitious and not real, and he will deceive and lead away from the living God those whose mind rests on an unsound and unstable foundation, so that even the elect shall, if it be possible, be made to stumble.²

Great will be the contest, O brethren, in those times, especially for the faithful, when signs and wonders will be wrought with great authority by the serpent himself; when he will show himself in awful apparitions as being similar to God - he will fly about in the air and all the demons, like angels will exult before the tormentor. For he will cry aloud with might, transforming his countenance and dismaying all men without measure.³

Antichrist's signs, worked by the power of Satan, will produce an irresistible influence on spectators. Men will not grasp the fact that his miracles do not have any good, intelligent aim, that they are freakish, evil and aimless, able to produce amazement, to bring the mind into perplexity and self-forgetfulness, to delude and deceive and to captivate one by the enchantment of splendid, empty performances.

HIS POWER:

Having seen these "miracles", men, because of their spiritual

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist

²John Damascene: Expounding the Orthodox faith

³Saint Ephraim the Syrian: Word on Antichrist

blindness and the triumph of their carnal understandings, will immediately acknowledge these demonstrations of Satanic power to be the greatest manifestation of the power of God and they will ecstatically receive **Antichrist** as a God. **Antichrist** will terrify with his threatening and amazing miracles. With them he will satisfy imprudent curiosity and coarse ignorance, he will satisfy men led by the guidance of their fallen nature, estranged from guidance by the light of God, will be allured into submission by the deceiver. People will adore him both because of amazement as well as fear of him. "... and they worshipped the **beast**, saying, Who is like unto the **beast**? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev 13:4) Saint Augustine comments on this by saying:

By a lion in a den, he means one in whom both violence and deceit will work. For the first persecution of the Church was violent, when by proscriptions, by torments, by murders, the Christians were compelled to sacrifice: another persecution is crafty, which is now conducted by heretics of any kind and false brethren: there remains a third, which is to come by **Antichrist**, than which there is nothing more perilous; for it will be at once violent and crafty. Violence he will exert in empire, craft in miracles.¹

And former persecuting kings only put to death; they did not pretend to raise the dead, nor did they make false shows of signs and wonders. But in his time there shall be the evil inducement both of fear and of deceit, so that if it be possible the very elect shall be deceived.²

RELATION TO THE JEWS:

It is generally agreed by the Fathers that the first to accept him as king and God will be the Jews. The Ancients base this on what the Lord Jesus said in John 5:43 concerning the coming of **Antichrist**.

It is said of **Antichrist**, and all understand of him what the Lord said, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye have not received Me; if another

¹Augustine of Hippo: Commentary on the Psalms

²Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”¹

“I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive.” But who is it that He here saith shall come "in his own name"? He alludeth here to **Antichrist**.²

The Lord also spoke as follows to those who did not believe in Him: “I have come in my Father's name, and ye have not received Me: when another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive,” calling **Antichrist** "the other," because he is alienated from the Lord.³

For the Lord said to them: I am come in My Father's name and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. And the apostle says, Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them a strong delusion that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. The Jews accordingly did not receive the Lord Jesus Christ who was the Son of God and God, but receive the impostor who calls himself God.⁴ Since the true Christ is to come a second time, the adversary, taking occasion by the expectation of the simple, and especially of them of the circumcision, brings in a certain man who is a magician, and most expert in sorceries and enchantments of beguiling craftiness; who shall seize for himself the power ..., and shall falsely style himself Christ; by this name of Christ deceiving the Jews, who are looking for the Anointed, and seducing those of the Gentiles by his magical illusions.⁵

What is said above gives us an insight into how the impostor will deceive Christians too. For we are told that since Christ will come a second

¹Augustine of Hippo: Sermon LXXIX

²Saint John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Gospel of John

³Irenaeus: Against Heresies, Book V

⁴John Damascene: Expounding the Orthodox Faith

⁵Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

time, Satan will use the expectation of the simple to delude them into believing that this is Christ in His second coming. To that end, the Devil has been preparing for close to 17 centuries, by spreading among Christians the heresy of:

THE MILLENNIAL RULE OF CHRIST:

This heresy which started in the third century is based on the wrong interpretation of Revelation 20:1-7:

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the **souls** of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the **dead** lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

Followers of this heresy, which the Church repudiated in the Second Ecumenical Council, believe that prior to Christ's coming to judge the world, He will actually come to earth to reign for a literal thousand years with the elect. If we examine the passage carefully, we find out that those who reigned with Christ were the **souls of the elect who had died**, for we are told that **the rest of the dead** did not share in this reign with Christ. This thousand year reign of the **souls of the elect** with Christ is called the first resurrection, and those who participate in this first resurrection, will not suffer the second death (eternal damnation in the lake of fire.) The Church believes that we are already in the thousand year reign of Christ. Satan has been bound by Christ when he died on

the Cross and he will be loosed for a little season at the time of the end when **Antichrist** will appear and the **Great Tribulation** is visited upon the earth. The souls of the righteous, beginning with the soul of the thief that was crucified with our Lord are now reigning with Christ in Paradise. This is their first resurrection (resurrection of the soul.) The second resurrection is when those souls are united with their new heavenly bodies on the day of the Second Coming of our Lord (resurrection of the flesh.) Obviously, those souls who attained to Paradise will not taste the second death which is the lake of fire, a place reserved for the souls that are now in Hades. Those souls who are now tormented in Hades, will also be resurrected but into damnation, for they will be thrown, body and soul, into the Lake of fire (the second death.) That is why we are told that the rest of the dead did not participate in this thousand year reign with Christ.

The meaning of the binding of Satan is that Satan has lost his hold on the souls when Christ came to save us. When the Jews accused the Lord of casting out devils by the power of the prince of demons, he answered, "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." (Matt 12:29) Jesus did bind the strong man (Satan) and released the souls that were enslaved to him from that bitter bondage, even the souls of the righteous, who died before Christ, that were held in Hades were released from that prison when Christ descended into Hades, after His death on the Cross.

Someone may wonder how come Satan is bound with all the evil around us? The answer is that Satan's power has been curtailed, so that we now have the power to resist him. But, our free will is not bound, so, if we decide to use our free will to follow Satan, we are left to do so.

The prevalence of evil today means one of two things, either that a lot of people are choosing to follow Satan than to follow Christ, or that we are nearing the time of the end when the love of many shall wax cold and iniquity will abound.

It is also important to know that numbers in Revelation are symbolic and are not to be taken literally, so, a thousand years means a long time. And, even though Satan has been bound for nearly two thousand years, we are still living in the thousand year reign of Christ.

The danger of this heresy lies in the confusion it will produce in the mind at the coming of **Antichrist**, who will actually claim that he is Christ coming for his thousand year reign on earth.

The Bible and the Fathers tell us that Christ has two advents, one for **salvation** when he died on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven after promising us to come again for **judgment**. There is no intermediate coming of Christ.

The Second Coming of Christ will be on the clouds (Matt 24:30, 26:64, Mark 13:26, 14:62, I Thes 4:17, Rev 1:7) He will not come down to earth but will “send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matt 24:31) And, if we are alive at the second coming of Christ we will be “caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” (I Thes 4:17) In short, **He shall not come down to earth, we shall go up to meet Him in the clouds.**

The early Fathers of the Church spared no effort to remind us that the Second Coming of Christ will not be from the earth but rather from heaven.

This Jesus Christ who is gone up shall come again, not from earth but from heaven: and I say, "**not from earth**," because there are many Antichrists to come at this time from earth. For already, as thou hast seen, many have begun to say, I am the Christ: and the **Abomination of desolation** is yet to come, assuming to himself the false title of Christ. But look thou for the true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, **coming henceforth no more from earth, but from heaven**, appearing to all more bright than any lightning and brilliancy of light, with angel guards attended, that He may judge both quick and dead, and reign in a heavenly, eternal kingdom, which shall have no end.¹

The true Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, **comes no more from the earth**. If any come making false shows in the wilderness, go not forth; if they say, Lo, here is the Christ, Lo, there, believe it not. Look no longer downwards and to the earth; for the Lord descends from heaven; not

¹Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

alone as before, but with many, escorted by tens of thousands of Angels; nor secretly as the dew on the fleece; but shining forth openly as the lightning. For He hath said Himself, As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be; and again, And they shall see the Son of Man coming upon the clouds with power and great glory, and He shall send forth His Angels with a great trumpet; and the rest.¹

And the Lord shall come out of heaven, just as the holy apostles beheld Him going into heaven perfect God and perfect man, with glory and power, and will destroy the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, with the breath of His mouth. **Let no one, therefore, look for the Lord to come from earth,** but out of Heaven, as He himself has made sure.²

Saint Paul once said, “I became all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (I Cor 9:22) In the same manner, **Antichrist** when he comes, will become all things to all men, that he might by all means destroy some! To the Jews he will be their long awaited Messiah. To Christians who defy the Church’s teaching and believe the heresy of the Millennial rule of Christ, he will be “Christ” coming to reign on earth. To Muslims, he will be “Al Mahdy Al Montazar,” a last time Messianic figure that will make the whole world one religion. To the Buddhists, he will be a re-incarnation of Buddha. To humanists, he will be the perfect ruler spreading peace, justice and prosperity in the earth. To the curious, he will offer the greatest show on earth. And to the rest, a kind, righteous, miracle worker, that showers worldly goods and honours on his followers. No wonder the scriptures says concerning him, “He is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.” (Hab 2:5) “And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life.” (Rev 13:7-8)

¹Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

²Saint John Damascene: Expounding the Orthodox Faith

HIS BLASPHEMY:

Once he gathers unto himself all the nations and heaps unto himself all peoples, and he is worshipped by all those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, he will be puffed up in his heart and will start to show his true colours. He will start blaspheming God. “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” (Rev 13:6) The same is predicted to us in the Book of Daniel, “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (Dan 7:25) “And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods.” (Dan 11:36)

It is then that his followers will realize that they have been fooled by the imposter. The Jews will realize that he is not their awaited Messiah, for, even that he will be born in the Jewish faith, he will blaspheme Yahweh, the God of the fathers, and, instead he will claim divine honours to himself, “Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.” (Dan 11:37) “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (II Thes 2:4)

Christians who were deceived into thinking that he is Christ in his supposed Millennial rule, will also discover the bitter truth, that they were deceived by the imposter, and that in acknowledging him as Christ, they have forfeited their share in eternity, and have been damned to the end, for the Fathers tell us that those who accept him and receive his mark (see later) have no chance to repent.

And he will put his mark on their right hand and on their forehead, that no one may put the sign of the honourable cross upon his forehead with his right hand; but his hand is bound. And from that time he shall not have power to seal any one of his members, but he shall be attached to the deceiver, and shall serve him; **and in him there is no repentance. But**

such an one is lost at once to God and to men.¹

THE FLIGHT OF THE CHURCH:

But not all will be deceived by him, for those whose names are written in the Book of Life, God's own elect, for whose sake the days of the **Great Tribulation** will be shortened, will see through his deceiving exterior, and will refuse to submit to him. Having received the seal of the Living God on their forehead (Rev 7:2-3), they will refuse to be polluted by the mark of the **Beast**. They will heed the command of the Lord, "When ye therefore shall see the **Abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." (Matt 24:15-18) A thorough understanding of this commandment is vital for our salvation should we be around during those perilous times. "When you see the **Abomination of desolation** spoken of by Daniel the prophet" interpretation: when you see **Antichrist**, a.k.a. **man of sin, little horn, the beast ...** etc, "stand in the holy place" interpretation: sitting in the temple of God, showing himself to be God (II Thes 2:4) i.e, being worshipped in the churches as God, "then let them ... let him ..." We have here two sets of directives. The first one, "let them which be in Judea flee to the mountain" is directed to the Church of the elect, to flee. The flight of the Church into the wilderness has been dealt with in our previous issue. The Book of Revelation assigns a whole chapter for this emigration of the faithful away from the Middle East (Rev 12) When the Lord says let them that be in Judea ..., there are two reasons for this. The first is that like many of the prophecies, this one pertains both to the destruction of Jerusalem around A.D. 70, as well as to the desolation of the world that will happen in the days of the **Abomination of Desolation**. In interpreting this command concerning the end of times, Judea will mean the Middle East, the birthplace of the Church. The second, is that Judea will actually be

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist

the place where the **Abomination of Desolation** will set up his kingdom as king and Messiah of the Jews, universal ruler and god of all nations, with Jerusalem as his capital as we can understand from Revelation 11:8. Please refer to our previous chapter for more details.

The second directive that starts with “let him” is a directive to each and every individual who wishes to be saved from the damnation reserved for those who worship the **beast**. It is a command to flee from the deceiver, to avoid any contact with him. For, though his sphere of influence will be in the Middle East, he will be all over the place trying to convert all to his worship.

He will be travelling all over the world bringing his show of false miracles and using his powers of speech (his great words) and his charismatic personality to win over, if it were possible, even the elect. We can deduce this from reading Habakkuk’s prophecy about him (see above,) where we are told that he never stays home but goes around trying to gather unto himself all nations and heap unto himself all people. (Hab 2:5)

Here is the wisdom of the elect and their understanding. For the Lord’s command is both urgent and absolute that we have no direct contact with the imposter should he come near us. Should he hold a revival meeting in Toronto then let the elect go to Montreal, and if he has his meeting in Los Angeles, then let the faithful go to San Francisco!

Let no one be driven by curiosity to “take a look,” for the Lord actually warns us against this, “In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot’s wife.” (Luke 17:32)

Lot’s wife’s problem was idle curiosity. She just wanted to take a look, and she perished. The Lord is warning us because He knows that if we go we will be deceived, for this is no ordinary man, this is a man endowed with all the power and authority of Satan. For this reason the Lord also tells us, “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.” (Matt 24:26) Saint John Chrysostom comments on this by saying:

And see how He secures them; ‘Go not forth into the deserts, enter not into the secret chambers.’ **He did not say, ‘Go, and do not believe;’ but, ‘Go not forth, neither depart thither.’** For great then will be the deceiving, because that even deceiving miracles are wrought.”¹

I often explain the perils of coming near the **Abomination of Desolation** by using a parable! If you have a compass, it will always direct you in your way. For it will always point to the North Pole (elementary physics!) The compass is your free will, always directing you to heaven. (The North pole is on the top of the globe towards heaven!) Now, if you bring your compass close to a strong magnet, it will no longer point to the North Pole, but will always point to the magnet. The magnet is the deceiver, and if you come near him he will captivate your free will and you will not be able to go back to your previous condition. That is why the Lord, in a most urgent way, admonishes us to “flee” and to “remember Lot’s wife.” The Fathers emphasize this personal flight in their writings:

But many who are hearers of the divine Scriptures, and have them in their hand, and keep them in mind with understanding, will escape his imposture. For they will see clearly through his insidious appearance and his deceitful imposture, and **will flee from his hands**, and betake themselves to the mountains, and hide themselves in the caves of the earth; and they will seek after the Friend of man with tears and a contrite heart; and He will deliver them out of his toils, and with His right hand He will save those from his snares who in a worthy and righteous manner make their supplication to Him.²

For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, Then let them which be in Judaea flee to the mountains.³

¹Saint John Chrysostom: Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

²Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist

³Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

Thou hast received the tokens of the Deceiver who is to come; thou hast received the proofs of the true Christ, who shall openly come down from heaven. Flee therefore the one, the False one; and look for the other, the True.¹

PERSECUTION OF THE SAINTS:

Revelation 12:7 tells us, “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.” Daniel’s prophecies tell us the same thing: “And the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them.” (Dan 7:21) And again, “And he shall wear out the saints of the most high.” (Dan 7:25)

If, as we said before, the church will be given a safe haven from the face of the serpent (and his puppet, the **beast**) then how come we are told that he will make war against the saints and overcome them? Well, the answer is given to us at the end of Revelation 12. After the woman, (the church) makes her flight into her safe haven, the dragon follows suit for we are told, “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.” (Rev 12: 14-16)

Waters in apocalyptic language means people, so, the above means that Satan working through **Antichrist** will mobilize people at his command against the church but God will intervene miraculously to save the elect. Immediately after that we are told, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 12:17) The remnant of the woman’s seed means the rest of the elect who, being chosen by God to receive the crown of martyrdom will be left behind. These will be persecuted and killed by **Antichrist**. He will think that he had prevailed over them, but in reality,

¹Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Rev 12:11)

When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, Saint John saw under the altar “the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Rev 6:9-11) This means that this persecution and martyrdom of the saints is pre-ordained by God, so that the number of the martyrs should be fulfilled.

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem tells us, if you feel that you are called to martyrdom, then, by all means, don’t run, stand up, be counted among those who will be crowned with the crown of martyrdom:

But if any man is conscious that he is very stout-hearted, to encounter Satan, let him stand (for I do not despair of the Church's nerves), and let him say, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the rest. But, let those of us who are fearful provide for our own safety; and those who are of a good courage, stand fast.¹

THE FALSE PROPHET:

We have now made the acquaintance of the Red Dragon (Satan,) the **Beast** coming out of the sea (**Antichrist**), now we are going to be introduced to a third character, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.” (Rev 13:11-12)

Revelation 19:20 identifies this second beast as the **false prophet**. The **false prophet** is described as having two horns like a lamb but he spake as a dragon. This means he will have the appearance of a lamb but is really a devil. This description agrees with the Lord Jesus definition of

¹Saint Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

false prophets, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matt 7:15)

Like his master, this second beast will have a fake aura of holiness around him but in reality he is a dragon (a devil!) We are told that he exercises all the power of the first **beast**. That means that the dragon, (Satan), will give this second beast, **the false prophet**, the same power as he gave to the first **beast**, **Antichrist**. The **false prophet** will convince the inhabitants of the earth to worship **Antichrist**. Because of this role he has been called a forerunner of **Antichrist** in the same manner that John the Baptist was a forerunner for Christ. John the Baptist testified to Jesus saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) In like manner, the **false prophet** will do the same, telling people this is your God worship him.

FIRE COMING FROM HEAVEN:

We are told that the **false prophet** will do great wonders, so that he “maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” (Rev 13:13) This is what the commentators say about this:

In a parody of Pentecost, this monstrous cult leader is able to make fire come down by means of deception and sorcery.¹

This means that the **false prophet** will be able to imitate the day of Pentecost, making fire to descend on his followers even as the believers received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost.

THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST:

The **false prophet** will order everyone on earth to make an **image** of the **Beast** (Rev 12:14). “And he had power to give life unto the image of the **Beast**, that the image of the Beast should speak. (Rev 12:15). Many people believe that this image that comes to life and speaks is none other than the almighty Television! Saint John in the Revelation saw an image of **Antichrist** in every house and the image was “alive” and speaking. Of course, St. John did not know that something called T.V. would be

¹Orthodox Study Bible: Footnotes on Revelation 13

invented nineteen centuries later.

This means that **Antichrist** will use Television to its maximum potential. He will be on every channel and people will be worshipping him even at home when they see him on T.V. delivering his sermons or giving his “blessing” to his “flock”. As a great speaker with irresistible charisma and many miracles **Antichrist** will put heavy emphasis on the use of T.V. Satellites will bring him alive to every house in the world and in every language.

THE MARK OF THE BEAST:

The **false prophet** will order that people would have the mark of the beast on their forehead or the right hand. That mark would be his name or the number of his name: **666**. Those who refuse this will be at a financial disadvantage, unable to buy nor sell.

Christ gave to those who believed on Him the honourable and life-giving cross, and he in like manner will give his own sign. ... and he will put his mark on their right hand and on their forehead, that no one may put the sign of the honourable cross upon his forehead with his right hand; but his hand is bound. And from that time he shall not have power to seal any one of his members, but he shall be attached to the deceiver, and shall serve him; and in him there is no repentance. But such an one is lost at once to God and to men.¹

The technology of biometric identification, *i.e.*, identifying a person by scanning his forehead or his hand, is already available. In the same manner in which a cashier scans a product at the cash register and its name, size, price ... etc. appear on the screen, this technology can identify a man’s name, social security number, even his medical history by scanning his forehead or his hand. No doubt, **Antichrist** will use this technology to identify his own followers, and to discriminate against those who are “unbelievers.”

For those who are sceptics about this, or think that it is far fetched, let me offer excerpts from an article that appeared in the Globe and

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist.

Mail, Canada's largest newspaper on October 22, 1999. The article appeared on the first page with the title:

ONTARIO'S ID PLAN SPURS PRIVACY FEARS

Every resident of Ontario would be required to carry new high tech ID ... (this) would be needed for all dealings with the provincial government, including health insurance, social assistance payments, students or seniors eligibility, or enrolment in an educational institutions. Driver's licences, birth certificates, and hunting and fishing permits could also be incorporated." "Eventually, a single card could enable an Ontario resident to gain access to Federal as well as provincial services, said Management Board Chairman Chris Hodgson, who is responsible for bringing in the new card." "Mr. Hodgson said advanced technology cards are being used in European countries such as Germany and France." "A high-tech firm working with the government to implement the new card says, **biometrics**, the use of a digital imprint of a finger, retina, or **facial or hand features to identify a person would be central to the project.**" "Yesterday, Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian, voiced her concern about the new card." " Ross Hutchison, chairman of Mytec Technologies, which specializes in biometric identification systems, said the Ontario government is already far advanced in preparing its information systems to receive the card.

THE UNHOLY TRINITY:

The dragon (Satan), the **Beast (Antichrist)**, and the second beast (the **false prophet**) have been collectively called the **unholy trinity**. For Satan would like to be worshipped in the same way that God is worshipped. If God is worshipped as one God in a Trinity, so also would Satan have his own **unholy trinity**, where Satan would emulate God the Father, **Antichrist** would emulate Christ and the **false prophet** emulates the Holy Spirit. Revelation 20:10 tells us the end of the **unholy trinity**, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the **Beast** and the **false prophet** are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

ANTITHEOTOKOS: FALSE PROPHETESS?¹

As we said earlier, Satan has devised various ways for deceiving various kinds of people. Satan will have no problem with Jews, since they are fervently waiting for a “Messiah,” a worldly king, who will reign in their holy city Jerusalem, and will even be a universal ruler. With non-Christians, the miracles, prosperity and worldly things he will bestow on them will be enough to sway them behind **Antichrist**. Satan’s main problem in deceiving the world is bringing Christians to the folds of **Antichrist**. A minority of Christians who believe in the heresy of the Millennial rule of Christ, will be easy prey for him, believing **Antichrist** to be Christ in His “Millennial” coming.

But the great majority of Christians are either Catholic or Orthodox. Both churches condemn the Millennial rule of Christ as a heresy. So, how can Satan deceive those Christians who form 85% of all Christians?

Satan is a very crafty creature, and he knows that one of the things on which Catholics and Orthodox agree is their veneration of the holy Virgin. So, if Satan would be able to make one of his demons to impersonate the Virgin Mary, and, through this false virgin, assure those Christians that the Lord will indeed come to earth and reign among them for a thousand years, those Christians that will believe the false virgin will actually fall easily for **Antichrist**.

The question arises, can Satan do this? II Corinthians 11:14 tells us that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light! And if Satan can and will bring in a man that will impersonate Christ, an **Antichrist**, what hinders him from bringing in some entity to impersonate the Theotokos, an **Antitheotokos**?

This is not a fantasy or an unproven theory, it is actually happening right now! In the following pages we will give you the details.

It all started on May 8, 1972, when a simple minded Catholic priest became convinced that he is receiving “messages” from the Virgin Mary. These messages urged him to start a movement (cult) inside the Catholic church, among the clergy and the laity. Ever since, the cult has been extending all over the world, so that by 1995, membership in the

¹Published: December, 1999

cult reached 300 bishops, 60,000 priests and tens of millions of lay persons.

The messages of this false virgin (whom we shall call **Antitheotokos**) were printed in a book of more than 1000 pages. Millions of copies of this book are given for free in all languages. I stumbled across the book by chance, and what I read really scared me! In the following pages I will share with you excerpts (direct quotations) from this book.

THE CULT:

The first thing that strikes the reader is the classic cult indoctrination that is contained in these messages. First, **Antitheotokos** asks her followers for **complete obedience**:

I am your leader, you therefore, my beloved ones must listen to my voice, be docile to my teachings, and above all, be prompt and obedient to my orders ... give me always a 'yes' and no longer think anything of yourself. I want to be the one who thinks of everything.

No questions allowed:

Do not ask me where I am leading you; do not seek to know beforehand the path which I have marked for you. Your duty is to second my action with your docility.

My plan can be carried out only through you. Nevertheless, it is not for you to know it in detail. It is enough that it is known by me, as I am your leader. You must all obey my orders with docility and let yourself be led by me. Do not ask me where I am leading you. I shall place each one of you at his proper post. Each one must look only to doing his own part well.

Like all other cults, the cult leader demands nothing less than **blind trust** from his/her followers:

You must completely entrust yourselves to me, in a total and everlasting way, ... you must entrust yourselves in a manner that is complete, giving me everything ... you should truly be wholly mine. I want you to grow in trust in me. You must let yourself be led by this trust without ever offering resistance, but rather being, as it were, carried and guided by it every moment of your day.

Antitheotokos demands that her followers surrender their free will to “it.” This is interesting, for God does not deprive us of our free will. Only the devil can rob us of our free will if we walk into his nets by our free will.

One who has consecrated himself to me belongs totally to me. He cannot, at any moment of the day, decide freely what he is to do with himself. If you remain with me, I myself will tell you at every moment what I would like you to do, and then whatever you do will always be according to my will.

Cult leaders brainwash their prey to be **completely detached** from everyone and everything, family, friends advisers... etc:

How many ties you still have my sons! Ties to your own self, to other persons however good and holy they be, to your activities, to your ideas, to your feelings, And I will break them one by one, so that you will be mine alone.

They must no longer live for themselves, not even as regards to their priestly activity, which absorbs them too much, tires them, and consumes them, but leaves them empty and far from me.

Note how this **Antitheotokos** is attacking the priests attachment to their priestly vocation. How could 60,000 priests not realize that this is the Devil speaking?

Next, **total dependence** on the cult leader is encouraged:

I will accustom you to depend on me at each moment, oh, but in a manner so simple and spontaneous, as a child does in the arms of its own mother.

I want all the priests of my movement to rely on me as little children. They must no longer think of themselves; I want to take care of them myself. I will grant all their requests and satisfy their deepest desires.

Note that God never promised to grant us all our requests! Neither did He promise to satisfy our deepest desires. Only the Devil can do this. He tempted the Lord Jesus by offering to give Him the whole world if He would worship him!

The next step is something no cult leader dares to ask of his/her followers, to allow themselves to be **possessed** by him/her! We know that an angel cannot possess a human, neither can a saint possess a human being, only the Devil can possess a human, and yet **Antitheotokos** is asking this of its followers.

Learn to let yourselves to be **possessed** by me, so that in everything you do, it will be I who am doing it through you. ... O my priests, allow yourselves to be truly **possessed** by me.

Since by their consecration they have allowed themselves to be **possessed** by me, I will manifest myself through them and through them I will act to strike at the heart of my enemy. ... the time will come when I will make my voice heard by them, and when I will place myself at the head of this, my cohort, prepared for battle.

Note the military tone used here. Note also that anyone who allows the Devil to possess him/her, has actually sold his soul to the Devil. This is irrevocable, since one becomes completely the property of the Devil.

If you remain in the garden of my immaculate heart, you become my property. And so, no one can any longer take you away from me. With the act of consecration, you have put your life in my hands. Now it belongs to me. It is mine. I have taken possession of it. I want all the priests of my movement to be like this, they must be my priests! I say it again, mine! From the time they are consecrated to my immaculate heart they can no longer belong to themselves. Their life, their soul, their mind, their heart, the good they do, even the wrong they have done and the defects they possess, all is mine, all belongs to me.

The rite of entrance into the cult is called consecration to the Immaculate heart of Mary. It is obvious that through this initiation one sells himself totally and irrevocably to this Satanic entity; he is completely possessed by it, no longer belongs to himself and no one can take him away from this entity, *i.e.*, free him from this slavery to Satan. Unfortunately hundreds of bishops, tens of thousands of priests and tens of millions of lay persons have sold themselves by accepting this initiation into the cult of **Antitheotokos**. The end result is this:

Now something is really changing, it is I who am living and working in you. Your heart beats in unison with mine; your mind follows my thoughts; your word repeats my voice; your hands repeat my gestures; you are as it were, born again in me.

Christians are born again when they are baptized, so how can one be born again a second time by joining this cult, except if accepting to be possessed by **Antitheotokos** is actually a renunciation of one's Baptism.

THE SEALING OF THE DECEIVED:

In the last days people will either have the seal of God on their foreheads, (Rev 7:3) or have the sign of the **Beast** on their forehead. (Rev 13:16) now, listen to this:

I have now imprinted my sign on the forehead of each one of you. My adversary is no longer able to do anything against those who have been signed by their heavenly Mother. The angels of light of my immaculate heart are gathering from everywhere the elect, called to form part of my victorious cohort. They are signing you with my seal.

This seal cannot be the seal of God, for we have received that already in the Sacrament of Chrismation. Could this sign given to the followers of this cult be that of the **Beast**?

Note also how the entity calls itself the heavenly Mother, usurping the prerogative of God the Father. Christ came in His Father's Name, telling us about His Heavenly Father, Who is also our Heavenly Father, and predicted that when **Antichrist** will come, he will come in his own name.

The cult has now become so strong that the cult leader, (**Antitheotokos**) is boasting its success:

My movement has spread spontaneously everywhere. ... My plan is now being accomplished everywhere. By the tens of thousands my children are responding to me, with such a love and great enthusiasm that it moves my motherly Heart. This work of mine has now spread throughout the whole world. This is my work alone and I myself am furthering it in every part of the world.

Note how **Antitheotokos** takes pride in the success of the cult, never mentioning the movement as the work of God, but saying “it’s my own work”. Again this is the sign of **Antichrist** who comes in his own name and not in the name of God the Father.

THE MILLENNIAL HERESY:

Now that the cult is well established inside the Catholic Church, the deadly heresy of the Millennial rule of Christ on earth is propagated by **Antitheotokos**, in preparation for the coming of **Antichrist**:

The glorious reign of Christ, which will be established in your midst, with the second coming of Jesus Christ **in the world**, is close at hand. This is his return in glory ... to bring all humanity back to the state of his new **terrestrial paradise**.

Christ never promised us a terrestrial paradise, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36) **Antichrist**, on the other hand will reign on the earth until Christ consumes him with the Spirit of His mouth and destroys him with the brightness of His coming. (II Thes 2:8)

Jesus Christ, surrounded by the choir of the angels, on the clouds of heaven prostrate at his feet to form a royal throne, in the splendour of His divinity, will return to bring humanity to a new life, souls to grace and love, the church to its highest summit of sanctity; and thus he will restore **in the world** his reign of glory.

The Second Coming of Christ will be for Judgment. He will send his angels to gather His elect to meet Him on the clouds. He will **not** reign in this world, for at His coming, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (II Pet 3:11) Christ will reign with His elect in the new earth and the new heaven which He has promised us. (II Pet 3:13) And yet **Antitheotokos** teaches exactly the opposite:

In this world Christ will reign. Jesus will return in glory to bring all creation back to the full splendour of his new **earthly paradise**.

This is vintage Millennial rhetoric. The Mormons could not have said it any better (or worse!)

THE DATE OF HIS COMING:

The day of the coming of our Lord no one knows, for He Himself told us so, but **Antitheotokos** seems to know!

His second coming, beloved children, will be like the first. As was his birth on this night, so also will be the return of Jesus in glory, before his final coming for the last judgment, the hour of which however is still hidden in the secrets of the Father.

This message, which was delivered December 24, 1978, claims that Christ's Second Coming for His presumed millennial rule will also be on December 24! **Antitheotokos** knows what all Christians know, that the day of the return of Jesus is only known to the Father, so the claim is made that Jesus' return to earth is something other than His return for the final judgment, the date of which is known only to the Father!

THE YEAR OF HIS COMING:

I confirm to you that by the great Jubilee of the year two thousand, there will take place the triumph of my Immaculate heart, of which I foretold you at Fatima, and this will come to pass with the return of Jesus in Glory, to establish his reign **in the world**.

Not only is the day known, but the year is also known; December 24, 2000!

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE TRIBULATION?

Christians know that Christ's second coming must be preceded by the **Great Tribulation**, for the Lord told us, "Immediately after the **tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven ..." (Matt 24:29-30) But this is no problem for **Antitheotokos**. Why not convince Christians that the **Great Tribulation** has actually happened! On September 18, 1988 **Antitheotokos** said:

In this period of ten years, there will come to completion the time of the **Great Tribulation**, which has been foretold to you in Holy Scripture before the second coming of Christ.

This means, according to **Antitheotokos**, the **Great Tribulation** already came and went (having ended in 1998 by the latest!) So, now Christ's presumed Second Coming could happen any time. A couple of years ago, the same false prophecy was propagated:

But now, you must enter into, and live out, the final time of the **Great Tribulation**.

In confidence, the impression is given that the **Great Tribulation** is already happening and that it is coming to a close, making the Second Coming of Jesus plausible.

Another problem, is that Christians know from reading II Thessalonians that the Apostasy and **Antichrist** must come before the Second Coming of Christ, but there is no problem there either. If **Antitheotokos** can convince her followers that the Apostasy is already in the Church and that **Antichrist** is already sitting in the Church, then whoever comes now must be Christ in His Second Coming!

The hour of its great trial has above all come for the Church, because it will be shaken by lack of faith, obscured by apostasy, wounded by betrayal, abandoned by its children, divided by schisms, possessed and dominated by Free masonry, turned into fertile soil from which will spring up the wicked tree of the man of iniquity, the **Antichrist**, who will bring his kingdom to its interior.

In the Church, the great apostasy, which will spread throughout the whole world, will be brought to its completion; ... There will enter into the Church the man of iniquity who opposes himself to Christ, and who will bring into her interior the **Abomination of desolation**.

Now after prophesying about these things, **Antitheotokos**, at a later date, tells her followers that these things have already been fulfilled:

Satan has succeeded in entering into the Church, the new Israel of God. He has entered there with the smoke of error and sin, of loss of faith and apostasy, of compromise with the world and the search for pleasure. During these years, he has succeeded in leading astray bishops and priests, religious and faithful.

How true! For through that cult led by **Antitheotokos**, many bishops, priests and laity have been led astray. Of course this is not what **Antitheotokos** means, what is meant here are those who are not yet members of this deadly cult.

This Church, which according to **Antitheotokos** is corrupt, must now die, and a “new church” must be born!

Today I invite you to descend into the sepulchre with Christ! ... Let it be the sepulchre of your slavery where the Church dies, the Church which is sick and divided, pervaded with the spirit of the world, darkened in its loyalty and holiness, assailed by the loss of faith and apostasy; and where the new Church is born, holy, faithful, enlightened, evangelical, poor and chaste, reflecting solely the light of its Christ upon the world.

This new church that must replace the current Church will be the church that will welcome **Antichrist**, thinking that he is Christ in His second coming. The theme of this new church is further developed:

If you saw the splendour of holiness and the fullness of unity of the Church, after this period of **great tribulation**, you too, with me, would jump for joy! Because then all the nations will walk toward her.

I am amazed by the deceiving words, convincing her followers that they are living the **Great Tribulation**. **Antitheotokos** “prophesies” of a new united church for all nations. Any student of the Scripture will realize that this universal, united church will worship **Antichrist**, who will “gather unto himself all the nations.”

THE SECOND PENTECOST:

A new church needs a new Pentecost! So **Antitheotokos** promises her followers to send upon them her own “unholy spirit”:

The glorious reign of Christ will correspond to a general flowering of holiness and purity, of love and justice, of joy and peace. For the hearts of men will be transformed by the powerful force of the “holy spirit,” who will pour himself out upon them through the miracle of the second Pentecost.

The miraculous event of the second Pentecost must now be accomplished, implored and expected by you. Again, there will be descending upon the Church and upon all humanity miraculous tongues of fire.

Orthodox commentators feel that the **false prophet** will be a cult leader that will bring fire down from heaven upon his followers in imitation of the Pentecost.

THE NEW TIMES:

The Book of Daniel tells us that **Antichrist** will change the times, “And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.” (Dan 7:25) The word “times” in apocalyptic language means years, for example time and times and the dividing of times means three and a half years. So, to change the times means to change the years or the calendar. Although **Antichrist** will first pretend to be Christ, yet after he deceives the great majority, he will start blaspheming the Holy Trinity, claiming that only he is God. He will try to wipe out anything that will remind the people with Christ, including the current calendar which tags the years as A.D. (Anno Domini, the year of the Lord.) Satan has started to prepare humanity for this. For, even now, politically correct writers, journalists and politicians have stopped using A.D., exchanging it for C.E. (Common Era) **Antitheotokos** is preparing her followers for the “new times” that **Antichrist** will announce:

Prepare yourselves to live the Pasch of the new times. It is the Pasch prepared for you. It is the Pasch that awaits you at the end of the gloomy period of purification and the **great tribulation** in which you are now living.

Soon, my sons, a new date will be celebrated.

Antitheotokos even gives a hint of the new calendar that will be enforced when **Antichrist** establishes his kingdom, “New Era.” The term currently in use now, “Common Era” is an intermediate name that I feel very strongly will be changed to “New Era” The fact that computers recognize only two digits for the year will make this change

very “logical.” Since computers will recognize the year 2001 as the year “01” why bother calling the year “2001 A.D.” or even “2001 C.E.?” Why not call it the year “01 N.E.?” I base my predictions on the sayings of **Antitheotokos**:

In these days, Jesus is working in a very powerful way in every part of the world, to carry out the plan of his merciful love. For the present, this plan is hidden and enclosed in the secret of his divine heart. Today it is being revealed only to the little, to the simple, to the poor, to the pure of heart. With these little ones, which he is gathering from every part of the earth, Jesus will soon restore his reign of glory. This is the road which leads to the **new era**.

From the chalice of sufferings never experienced until now, there will come forth the divine sun of a **new era**, of a humanity heretofore unknown, of grace and holiness, of love and justice, of joy and peace. The **new era** which I am preparing for you, coincides with the defeat of Satan and of his universal reign. All his power is destroyed. He is bound with all the wicked spirits, and shut up in hell from which he will not be able to get out to do harm in the world.

THE ROLE OF ANTITHEOTOKOS:

It seems that this coming of Jesus to rule on earth (really meaning the coming of **Antichrist** pretending to be Christ coming for his Millennial rule) will be associated with the appearance of **Antitheotokos**, (probably as the **false prophetess**):

Even in this second coming, the Son will come to you through his Mother. As the Word of the Father made use of my virginal womb to come to you, so also will Jesus make use of my Immaculate Heart to come and reign in your midst.

I am the Mother of the Second Advent. Allow yourselves therefore to be formed and prepared by me , so that you can be ready to receive Jesus, who will come in Glory to restore among you his reign of love holiness, justice and peace.

Interpretation: I am the herald of the coming of **Antichrist!** Allow yourselves to be fooled and deceived by me, so that you can be ready to receive **Antichrist**, who will come in a false show of glory to restore among you the reign of Satan, vanquished by Christ on the Cross!

Antitheotokos even promises to “come down from heaven” to announce the Second Coming of her son (**Antichrist**)!

I myself will come down from heaven to place myself at the head of the cohort of my beloved sons.

For this reason, I invite you all today to follow me as your heavenly Mother who am coming down from heaven in order that I myself may become in these times, your salvation and your sure liberation.

It is passages like this that make me tremble. The thought of a false, but convincing apparition of someone (or something) claiming to be the Virgin announcing the coming of the “Son” to reign on earth makes me very uncomfortable, given the gullibility of our people concerning reported apparitions especially of the Virgin.

The more I read the false prophecies of **Antitheotokos**, the more I become convinced that the second beast of Revelation 13:11 will be a woman impersonating the holy Virgin, an **Antitheotokos** in the role of **false prophetess**. Satan is the author of political correctness, and this would be the politically correct thing to do!

Our Lord said, if someone tells you Christ is here or there, believe it not and do not go. May I humbly add, if someone tells you the Virgin is here or there, believe it not and do not go.

HIS BEGINNINGS¹

The ancient writers of the Church agree that the **Abomination of Desolation, Antichrist**, will be a Jew from the Tribe of Dan. They site many Biblical verses to prove their point.

As the Lord Jesus Christ made His sojourn with us in the flesh (which He received) from the holy, immaculate Virgin, and took to Himself the tribe of Judah, and came forth from it, the Scripture declared His royal lineage in the word of Jacob, when in his benediction he addressed himself to his son in these terms: 'Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hands shall be on the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from a sprout, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as a lion's whelp: who shall rouse him up? A ruler shall not depart from Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until what is in store for him shall come, and he is the expectation of the nations.' (Gen 49: 8-10) Mark these words of Jacob which were spoken to Judah, and are fulfilled in the Lord. To the same effect, moreover, does the patriarch express himself regarding Antichrist. Wherefore, as he prophesied with respect to Judah, so did he also with respect to his son Dan. For Judah was his fourth son; and Dan, again, was his seventh son. And what, then, did he say of him? 'Let Dan be a serpent sitting by the way, that biteth the horse's heel' (Gen 49:17) And what serpent was there but the deceiver from the beginning, he who is named in Genesis, he who deceived Eve, and bruised Adam in the heel?²

Note that the Tribe of Dan was the first among the Tribes of Israel to embrace idolatry. (Judg 18:30-31)

And in like manner also we find it written regarding Antichrist. For Moses speaks thus: "Dan is a lion's whelp, and he shall leap from Bashan." (Deut 33:22) But that no one may err by supposing that this is said of the Saviour, let him attend carefully to the matter. Dan, he says, is a lion's whelp; and in naming the tribe of Dan, he declared clearly the tribe from which Antichrist is destined to spring. For as

¹Published: December, 2000

²Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the world and on Antichrist

Christ springs from the tribe of Judah, so Antichrist is to spring from the tribe of Dan.¹

Note that both Christ and Antichrist were likened to a “lion’s whelp.” Saint Hippolytus² explains this by saying that Antichrist wants to mimic Christ in everything, Christ is likened to a lion, he is also likened to a lion. Christ is the “Lion from the Tribe of Judah” (Rev 5:5) and Antichrist is the “lion from the Tribe of Dan.” Note also that the Devil has also been likened to a lion. (I Pe 5:8)

“That it is in reality out of the tribe of Dan, then, that tyrant and king, that dread judge, that son of the devil, is destined to spring and arise, the prophet testifies when he says, Dan shall judge his people, as (he is) also one tribe in Israel.’(Gen 49:16) But some one may say that this refers to Samson, who sprang from the tribe of Dan, and judged the people twenty years. Well, the prophecy had its partial fulfilment in Samson, but its complete fulfilment is reserved for Antichrist.³

Revelation 7:5-8 recounts the sealing of the elect, in giving the names of the tribes of Israel, the Tribe of Dan is excluded.

And Jeremiah does not merely point out his sudden coming, but he even indicates the tribe from which he shall come, where he says, “We shall hear the voice of his swift horses from Dan; the whole earth shall be moved by the voice of the neighing of his galloping horses: he shall also come and devour the earth, and the fulness thereof, the city also, and they that dwell therein.” (Jer 8:16) This, too, is the reason that this tribe is not reckoned in the Apocalypse along with those which are saved.⁴

¹Hippolytus: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

²Saint Hippolytus is recognized in our Coptic Synaxarion, his feast day is the 6th day of Meshir

³Hippolytus: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

⁴Irenaeus: Against heresies, Book V

THE THREE KINGS:

Although Antichrist will enter the world stage peacefully, yet we are told that he shall “subdue three kings.” (Dan 7:24) This is presented to us symbolically in this manner, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” (Dan 7:7-8) The little horn is no doubt no other than Antichrist, and the three horns that were plucked out by the root are the three kings whom he will subdue. (Dan 7:24) Here is how Saint Hippolytus characterizes these three kings:

“Another little horn shall rise, which is that of Antichrist. And it shall pluck by the roots the three others before it; that is to say, he shall subvert the three kings of Egypt, Libya, and Ethiopia, with the view of acquiring for himself universal dominion.¹

Saint Hippolytus bases his view on Daniel 11:42-43, where we are told that, “He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.” We have previously alluded to the fact that “Ethiopia” is a misnomer, for it is a translation of the Greek “*Kush*,” which is defined for us by most text books as “the land to the south of Egypt,” which is present day Sudan.

Why would Antichrist single out these three countries for military invasion? None of the ancient writers of the Church tells us. So, let us speculate! Lybia and the Sudan are the only two countries today with a truly Islamic government. They are considered as trouble making countries. It would seem that such activist governments should be out of the way if Antichrist is to have dominance in the middle east, and by virtue of the money and petroleum in the area, on the world. But Egypt

¹Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel

is a peace seeking country that is respected in the world, so, why is it necessary for Antichrist to invade Egypt? In my own personal view, it is the Church of Egypt, the largest and strongest church in the Middle East that Antichrist has to subdue before he can dominate the area. Twenty five years ago, the late fundamentalist Moslem leader of Iran Ayatullah Khomeiny was asked by a journalist, “what do you think is the greatest danger that faces Islam in the world?” The anticipated answer was the U.S.A. “The great Satan,” but, surprisingly enough, Khomeiny told him, “the church of Egypt!” Khomeiny saw in the U.S.A. a corrupt worldly society that cannot adversely influence Islam. But, in the Coptic Church, he saw a church awakening from its centuries long sleep, starting to resume its role as teacher and missionary, and he felt that this is the greatest challenge to Islam.

Satan is a very intelligent being and he knows that unless he stifles this church, his representative on earth (Antichrist) cannot spread his influence in the Middle East. But, our all knowing God has other plans for His church in Egypt. For over the last third of a century, the Lord has been transplanting the church of Egypt, and indeed the church in the Middle East in the “wilderness of this world.” The unprecedented exodus of Christians out of the Middle East has been discussed earlier in a previous chapter. It is made very clear to us in Revelation 12, where we are told the woman (the church) will be given the two wings of a great eagle (A jumbo jet?) that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for the duration of the reign of Antichrist. (Rev 12:14)

Someone may ask, how can we reconcile Daniel’s warning that “the land of Egypt shall not escape with God’s blessing in Isaiah, “Blessed be Egypt my people?” (Isa 19:25) In my own personal view, there is no contradiction between the two. In Isaiah, the Lord blesses *His people in Egypt*. The blessing is for the people of Egypt, wherever they may be. And, if it is the will of God to say to His people Egypt, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee ... and I will bless thee ...,” (Gen 12:1-2) then the blessing of God promised of old will certainly follow, even as the blessing of God followed Abraham when he left his own country to go to the Land of Canaan.

The blessing of the Lord promised in Isaiah has been fulfilled. Look at the number of churches and schools we now have in every continent

on Earth. God Almighty had foiled Satan's plans, for, if it is according to God's will that Antichrist would persecute the Church universal including the church of Egypt, and this we know from reading the scripture, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them." (Rev 13:7) then what God has been doing over the last 40 years, is in keeping with God's blessing for Egypt His people.

I feel very strongly that this transplanting of the church outside Egypt is one more sign that perhaps the things we have been meditating on are not for the very distant future.

THE TWO WITNESSES:

The Book of Revelation tells us that shortly before Antichrist's rise to power, two witnesses will be sent to warn the world against him:

And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Rev 11:3-13)

Most of the Fathers of the Church believe these two witnesses to be Enoch and Elias (Elijah) which will come to earth to warn people not to follow the deceiver (Antichrist). There are many reasons for this. First is the fact that Enoch and Elias did not die, but were translated to heaven alive. (Gen 5:24, 2 Kgs 2:11) The second is the allusion to their power to “shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy,” something Elijah already did during his earthly ministry (1 Kgs 17:1, Jas 5:17)

The fire that proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies, is symbolic of their fiery speeches that no one will be able to contradict. “The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit” is none other than Antichrist, who will be opposed by the two witnesses. Ultimately, he will seize them and kill them and they will be left unburied for the whole world to see. The city which is called Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified is Jerusalem, which will become the seat of Antichrist. It is called Sodom because under the rule of Antichrist, the holy city will become an abomination, since there Antichrist will be worshipped instead of God. It is also symbolically called Egypt because like Egypt in the time of Moses persecuted God’s people, so will Jerusalem become the centre from which Antichrist will give orders to persecute the Church. We are also told that “they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half.” This would not have been possible during the time of the writing of Revelations, but today, with satellite communications, the whole world can watch this great spectacle on CNN!

We are also told that after three and a half days (symbolic) they will be resurrected and taken to heaven. A great earthquake will shake the city of Jerusalem, and “the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” Here we find an allusion to the conversion of the “remnant of Israel” that St. Paul spoke of, “Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.”(Rom 9:27) When the Jews see what happens to the two prophets, their resurrection and ascension, and the great earthquake, the “remnant” will believe on Christ.

For when the threescore and two weeks are fulfilled, and Christ is come, and the Gospel is preached in every place, the times being then accomplished, there will remain only one week, the last, in which Elias

will appear, and Enoch, and in the midst of it the abomination of desolation will be manifested, viz., Antichrist, announcing desolation to the world. And when he comes, the sacrifice and oblation will be removed, which now are offered to God in every place by the nations.¹

But Enoch and Elias the Thesbite shall be sent and shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, (Mal 4:5-6) that is, the synagogue to our Lord Jesus Christ and the preaching of the apostles: and they will be destroyed by him. And the Lord shall come out of heaven, just as the holy apostles beheld Him going into heaven perfect God and perfect man, with glory and power, and will destroy the man of lawlessness, the son of destruction, with the breath of His mouth (II Thes 2:8). Let no one, therefore, look for the Lord to come from earth, but out of Heaven, as He himself has made sure.²

Most of the other fathers are in agreement that the “two witnesses” are Enoch and Elijah. They cite Malachi 4:5-6 (above). They feel this prophesy had its fulfillment in the coming of John the Baptist “in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke 1:17) as a fore-runner for the first coming, and will also be fulfilled in the coming of Enoch and Elijah (Elias) as fore-runners for the second coming of Christ. The two witnesses will come to warn the world against the deceit of Antichrist. Some claim that Elias will come to warn the Jews and Enoch to warn the gentiles.

For this is what the prophets Enoch and Elias will preach, ‘Believe not the enemy who is to come and be seen; for he is an adversary and corrupter and son of perdition, and deceives you;’ and for this reason he will kill them, and smite them with the sword.³

THE MYSTERY OF INIQUITY:

As early as the year 55 A.D., false teachings concerning the second coming of our Lord started to be circulated in the church. This prompted St. Paul to write his second epistle to the Thessalonians,

¹Hypolytus: Scholia on Daniel

²John Damascene: Expounding the Orthodox faith

³Hypolytus: Discourse on the end of the world and on Antichrist

explaining the relationship between the second coming of Christ and the coming of Antichrist:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Th 2:3-12)

The facts that St. Paul brings to the remembrance of the Thessalonians are these: (he tells them “remember ye not, that, when I was with you I told you these things?”):

1. The second coming of Christ must be preceded by the manifestation of Antichrist. (man of sin, son of perdition, etc...).
2. Antichrist will come with Satanic power and signs and lying wonders to deceive those that were going to perish anyway, those who refuse to be saved by the truth.
3. Antichrist will sit in the temple of God (the Church, not the temple of the Jews) and be worshipped as god (the Apostasy).
4. Antichrist will be working “under cover” until such a time that “something which withholds” or prevents his appearance be “taken out of the way.”

St. Paul must have told the Thessalonians about what withholds or prevents Antichrist from manifesting himself until it is removed out of the way, for he is reminding them of things that he already taught them when he was with them. It is unfortunate that we don't know what St. Paul told the Thessalonians concerning the thing which withholds and

that has to be taken out of the way so that Antichrist can manifest himself. Ancient writers of the Church speculated on this matter.

What then is it that withholdeth, that is, hindereth him from being revealed? Some indeed say, the grace of the Spirit, but others the Roman empire, to whom I most of all accede. Wherefore? Because if he meant to say the Spirit, he would not have spoken obscurely, but plainly, that even now the grace of the Spirit, that is the gifts, withhold him. And otherwise he ought now to have come, if he was about to come when the gifts ceased; for they have long since ceased.¹

Saint John Chrysostom is discussing the two views that were prevalent in his time. One view is that the graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit have to be lifted out of the world before Antichrist reveals himself. He rejects this interpretation based on the fact that the gifts had already ceased in the time of Chrysostom and Antichrist did not make his appearance. The second view, which he favours is that The Roman Empire had to be taken out of the way before Antichrist appears, a view that is also held by St. Augustine:

For what does he mean by "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now holdeth, let him hold until he be taken out of the way: and then shall the wicked be revealed?" I frankly confess I do not know what he means. I will nevertheless mention such conjectures as I have heard or read. Some think that the Apostle Paul referred to the Roman empire, and that he was unwilling to use language more explicit, lest he should incur the calumnious charge of wishing ill to the empire which it was hoped would be eternal.²

However, using the same argument, we can say, that the Roman Empire disappeared 10 centuries ago and Antichrist has not yet revealed himself! That brings us back to square one, that we don't know, from the speculations of the early Church interpreters what St. Paul meant by "what withholdeth" and what has to be taken out of the way before Antichrist makes his appearance.

¹John Chrysostom: Homily on II Thessalonians

²Augustin of Hippo: City of God, chapter 19

We can speculate about the matter, and my own personal view is that “wisdom” is the thing that has to be taken out of the way before Antichrist can appear and fool the whole world into believing that he is god. I say this, because as I look around me in the world, I have a feeling that wisdom is becoming a rarity these days! Anyone watching the American presidential election soap opera will agree with this view! The Canadian election campaign is not any less insane, nor is the situation in the Middle East, or the convulsions of the financial markets.

Then shall intelligence hide itself, and wisdom withdraw to its chambers, by many it shall be sought and not found.¹

And many shall say to many at that time, Where hath the multitude of intelligence hidden itself, and whither has the multitude of wisdom hidden itself?²

We can also speculate that it is righteousness that has to be lifted out of the way before Antichrist appears.

And the little horn, which is Antichrist, shall appear suddenly in their midst, and righteousness shall be banished from the earth, and the whole world shall reach its consummation.³

One land shall also ask another and say, Is righteousness passed through thee? And it shall answer, No.⁴

¹IV Esedras: (1st century A.D.)

²II Baruch (1st century A.D.)

³Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel

⁴IV Esedras

THE GREAT TRIBULATION¹

Daniel 12:1 tells us, “And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” The same grim prediction is repeated to us by the Lord in Matthew 24:21-22, “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” The Book of Revelation 7:14-17 gives us further details about this **Great Tribulation**, “And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

This **Great Tribulation** will shortly precede the second coming of our Lord to gather His elect unto His eternal kingdom as we are told, in Matthew 24:29-31, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

It follows that this **Great Tribulation** will by necessity coincide with the universal rule of the **Abomination of Desolation**, that **Man of Sin**, “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (II Th 2:4)

¹Published: March, 2001

To be precise, the **Great Tribulation** will coincide with the latter part of the rule of **Antichrist**. The early part of the rule of the deceiver will actually be like a honeymoon for the inhabitants of the earth:

Progress will have reached an apex and the fight against illnesses and disease will be reaching such an advanced stage that it will seem as if even death would soon be conquered.¹

Wealth and material prosperity will be everywhere, and people will see an earthly paradise emerging under the rule of **Antichrist**, that they will acknowledge him as God and saviour of the human race. The many miracles that he will perform will completely dazzle a spiritually blind world and lead to the sad situation predicted in Revelation 13:3-8:

and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? ... and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

When **Antichrist** is acknowledged as God by all those whose names are not written in the **Book of Life**, all other religions will be outlawed, Christian churches will be confiscated and turned into centres for the worship of the new "God." The Liturgy of the Eucharist as well as other Christian services will have to cease as we are told by the Fathers:

And the churches, too, will wail with a mighty lamentation, because neither oblation nor incense is attended to, nor a service acceptable to God; but the sanctuaries of the churches will become like a garden-watcher's hut, and the holy body and blood of Christ will not be shown in those days. The public service of God shall be extinguished, psalmody shall cease, the reading of the Scriptures shall not be heard.²

¹Pohalo and Novakshonoff: *Apostasy and Antichrist*.

²Hippolytus: *Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist*

Modern Orthodox commentators echo the same view:

At the same time, the Christian sanctuary will be closed and in it will be placed an idol of Antichrist, a lifelike, speaking statue. This was called "the abomination of desolation" by the prophet Daniel. From that time on, the bloodless sacrifice of the Eucharist will cease on earth.¹

This view is not without Biblical support, for in Daniel 8:11 we are told, "Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down." Daniel 11:31 reiterates this, "And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate." In these verses the "sanctuary of strength" refers to the Christian sanctuary and the "daily sacrifice" refers to the Eucharistic bloodless sacrifice.

It is at this point that the **Great Tribulation** will start, for we are told in Daniel 12:11, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days." The **abomination that maketh desolate** is the talking idol that will be placed in the Christian sanctuary for people to worship instead of Christ. This is alluded to in Revelation 13:15, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." The thousand two hundred and ninety days is the symbolic time of the **Great Tribulation** which is the same as the "time and times and the dividing of times" of Daniel 7:25 and the "forty two months" of Revelation 13:5. This period of three and a half year is not to be taken literally for as with many numbers in the apocalyptic scriptures they are symbolic. If seven is the symbol of perfection or completion then three and a half represents imperfection or a time that will not be completed or shortened. This agrees with the Lord's assertion that, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Mat 24:22)

¹Pohalo and Novakshonoff: Apostasy and Antichrist.

The worship of Antichrist in the Christian sanctuary is mentioned by St. Paul, “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.” (II Th 2:4) “The temple of God” refers to the Christian sanctuary and *not the temple of the Jews in Jerusalem*, for St. Paul would not call the temple of Jerusalem “the temple of God.”

Our Lord also told us about this, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains.” (Matt 24:15-16) The abomination of desolation is the speaking idol of **Antichrist** that will stand in every church. Again, the Lord would not refer to the temple of Jerusalem as “the holy place” but rather to the church.

As soon as the worship of **Antichrist** starts in the churches, the **Great Tribulation** will immediately start. The earthly paradise which the worshippers of **Antichrist** thought would last till eternity suddenly turns into hell on earth:

Then, after all these things, the heavens will not give their dew, the clouds will not give their rain, the earth will refuse to yield its fruits, the sea shall be filled with stench, the rivers shall be dried up, the fish of the sea shall die, men shall perish of hunger and thirst; and father embracing son, and mother embracing daughter, will die together, and there will be none to bury them. But the whole earth will be filled with the stench arising from the dead bodies cast forth. And the sea, not receiving the floods of the rivers, will become like mire, and will be filled with an unlimited smell and stench. Then there will be a mighty pestilence upon the whole earth, and then, too, inconsolable lamentation, and measureless weeping, and unceasing mourning. Then men will deem those happy who are dead before them, and will say to them, “Open your sepulchres, and take us miserable beings in; open your receptacles for the reception of your wretched kinsmen and acquaintances. Happy are ye, in that ye have not seen our days. Happy are ye, in that ye have not had to witness this painful life of ours, nor this irremediable pestilence, nor these straits that possess our souls.”¹

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

This grim description of the state of the world during the **Great Tribulation** is also to be gleaned from reading Isaiah 24:1-13:

Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merryhearted do sigh. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth, the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the harp ceaseth. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it. The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done.

The Book of Revelation tells us that the two prophets Enoch and Elijah (Elias) will be sent by God to warn the people of the earth against the deceit of **Antichrist**. But, few will heed the warning, only those “whose names are written in the Book of Life” will listen, the rest of the world will mock them and despise them. It is possible that the two prophets, will then cause all these calamities to fall on the apostate world, for we are told in Revelation 11:6, that “These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” We are also told that, “these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.”(Rev 11:10)

A major reason for the misery of the people who accepted **Antichrist** as their God and saviour is their realization that they have been deceived by the devil and that not only have they condemned themselves to a life of misery on Earth but also to eternal damnation in:

When men have received the seal, then, and find neither food nor water, they will approach him with a voice of anguish, saying, Give us to eat and drink, for we all faint with hunger and all manner of straits; and bid the heavens yield us water, and drive off from us the beasts that devour men. Then will that crafty one make answer, mocking them with absolute inhumanity, and saying, The heavens refuse to give rain, the earth yields not again its fruits; whence then can I give you food? Then, on hearing the words of this deceiver, these miserable men will perceive that this is the wicked accuser, and will mourn in anguish, and weep vehemently, and beat their face with their hands, and tear their hair, and lacerate their cheeks with their nails, while they say to each other: Woe for the calamity! woe for the bitter contract! woe for the deceitful covenant! woe for the mighty mischance! How have we been beguiled by the deceiver! how have we been joined to him! how have we been caught in his toils! how have we been taken in his abominable net! how have we heard the Scriptures, and understood them not!¹

It is not possible for anyone who accepts **Antichrist** to retract or repent, for Revelation 14:9-11 tells us that these people have already been warned by God about their fate, “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

And he will put his mark on their right hand and on their forehead, that no one may put the sign of the honourable cross upon his forehead with his right hand; but his hand is bound. And from that time he shall not

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

have power to seal any one of his members, but he shall be attached to the deceiver, and shall serve him; **and in him there is no repentance. But such an one is lost at once to God and to men.**¹

Saint Hippolytus continues to describe the misery of those people:

Observe, also, how hard the season and the times will be that are to come upon those in city and country alike. At that time they will be brought from the east even unto the west; and they will come up from the west even unto the east, and will weep greatly and wail vehemently. And when the day begins to dawn they will long for the night, in order that they may find rest from their labours; and when the night descends upon them, by reason of the continuous earthquakes and the tempests in the air, they will desire even to behold the light of the day, and will seek how they may hereafter meet a bitter death. At that time the whole earth will bewail the life of anguish, and the sea and air in like manner will bewail it; and the sun, too, will wail; and the wild beasts, together with the fowls, will wail; mountains and hills, and the trees of the plain, will wail on account of the race of man, because all have turned aside from the holy God, and obeyed the deceiver, and received the mark of that abominable one, the enemy of God, instead of the quickening cross of the Saviour, but for men there shall be darkness, and lamentation on lamentation, and woe on woe. At that time silver and gold shall be cast out in the streets, and none shall gather them; but all things shall be held an offence. For all shall be eager to escape and to hide themselves, and they shall not be able anywhere to find concealment from the woes of the adversary; but as they carry his mark about them, they shall be readily recognised and declared to be his. Without there shall be fear, and within trembling, both by night and by day. In the street and in the houses there shall be the dead; in the streets and in the houses there shall be hunger and thirst; in the streets there shall be tumults, and in the houses lamentations. And beauty of countenance shall be withered, for their forms shall be like those of the dead; and the beauty of women shall fade, and the desire of all men shall vanish.²

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

²Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

Amid all of the doom and the gloom I am sure that our dear reader must be wondering, “what about those who refuse to worship **Antichrist**?” The answer to this question is actually found in the scriptures. First and foremost, the Lord who warned us about the **Great Tribulation** gave us very specific instructions about what to do then:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. (Matt 24:15-18)

Interpretation: when you see **Antichrist** being worshipped in the churches, then *run for your life!* The Lord does not want us to resist **Antichrist** or fight against him but to run from him. For great will be the power he is given. “And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.” (Rev 13:7)

For this cause the Lord knowing the greatness of the adversary grants indulgence to the godly, saying, Then let them which be in Judaea flee to the mountains. But if any man is conscious that he is very stout-hearted, to encounter Satan, let him stand (for I do not despair of the Church's nerves), and let him say, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ and the rest? But, let those of us who are fearful provide for our own safety; and those who are of a good courage, stand fast: for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be.¹

Some Christians will be called to witness to the Lord and become martyrs. The first among those will be the two prophets Enoch and Elijah:

And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and

¹St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical lectures

shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. (Rev 11:7-13)

Those who are called to the glory of martyrdom will also be tortured and killed. Great will be the strife of those blessed ones, but great also will be their reward:

Blessed shall they be who overcome the tyrant then. For they shall be set forth as more illustrious and loftier than the first witnesses; for the former witnesses overcame his minions only, but these overthrow and conquer the accuser himself, the son of perdition. With what eulogies and crowns, therefore, will they not be adorned by our King, Jesus Christ!¹

Who then is the blessed man, that shall at that time devoutly witness for Christ? For I say that the Martyrs of that time excel all martyrs. For the Martyrs hitherto have wrestled with men only; but in the time of Antichrist they shall do battle with Satan in his own person. And former persecuting kings only put to death; they did not pretend to raise the dead, nor did they make false shows of signs and wonders. But in his time there shall be the evil inducement both of fear and of deceit, so that if it be possible the very elect shall be deceived.²

¹Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

²St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical lectures

The great majority of the faithful will however, heed the Lord's advice to flee from the tyrant. This admonition to flee and hide is also given to us in the Old Testament, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the LORD cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." (Isa 26:20-21)

Observe how the Lord describes the time as "for a little moment" for, the Lord is true to His promise that the time of the tribulation shall be shortened for the sake of the elect.

THE CHURCH IN EXILE:

Revelation 12 gives us a description of the Church during the **Great Tribulation**.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.

Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 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. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The chapter describes the exile of the Church (the woman) at the time of the **Great Tribulation**. There are many points that we ought to meditate on.

The woman (symbolizing the Church) is being persecuted by the serpent (Satan), so she flees to the wilderness “**where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.**” It is very comforting to know that during the **Great Tribulation**, God has a place prepared for the church where she can find refuge, and where she will be looked after (fed) for the whole duration of the Tribulation (a thousand two hundred and threescore days.) The word “wilderness” does not necessarily mean a desert place, but rather a solitary place, a kind of a retreat. This corresponds to the admonition of our Lord that we flee to the mountains. Again mountains here are not to be taken literally, but rather in the sense of taking the “high ground.” The Old Testament has several allusions to this flight of the Church into the “wilderness”:

Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies. (Mic 4:9-13)

Observe the similarity in the image of the Church, “And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered” and “Be in

pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail.” Again, observe the theme of exile (going out of the city.) But the most important point is that the object of this exile is, “there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.”

The going of the Church into exile during the **Great Tribulation** is also likened to the going of the Church of the Old Testament out of Egypt into the wilderness, where for forty years the Lord had provided for His people, before bringing them into the promised land:

Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old. According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things. The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might: they shall lay their hand upon their mouth, their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent, they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth: they shall be afraid of the LORD our God, and shall fear because of thee. (Mic 7:13-17)

After describing the desolation of the land during the **Great Tribulation**, and explaining that this is because of “them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doing,” the prophet implores the Lord to *feed His people who dwell solitarily in the wood ... as in the days of old*. Then comes the Lord’s response to the prophet that He will show the same marvellous things He had shown at the time of the coming of Israel out of Egypt. The prophet then describes the astonishment of the nations when they see how the Lord protects His people with a strong arm. In Revelation 12, we are told that when the serpent (Satan) tries to reach to the Church in exile by *casting out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood, the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth*. The Fathers explain this passage as follows: when Satan acting through **Antichrist** sees that the Church is living safely in her place of exile, he will try to attack her using all the people at his disposal (symbolized by the water as a flood,) but God will miraculously save the Church, to the astonishment of the nations around the world.

The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. (Isa 35:1-4)

The prophet here describes the place of exile of the Church (the wilderness and the solitary place) as rejoicing at the coming of the Church into it. He sees this place of exile blossoming and becoming excellent as the land of Lebanon. It is there that the exiled Church shall see “the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God.” The prophet then exhorts the exiled to encourage one another and strengthen the weak among them by reminding them of the imminent coming of the Lord, to take vengeance against their enemies and to save them.

The Church in exile will be subject to varied emotions, fear, faintheartedness, weakened faith and lack of hope at times, but God will always be there to comfort His bride who is living in exile.

Saint Augustine feels that Psalm 10 pertains to the Church during the **Great Tribulation**:

And because it is believed that he is to arrive at so great a pitch of empty glory, and he will be permitted to do so great things, both against all men and against the Saints of God, that then some weak ones shall indeed think that God cares not for human affairs, the Psalmist interposing a diapsalma, adds as it were the voice of men groaning and asking why judgment is deferred, “Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?” (Ps 10:1)

Commenting on Verse 10, Saint Augustine compares the Church during the **Great Tribulation** to the disciples when they were in a ship and “there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. (Matt 8:24-25)

The Church then labouring in such times, like a ship in great waves and tempests, awaketh the Lord as if He were sleeping, that He should

command the winds, and calm should be restored. He says therefore, Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.

The Lord said to the disciples when they woke Him up, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.” (Matt 8:26) In the same manner the lord rebukes the Church for her fears, reminding her of His promise that He will not leave the Church comfortless. (John 14:18)

I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?(Isa 51:12-13)

The Lord uses the same imagery of the storm tossed ship in addressing the fearful Church promising her that no harm can come to her in spite of the hostile world around her:

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. (Isa 54:11-15)

We have alluded to Isaiah 24 above. Verses 1-13 describe the desolation of the earth during the time of the **Great tribulation**, however verses 14-16 have a different tune to them:

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the LORD, they shall cry aloud from the sea. Wherefore glorify ye the LORD in the fires, even the name of the LORD God of Israel in the isles of the sea. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness,

woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. (Isa 24:14-16)

In the midst of the desolation that is taking place in the world Isaiah the prophet is hearing people who lift up their voice and sing to the Lord. Their voice is coming from across the sea (where the Church is in exile), and he asks, why are you glorifying the Lord while you are in the midst of the fire, (the tribulation) and why are you doing this in the isles (the land across the sea)? Again he is puzzled by the fact that the songs of glory to the righteous One (the Lord) are coming from the uttermost parts of the earth. Then he laments the treacherous deal that has overtaken the whole world (the deceit of **Antichrist** perpetrated against most of the inhabitants of the earth.)

The imagery of the Church in the midst of the fire (the tribulation) was not lost to the Fathers of the Church, who likened the Church during the **Great Tribulation** to the three children in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3):

For that image which was set up by Nebuchadnezzar had indeed a height of sixty cubits, while the breadth was six cubits; on account of which Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, when they did not worship it, were cast into a furnace of fire, pointing out prophetically, by what happened to them, the wrath against the righteous which shall arise towards the [time of the] end. For that image, taken as a whole, was a prefiguring of this man's coming, decreeing that he should undoubtedly himself alone be worshipped by all men.¹

Like the three children, the Church will be in the midst of the fiery furnace (the **Great Tribulation**) and yet Christ be in her midst, and, like the three children, she shall come out of the fiery tribulation unscathed.

The scriptures give us repeated assurances that God will protect the elect during the **Great Tribulation**. In Daniel 12:1, the angel Gabriel tells Daniel, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: **and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall**

¹Irenaeus: Against heresies, Book V

be found written in the book.”

God will give Archangel Michael charge over the Church during the **Great Tribulation**. And everyone from among the people of God *whose name is written in the book (of life)* shall be saved. Who are those whose names are written in the book of life? The answer is in Revelation 13:18, “And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Those who do not worship him are the ones whose names are written in the book of life.

The Book of Revelation gives us more assurances in this regard:

And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. (Rev 7:2-3)

God will seal His elect before the **Great Tribulation** to distinguish them from those who accept the mark of the beast (**Antichrist**), so that the plagues that will befall the earth will not harm them.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. (Rev 11:1-2)

John was given a reed and was asked to measure the temple of God (the Church) and the altar and those that worship in them. In the Apocalyptic scripture, measuring assures God’s protection to the place measured. While in the previous verses protection was offered to the individual believers who remain faithful to their God, here protection is again promised to the whole Church and all who remain inside her. Those who stay in *the court which is without the temple*, (those who stay in the world rather than go to exile with the Church) will not be protected in the time of the **Great Tribulation**.

The Fathers of the Church concur with this view that the exiled Church will be protected from all harm during the **Great Tribulation**:

Then indicating, that these things will in no degree harm the noble and the firm, He saith, Fear not, neither be troubled. For if ye show forth the patience that becomes you, the dangers will not prevail over you.¹

But many who are hearers of the divine Scriptures, and have them in their hand, and keep them in mind with understanding, will escape his imposture. For they will see clearly through his insidious appearance and his deceitful imposture, and will flee from his hands, and betake themselves to the mountains, and hide themselves in the caves of the earth; and they will seek after the Friend of man with tears and a contrite heart; **and He will deliver them out of his toils, and with His right hand He will save those from his snares who in a worthy and righteous manner make their supplication to Him.**²

For the Lord says, “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And there shall not a hair of your head perish.”³

But, the puzzling question is this, where is this place prepared by God for His Church to sojourn in during the **Great Tribulation**? The scripture does not tell us, it only gives us clues.

The first clue comes from the Lord’s admonition, “let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” (Matt 24:16) This means that people in Israel should seek the high ground or get away as fast as possible. This is logical since most of the Fathers agree that **Antichrist** will reign from Israel and that Jerusalem will be his capital, a fact alluded to in Revelation 11:8. **Antichrist** will reign primarily over the Middle East, most of the countries in that region will voluntarily join him except for three, which he will have to attack and subdue militarily. We explained in our previous chapter that these three countries are Egypt, Lybia and the Sudan. (Dan 11:42-43) We can understand from this that the place of refuge of the Church must be as far away from the Middle East as possible.

¹St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on Matt XXIV

²Hippolytus: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

³Hippolytus: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

We also speculated on “the ten kings, which have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.” (Rev 17:12-13) If the prophecies of Revelation pertain to our present time, then it is safe to assume that these “kings” which have one mind could represent the countries in the European Union. We also said that St. Hippolytus calls them “ten democracies,” an amazing designation for a saint writing in the middle of the second century.¹ If the reader accepts my theory then Europe as a whole would not be a good place for a safe haven of the Church, since the European countries would be in a military alliance with **Antichrist**. This will become a must if **Antichrist** has his hands on the petroleum rich Middle East.

Another clue comes from Isaiah’s prophesy about the Church singing in exile, where he hears singing coming from “the isles of the sea” and “the uttermost part of the earth”. (Isa 24:14-16) This description could mean a place in the New World. What Isaiah heard was singing coming from a far away land across the seas.

It is no coincidence that for the last one third of a century, Christians have been leaving the Middle East, emigrating to Canada, U.S.A. and Australia. In a previous article, we explained that this is the preliminary phase of the exile of the Church that will happen in the time of the **Great Tribulation**.²

Some people believe that the two prophets Enoch and Elijah will guide the elect into that place prepared by God for the Church, where He shall feed and protect her during the **Great Tribulation**.

THE CHURCH IN THE OLD WORLD:

If we accept the thesis that the place of refuge prepared by God for His Church will be in the New World, then what about the Church in the Old World? Saint Hippolytus paints for us a grim picture:

Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.”(Isa 1:7-8) You

¹St. Hippolytus was a contemporary of Origen, whom he met.

²The Abomination of Desolation (3) in Parousia December, 1998

see, beloved, the prophet's illumination, whereby he announced that time so many generations before. For it is not of the Jews that he spake this word of old, nor of the city of Zion, but of the Church. For all the prophets have declared Sion to be the bride brought from the nations.¹

St. Hippolytus sees in the opening verses of Isaiah a picture of the Church in the Old World under the tyranny of **Antichrist**. The first part of the prophecy pertains to the desolation of the countries under the rule of **Antichrist**, but the part concerning the daughter of Zion pertains to the Church which will be besieged.

It is not conceivable that all Christians would go into exile (presumably somewhere in the New World.) Many Christians will remain in the Middle East and Europe, so what is to become of them? Revelation 12:15-17 tells us:

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. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

When **Antichrist** fails to assail the Church that has gone into exile, through the miraculous intervention of God, who ordered His Church to flee away from the **Abomination of Desolation** (Matt 24:15-16,) he will be enraged and will persecute “the remnant of her seed,” those who could not go to exile but remained behind. What will happen to those? Unfortunately, the great majority will apostatize and follow the deceiver, in fulfilment of the Lord’s prophecy, “when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8) Many will certainly confess Christ and be tortured and killed by the **Abomination of Desolation**, and will join those who overcame Satan and his **Antichrist**, “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” (Rev 12:11)

¹Hippolytus of Rome: Discourse on end of the World and on Antichrist

WHY GOD ALLOWS THIS TO HAPPEN?

The Fathers struggled with this difficult question, here is what they tell us concerning this:

Why then, you say, did God permit this to be? and what dispensation is this? And what is the advantage of his coming, if it takes place for the ruin of our race? Fear not, beloved, but hear Him saying, "In them that are perishing," he hath strength, who, even if he had not come, would not have believed. What then is the advantage? That these very men who are perishing will be put to silence. How? Because both if he had come, and if he had not come, they would not have believed in Christ; He comes therefore to convict them.¹

St. Irenaeus insists that the Tribulation is necessary for our salvation:

And then he points out the time that his tyranny shall last, during which the saints shall be put to flight, they who offer a pure sacrifice unto God: 'And in the midst of the week,' he says, 'the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away.' And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet. As a certain man of ours said², when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God."³

Again St. Irenaeus comments on the necessity of the **Great Tribulation**:

There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be." For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.⁴

¹St. John Chrysostom: Commentary on II Thessalonians

²St. Irenaeus is referring here to St. Ignatius, who died as a martyr when he was thrown to the beasts

³St. Irenaeus: Against heresies, Book V

⁴St. Irenaeus: Against heresies, Book V

St. Paul, trying to answer the same question tells us:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. (II Th 2:12-13)

The reason, then, is the damnation of the non believers, who “believed not the Truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” As for us, the elect, chosen by God from the beginning, this will lead to our salvation.

St. Augustine, commenting on St. Paul’s words has this to say:

God shall permit the devil to do these things, the permission being by His own just judgment, though the doing of them is in pursuance of the devil's unrighteous and malignant purpose, “that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”¹

HOW TO SURVIVE THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

Here is what the Bible tells us in this regard:

PATIENCE:

“In your patience possess ye your souls.” (Luke 21:19) “He that endureth to the end shall be saved.” (Matt 10:22) Patience is a very important virtue especially in the last days, when “the love of many shall wax cold,” (Matt 24:12) and when faith will be weakened (Luke 18:8). It is for this reason that we should exercise ourselves in this important virtue. So, if God allows problems to befall you, and it seems that no solution is in sight, rejoice as St. Paul tells us, “but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” (Rom 5:3)

UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURE:

When the Lord commanded us saying, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand

¹Augustin of Hippo: City of God

in the holy place,” He added these words, “whoso readeth, let him understand.” (Matt 24:15) To study and understand properly the prophetic and apocalyptic scripture is very important. Daniel 11 speaks about the elect during the Tribulation, “but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they that understand among the people shall instruct many.” (Dan 11:32-33) Here Daniel is telling us that those who understand these things (as a gift from God,) have the obligation to “instruct many”. This understanding of the scriptures will be denied to the wicked, whose names are not written in the Book of Life, as we are later told that, “none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” (Dan 12:10) Those who understand and instruct others will be rewarded greatly as we are also told, “And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan 12:3)

Instruction of the catechumens about the coming of **Antichrist** was a major component of the Catechism given to new converts. The Church believed that knowing these things is essential for salvation:

Look therefore to thyself, O man, and make safe thy soul. The Church now charges thee before the Living God; she declares to thee the things concerning Antichrist before they arrive. Whether they will happen in thy time we know not, or whether they will happen after thee we know not; but it is well that, knowing these things, thou shouldest make thyself secure beforehand.¹

The catechumen was instructed to impart the knowledge he gained to others especially his or her children both in the flesh or the spirit:

Guard thyself then, O man; thou hast the signs of Antichrist; and remember them not only thyself, but impart them also freely to all. If thou hast a child according to the flesh, admonish him of this now; if thou hast begotten one through catechizing, put him also on his guard, lest he receive the false one as the True.²

¹St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

²St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures

DESPISING THE WORLD:

One who wants to be saved from the **Great Tribulation** should be willing to do what the Lord told us when He instructed us to flee the **Abomination of Desolation**, “Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” (Matt 24:17-18) This means that when the time comes for us to follow the Church into exile, we should completely neglect our earthly possessions, house, car, career, social status, wealth etc ... only trusting in the Lord Who promised us that He will feed us and protect us throughout the **Great Tribulation**. People with many worldly cares may make the wrong decision and perish for it, as St. Hippolytus tells us:

For truly those who are engrossed with the affairs of life, and with the lust of this world, will be easily brought over to the accuser then, and sealed by him.¹

¹Hippolytus of Rome: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

BABYLON THE GREAT WHORE¹

The Book of Revelation tells us that towards the end of the reign of **Antichrist**, and indeed the end of the world, a major world power will be suddenly destroyed. This major world power is prophetically called **Babylon**.

The destruction of Babylon is first mentioned in Revelation 14:8 “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.” It is mentioned also in Revelation 16:9 “And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” In both these verses, this destruction is shown as happening in the context of, or close to the end of the world.

The Book of Revelation assigns two complete chapters (17 & 18) to the destruction of this great world power, and gives us graphic details about this destruction and about the reasons of its destruction.

Babylon, whatever that code name refers to, will be destroyed suddenly, like Sodom and Gomorrah. Three times we are told that the destruction will be “in one hour.” “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for **in one hour** is thy judgment come.” (Rev 18:10) “For **in one hour** so great riches is come to nought.” (Rev 18:17) “And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for **in one hour** is she made desolate.” (Rev 18:19)

The destruction will be complete and final as we are told, “... and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” (Rev 18:8) “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.”

The destruction will be a judgment of God: “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the **judgment** of the

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great whore that sitteth upon many waters.” (Rev 17:1) The judgment of course is because of her sins and iniquities: “For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” (Rev 18:5)

The early Fathers of the Church unanimously understood Babylon to be a code name for the Roman Empire. They all thought (and hoped) that the Roman Empire will be destroyed before the Lord’s second coming. Many verses in Revelation actually support this interpretation.

Revelation 17:6 tells us that “Babylon” is a persecutor of the saints, “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” And so does Revelation 18:24, “And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” The greatest persecutions of the Church happened during the reign of Rome, the new Babylon!

Rome was surrounded by seven hills, and Revelation 17:9 tells us, “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.”

The Roman Empire ruled over people from different nations and languages, and so does “Babylon” “And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” (Rev 17:15)

Rome ruled over all the world and appointed “kings” as representatives of Rome, like King Herod, who was subject to Rome. Revelation 17:18 tells us the same about Babylon, “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.”

The lifestyle of “Babylon” is decadent and so boastful, “How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.” (Rev 18:7) This fits neatly with the life style of the Romans during the glory of their empire.

The Fathers thought that the destruction of Rome is God’s revenge for the persecution Rome unleashed on the Christians. “Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.” (Rev 18:20)

There are, however, many problems with this interpretation! The main reason for this, is that in the early church there was a strong belief

that the prophesies of Revelation will be fulfilled very soon, and the only country that resembled the prophetic Babylon was Rome.

On close examination however, we have to admit that Rome was not destroyed in “one hour” but rather disintegrated slowly over decades, which certainly differs from the sudden and complete destruction of the Revelation’s Babylon.

Revelation makes it absolutely clear that the destruction of Babylon will precede the destruction of the world and the second coming of our Lord with a very short time. Rome has disappeared from the world stage many centuries ago and the world is still intact and the Church is still waiting for the second coming.

A third and most important point is that the destruction of Babylon will be brought about by God by using “ten kings” who will be reigning at the time of **Antichrist**. No one will doubt that **Antichrist** is yet to come. And so, Babylon is NOT ancient Rome!

Now we are back to square one! So, who or what is Babylon? To answer this question we have to look for a great world power that will be found near the end of time, that will resemble the ancient Rome in power, lifestyle and sinfulness.

To do this we have to glean through the Book of Revelation looking for clues that will help us construct a model for Babylon.

WHORE ... FORNICATION:

Babylon is described as a whore (Rev 17:15, 17:16) and even designated as “the great whore” (Rev 17:1 and 19: 2.) We are told that she has committed fornication in many places, for example, (Rev 14:8, 17:2, 17:4, 18:3, 18:9 and 19:2.)

The “whore” is judged by God for corrupting the whole world with her fornication as we are told in Revelation 19:2, “For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication.”

We are also told that the rulers of the world have committed fornication with her! (Rev 17:2, 18:3, 18:9.)

This corruption of the world is likened to being drunk or intoxicated, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of **the wine** of the wrath of her fornication.” (Rev 14:8) “With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made **drunk with the wine of her**

fornication.” (Rev 17:2) “For all nations **have drunk of the wine** of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.” (Rev 18:3)

But how can a nation or a country commit fornication with the “kings of the earth” or seduce “all nations” and “the inhabitants of the earth” with her fornication, making them intoxicated as if drunk and following her example and committing fornication?

It is obvious that fornication is used here symbolically (as is the case with everything else in the Book of Revelation!) So, let us examine the meaning of “fornication” in the prophetic and apocalyptic language.

In the Old Testament, the words whore, harlot, fornication and adultery were used figuratively to describe polytheism or idolatry. When Israel, God’s own people, the bride of Yahweh worshipped other gods, God sent the prophets to rebuke them for their whoredom. For God considered Israel His bride and if Israel would love someone else other than her Husband Yahweh, then she has become no more than a whore or a harlot. There are many examples of this, the earliest of which is in the Book of Judges, when we are told, “And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them.” (Judg 2:17) The same expression is used by God in rebuking Israel through His prophet Hosea, “Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.” (Hos 9:1) In the same book, the Lord is inviting Israel to repentance by telling them, “Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts.” (Hos 2:2) By worshipping other gods, Israel lost her privileges as the bride of Yahweh, but she can always return to her heavenly spouse if she repents. The faithlessness of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) was soon followed by the harlotry of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” (Jer 3:8) In the same book, the Lord rebukes His bride saying, “thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and with thy wickedness.” (Jer 3:2) The same sentiment appears in the words of the Lord through the mouth of Ezekiel, “Wherefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Are ye polluted after the

manner of your fathers? and commit ye whoredom after their abominations?” (Ezek 20:30) And in the opening chapter of Isaiah, the Lord laments the unfaithfulness of His own city, Jerusalem by saying, “How is the faithful city become an harlot!” (Isa 1:21)

If that is the meaning of whoredom and fornication in the Old Testament, bowing to other gods and becoming idolaters, then how can we relate this to the New Testament use of these words?

St. Paul gives us the first clue, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, **and covetousness, which is idolatry**” (Col 3:5) So, in the New Testament, covetousness is the equivalent of the Old Testament’s idolatry. Accordingly to covet things of the world, to become worldly and immersed in the pleasures of the world is considered spiritual fornication. For as in the Old Testament Yahweh was the spouse of Israel, so it is in the New Testament that Christ is the Spouse of the Church and of each unit of the Church, of each human soul. Are we not told by St. Paul, “for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (II Cor 11:2) A chaste virgin would love her spouse more than anything else or anyone else. She cannot love God and the world in the same time, for the Lord tells us, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.” (Matt 6:24) And St. John warns us, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (I John 2:15)

The clearest indication that worldliness is actually unfaithfulness to God and indeed adultery in the spiritual sense is emphasized to us by St. James, “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” (Jas 4:4) St. James calls “adulterers and adulteresses” and “enemies of God” those who even befriend the world, those who “go awhoring” after worldly things and worldly lusts.

Now the picture becomes clear, this “Babylon” or modern world power is guilty of being very worldly, of loving worldly things more than God. It is also guilty of seducing the other nations, the inhabitants of the earth and the rulers of the earth into following the same life style, a lifestyle of materialism and instant gratification that makes the love

of God disappear from the hearts of men. That is why she is called “Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” (Rev 17:5)

Now, let us start from the beginning of Revelation 17, “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” (Rev 17:1-2)

One of the seven angels offers to show St. John the “great whore that sitteth upon the many waters.” The seven angels are probably the seven archangels, they are to carry the final set of seven plagues and pour them on a world that has turned its back to God and has gone after the **Abomination of Desolation**, the Beast, also known as **Antichrist**.

The many waters are explained to us in Revelation 17:15 as, “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” This means that this world power, this modern day Rome is made up of multitudes of people from different ethnic origins and different mother tongues.

THE SCARLET BEAST:

So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Rev 17:3-5)

The scarlet beast that the woman is sitting upon with the seven heads and ten horns is none other than the beast of Revelation 13, **Antichrist**. The woman is sitting upon the beast that means, she is not part of his kingdom but is just “riding on his bandwagon.” Being a world power in her own right, the “New Rome” is not conquered by the beast, but remains on the side lines cheering for him and agreeing with whatever he does without actually being under his control.

The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. This refers to the worldliness of this world power. Contrast this woman with the other woman of Revelation 12, the Church, who is clothed with the Sun and the moon under her feet. As we said earlier, the woman is the Church, clothed by the Sun of Righteousness, that is Christ, while the moon representing the things of the world is under her feet, despised. What a difference!

The woman has a golden cup full of her abominations and fornications; she is drinking the sour wine of the love of the world and even offering the same drink to the people and the kings of the earth, inviting them and enticing them and teaching them the art of her fornication: love of the world which is enmity of God.

Her name starts with the word “mystery” meaning code name, not her real name; a mystery that will be revealed to the faithful whenever the woman (the world power) appears on the world’s stage near the end of time.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (Rev 17:8-11)

We dealt with the beast in a previous chapter, suffices to say that he is **Antichrist**. The seven heads are seven kings that we also dealt with previously, they are the previous “prototypes” that Satan erected before the real thing. Minor antichrists that Satan experimented with before perfecting the real thing. The five that are fallen are: Pharaoh king of Egypt, Sennacherib king of Assyria, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the kings of Medo-Persia, that kept Israel in captivity, and Antiochus Epiphanes the Greek king, who destroyed and desecrated the second temple, declared himself God, and butchered the Jews who refused to worship him. Each one of these persecuted the Church of the Old Testament, and was a little antichrist, particularly the last one.

The “one that is” is of course the Roman Emperor Nero who persecuted the Church of the New Testament. The “other that is not yet come” is the originator of a new politico-religious movement that was to come six centuries later. A movement that also persecuted the Church of the New Testament.

THE TEN HORNS:

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. (Rev 17:12-17)

The ten horns have been dealt with previously. We are told that they are ten kings that will reign in the time of the beast (**Antichrist**). They will be allies of **Antichrist** putting their strength and power in his service. The author of these articles has a theory, that if we take these prophecies as probably speaking about our time (as all the Fathers did) then these are the European Union nations. They have one mind (the European parliament). They will enter into an alliance with Antichrist who will most certainly be in control of the Middle East and its oil, which is vital to these European nations. None of the Fathers speculated on the identity of these kings or kingdoms except Saint Hippolytus, who peculiarly calls them “ten democracies!”

Being allied to **Antichrist**, they will participate with him in persecuting the Christians (referred to as making war with the Lamb).

Even though they are in alliance with **Antichrist**, yet God will use them for the fulfilment of His will, that is to punish Babylon for her sins.

THE FAITHFUL ARE WARNED TO FLEE BABYLON:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of

her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. (Rev 18:4-8)

A warning goes out to God's people to leave "Babylon" before its destruction. The same happened in the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Again we are told that it is because of her sins that she is punished. These sins are summarized for us. First, she has glorified herself (pampered herself) and lived deliciously (over indulged herself in the pleasures of this world). The Lord Jesus in the Parable of the sower, tells us, "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:14)

Overindulgence in riches and pleasures of this life can make one fruitless and thus one loses his eternal life. The second sin is pride and arrogance, over confidence, for she says to herself, "I am queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow." People who live only for worldly pleasures often think that life will go on like that and often forget or convince themselves that there is no judgment or retribution, until suddenly they come face to face with God's righteous judgment; to give each one according to his deeds.

Another clue about the destruction of Babylon is given to us, "she shall be utterly burned with fire" that means she will be burned to the ground, completely destroyed. Finally, we are reminded that this is the judgment of God, "for strong is the Lord God who judges her."

WORLD LEADERS WILL LAMENT BABYLON:

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall

weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. (Rev 18:9-13)

The world leaders who are guilty of the same sins as Babylon herself, who committed spiritual fornication by following her lifestyle (lived deliciously with her) will lament her destruction when they see the smoke of her burning. Notice two things here, first, that they stand afar off for fear of her torment, and second that the destruction is sudden “In one hour is thy judgment come”. If we put these two together, we can theorize that Babylon will be destroyed by a surprise nuclear attack by the 10 kings (The European Union?) Only such an attack can destroy a mighty world power like Babylon and accomplish this in one hour. Only a strong alliance like the European Union can deliver such a devastating attack. But never forget that this happens according to God’s plan for punishing Babylon for her sins.

We are also told that the merchants of the world will weep over her “for no one buyeth their merchandise any more.” A list of merchandise follows, all of them are luxury items. From this we understand that Babylon is the world’s largest importer of luxury goods, consuming the great majority of these, since, after her demise, no one will buy these items anymore.

The list includes “chariots” (cars?) It also includes slaves (the Greek original translates as ‘bodies’). This means that Babylon is an importer of able bodied people, which can be interpreted as a country that allows and benefits from immigration. The reference to “souls of men” may be interpreted as being engaged in “brain drain” or acting like a magnet for the upper crust of thinkers in other nations.

The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and

all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. (Rev 18:15-19)

Notice that the destruction of Babylon will lead to a major financial crisis, since the merchants of the whole world were made rich by trading with Babylon. Not only is Babylon a “mighty city” (Super power?), but also probably the richest country on earth. Again we are reminded that the destruction is accomplished in one hour. We are told repeatedly that those who mourn Babylon will “stand afar off for fear of her torment.” This means that they will not try to come close to rescue her because of “fear of her torment.” Certainly after a major nuclear attack no one wants to come near because of fear of radiation.

HEAVEN REJOICES AT THE DESTRUCTION OF BABYLON:

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. (Rev 18:20-23)

Because of her sins, and the fact that Babylon made the world drunk with her fornication (worldly lifestyle), heaven will rejoice at her destruction. The angel declares to us that Babylon will forever disappear from the face of the earth in a violent cataclysm. We are also told that by her “sorcery” the whole world was deceived. Sorcery here may mean the dazzling technological wizardry that Babylon offered the whole world. The story of the destruction of Babylon is also echoed in Old Testament prophecies:

Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. (Jer 51:7-9)

We are told once again about Babylon making all the world drunk with her wine (seducing the world with her lifestyle). The sudden destruction is also prophesied. There is no cure for Babylon and that is why the elect are instructed to flee her, because her judgment is sealed.

The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. (Jer 51:42-43)

This is a parallel to the angels throwing of the millstone into the sea. Again the utter destruction of all her cities is confirmed. She will never be a place where humans can live.

My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD.” (Jer 51:45)

Once again the elect (God's people) are told to flee Babylon, so that they may escape “the fierce anger of the Lord.

Now, dear reader, you may ask who or what is this Babylon? The answer is entirely up to you. If you believe that the prophecies of Revelation may be a few hundred or even a few thousand years away, then Babylon may be a future nation yet to appear on the world stage. If, on the other hand, you believe that **Antichrist** could be around the corner, then make your own opinion about who or what is Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.

HIS END¹

The Book of Revelation is like a big jig-saw puzzle, with the pieces scattered all over the place. It is up to the reader to gather the pieces, and find out where they fit. After all the pieces are put together in the right place, the picture will become clear. If even a few pieces are missing or are misplaced, the picture will not be clear and meaningful. Prophecies are not put in their chronological order, and the challenge is to place them correctly. For example, Revelation 6:12-17 reads as follows:

And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

If we examine this superficially, we might think that the end of the world and the second coming of the Lord will happen after the sixth seal! Yet, as we read on, we discover that there is a seventh seal, which in turn leads to another set of seven plagues, the seven trumpets. As we go through the seven trumpets and after the sixth trumpet, we read (Rev 10:5-7):

And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the

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days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Again, one may be led to the assumption that the seventh trumpet will signal the end of the world, and that “there will be time no longer” And yet again the seventh trumpet comes and the end is not yet for there opens for us another series of seven plagues called the seven vials! Revelation 14:14-20 reads like this:

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The reader may say, this is it! The angel with the first sickle will gather God’s elect and take them “to meet the Lord in the air” (I Thes 4:17) and the angel with the second sickle is the one that will gather the ungodly for their eternal punishment. And yet the end is not here either! Chapter 16:12-17 again tells us:

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto

the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

You may say now, "That's it!" Armageddon is the end of the world! Wrong again! For the next two chapters (17-18) tell us about the destruction of Babylon, which was mentioned briefly in Revelation 4:8:

And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

The narrative picks up again in Revelation 19:11-21, where we get the details of Armageddon:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him,

with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Here once again, one is tempted to believe that this is it, The Lord comes, the Beast (**Antichrist, Abomination of Desolation**) as well as the false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire and their followers are “slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse (the Lord).” Well, not quite! For in Revelation 20:7-10 we are told:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

You see, even after Armageddon, the world does not end, but there is a final assault on the Church by Satan even after he loses his right hand man (**Antichrist**) and his left hand man (the false prophet). It is at this final assault that the world will end by “fire coming down from heaven,” the devil will be cast into the lake of fire to join his two lieutenants, and the elect will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

The Book of Revelation is likened to a telescope with three segments; each one is “telescoped” inside the other. If you look at it while it is folded you can determine a beginning and an end. But, as you reach the end, you discover that there is another segment hidden inside. You open this segment only to find that there is a third segment hidden inside the second. Only after you open the third segment that the picture becomes clear. The first segment of the telescope corresponds to the seven seals, as one reaches the end, he discovers the seven trumpets (the second segment of the telescope). At the end of

these, the third segment of the telescope opens for us to reveal:

THE SEVEN BOWLS:

Although the last and final set of plagues is mentioned in chapters 15 and 16, yet chronologically it follows the destruction of Babylon, which is detailed in chapters 17 and 18.

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled. (Rev 15:5-8)

St. John tells us that he saw the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven, so what does that mean? You see, when God ordered Moses to make the tabernacle of the Testimony, He showed him a heavenly tabernacle and told him to make the earthly tabernacle after the pattern of the heavenly tabernacle as we are told in Exodus:

And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. (Exod 25:8-9)

St. Paul also emphasizes this in Hebrews 9:19-23:

Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

St. Paul calls the earthly tabernacle as “the patterns of the things in heaven.” And, in Hebrews 8:4-5, this is emphasized again:

For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

So, one should not wonder about this, because this was the heavenly tabernacle that God showed Moses and ordered him to copy when he made the earthly tabernacle.

The seven angels entrusted with the final plagues are probably the seven archangels. They are given seven vials by one of the four incorporeal beasts (probably the highest rank of all the heavenly orders, since they carry the throne of God). We are then told that no man could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled. What does that mean? This is generally understood to mean that no intercession would be allowed once the order to the seven angels has been given, it is final! It means that the privilege of the saints to intercede on behalf of humanity will be suspended! The death penalty has been passed and there is no way to appeal it.

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. (Rev 16:1-2)

One thing is peculiar about these plagues, they are not universal. They are directed towards the worshippers of the Beast, who acknowledge him as their god and accept his mark and the number of his name! There is very scant commentary about these plagues, but there are theories. And what I propose to present is my own personal opinion and it is entirely up to the reader to accept it or reject it.

I believe that these plagues will happen just after the destruction of Babylon, and that most of them can be explained by the aftermath of a major nuclear war.

The “grievous sores” of the first vial, which are interpreted by The New Unger’s Bible Handbook as “malignant sores” are very suspicious

of the manifestations of the cutaneous type of Anthrax, which medical text books call “malignant pustules.”

The most common form of the disease in humans is cutaneous anthrax, which is usually acquired via injured skin or mucous membranes. A minor scratch or abrasion, usually on an exposed area of the face or neck or arms, is inoculated by spores from the soil or a contaminated animal or carcass. The spores germinate, vegetative cells multiply, and a characteristic gelatinous edema develops at the site. This develops into papule within 12-36 hours after infection. The papule changes rapidly to a vesicle, then a pustule (malignant pustule), and finally into a necrotic ulcer from which infection may disseminate, giving rise to septicemia. Lymphatic swelling also occurs within seven days. In severe cases, where the blood stream is eventually invaded, the disease is frequently fatal.¹

It is not inconceivable that Babylon, sensing that it is under attack and not knowing what kind of weapon is being used against it, may decide to retaliate by using biological warfare in the form of Anthrax, which causes this kind of skin condition. These types of malignant sores can even be attributed to small pox, another feared weapon of biological warfare.

And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. (Rev 16:3-4)

The second and third plagues can be attributed to radiation poisoning of the seas and the rivers, which normally follows nuclear warfare. Unlike the earlier plagues where only a third of the seas and rivers are poisoned (probably due to pollution), we are told here that all living creatures die in the seas. Radioactivity can easily accomplish this.

¹Bacteriology 330 Home Page: University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of Bacteriology

And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. (Rev 16:8-10)

The fourth and fifth plagues can also be the aftermath of a major nuclear war. Scientists tell us that a major nuclear explosion can catapult the earth out of orbit. To explain this let us consider the example of the space station. The space station is carried to space by giant rockets that can place it into a pre-determined orbit. If the space station moves from the orbit that the scientists have determined, they correct this by the use of “booster rockets.” Each one of these rockets can move the station in a certain direction, and by manipulating these booster rockets the scientists can return the space station to its normal orbit. Imagine if one of these booster rockets malfunctions and fires on its own, what would happen to the space station? It will be either catapulted into space to be lost forever or come crashing down to earth. Now, imagine if all the booster rockets malfunction at the same time or in sequence one after the other. What would happen to the space station? This is what could happen to the earth in the case of a major nuclear explosion or a series of these explosions. Each explosion will be like a booster rocket catapulting the earth in a different direction. Let me give you another example, suppose you have a balloon, an ordinary birthday balloon, and you inflate it and then suddenly let go. It will go all over the place; the escaping air will be like the booster rockets moving it erratically.

These erratic movements of the earth can explain these two plagues, excessive heat that burns the people, followed by darkness and cold. If the earth follows an erratic course around the Sun, sometimes coming close to the Sun, and at others going the other way then we could have this happening. Seems far fetched you think? Hold it my friend! For there is something in the Bible that supports this theory:

The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage. (Isa 24:19-20)

The earth is utterly broken down, since a big chunk of it has been destroyed. The earth is moved exceedingly, it is moved out of its orbit that God had created for it to follow. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard! Doesn't that describe the erratic movement of the earth around the Sun that we just proposed? The earth shall be removed like a cottage, in the same way a tornado removes a cottage!

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (Rev 16:12-16)

The unholy trinity of Satan, **Antichrist** (the Beast) and the false prophet now gather their troops to go to war. The military headquarters of this great army is situated in a place called Armageddon. This place is actually located to the southeast of the port of Haifa. It is a very strategic location in Israel (**Antichrist's** homeland).

As we said earlier, the seventh vial depicts the end of the world, but the details of the battle of Armageddon are resumed in Revelation 19:11-21:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD

OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

What this is telling us is that it is the Lord himself who will fight against the unholy trinity. The Lord himself shall excise that cancer called **Antichrist, Abomination of Desolation**, the Beast, the little horn and many other names out of the earth and send him straight to Gehenna! St. Paul tells us so about his end:

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. (II Thes 2:8)

Note the emphasis on the fact that it is not a human that will remove him but the Lord Himself, “Who shall consume him with the spirit of His mouth.” The word “pneuma” in Greek can be interpreted as either spirit or breath. And I personally understand it in the latter sense (breath of his mouth rather than spirit of his mouth, in this context). In other words, the Lord will blow him away, all the way to Gehenna. When St. Paul refers to the “brightness of His coming,” he is not talking about the second coming, which will have to wait until Satan’s final assault on the Church that we explained earlier. This appearance of the Lord is a “special appearance” to rid the world of the Tyrant, in a similar way to the Lord’s appearance to Saul on the way to Damascus, although the outcome of the two appearances is quite different.

Daniel 8:25 reinforces this:

And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

When he says, “he shall be broken without a hand,” Daniel the prophet means without human hand. It will be as insurance brokers like to say—‘an act of God!’

The Book of Isaiah gives us this magnificent sarcastic dirge (mourning hymn) that the Church will sing when the **Abomination of Desolation** is translated alive to Gehenna:

How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. (Isa 14:4-11, 16-20)

THE DAY OF THE LORD¹

THE FORTY-FIVE DAYS:

The Book of Daniel is one of the most difficult books to interpret, but, perhaps the most difficult verses in that book are the next two verses, “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.” (Dan 12:11-12)

None of the Fathers of the Church offers any attempt at explaining these two verses except St. Hippolytus of Rome:

“Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days;” for when the abomination cometh and makes war upon the saints, whosoever shall survive his days, and reach the forty-five days, while the other period of fifty days advances, to him the kingdom of heaven comes. Antichrist, indeed, enters even into part of the fifty days, but the saints shall inherit the kingdom along with Christ.²

To me, the interpretation is more difficult to understand than the verses themselves! So, let us try to understand these two verses on our own. “From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away,” this refers to the abolition of the Eucharist by **Antichrist**, which will happen when he reveals his real colours and starts persecuting the Church. “The abomination that makes desolate is set up” refers to **Antichrist** (also known as the **Abomination of Desolation**) declaring himself as god and ordering people to worship him or else face the consequences. These two events, the declaration of the divinity of **Antichrist** and the abolition of the daily sacrifice of the Eucharist mark the beginning of the **Great Tribulation**. So, it follows that the thousand two hundred and ninety days refers to the length of the **Tribulation** (three and a half years, forty two months etc.). This of course is symbolic and is interpreted as a time that shall be shortened, as the Lord Himself tells us, “And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt

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²Hippolytus: Scholia on Daniel

24:22) The second figure, “thousand three hundred and five and thirty days” refers to time of the only event that is expected to happen after the end of the **Tribulation**, the second coming of Christ, the day of the Lord, as we are told in Matthew 24:29-30:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

From this we can assume that the forty-five days (1335-1290) is the period between the end of **Antichrist**, which we narrated in the previous chapter and the second coming of Christ, also referred to as “the day of the Lord.”

Of course the figure 45 is also symbolic for no one is supposed to know the time of the second coming of the Lord which will be “as a thief in the night.” (I Thes 5:2, II Pet 3:10, Rev 16:15) All we can say is that it probably refers to a two digit number of days, a short time.

What will happen during this period, known figuratively as the forty five days? A lot! Let us find out what the Bible tells us concerning them.

If we read Matthew 24 carefully, we can find out these events that will follow one another. Verses 1-14 tell us of the “beginning of sorrows” or the signs that will happen before **Antichrist** is revealed: wars, pestilences, earthquakes and persecutions. Then in Matthew 24:15-18, we are told about **Antichrist (Abomination of Desolation)** declaring himself as god and the urgency by which we should flee him, “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains. Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.” This urgency is explained later, since when this happens, the great tribulation will start and the Church will take flight, being carried away into the wilderness by the wings of the great eagle. (Rev 12), “For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days

should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.” (Matt 24:21-22)

Immediately after this we are told, “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matt 24:23-27)

You see, even after Satan loses his greatest advocate (**Antichrist**) he tries to lure the elect to their destruction. Now that **Antichrist** is gone, having been sent alive to Gehenna by the Lord Himself, the only expectation of the elect, who were given victory over **Antichrist** and the **Great Tribulation** by the Lamb in whom they trusted, and to whom they remained steadfastly faithful, is the coming of the Son of God to take them into His heavenly kingdom. Satan, knowing this, will use this heightened expectation of the imminent second coming to his own advantage. How is he going to do this? By false christs! Rumors that Christ has appeared here or that he is there, in the hope of luring the elect into believing in these false christs and thus losing their salvation. Imagine how ingenious this plan is, if he (Satan) could not deceive the elect by the greatest false christ of all time (**Antichrist**) then he tries something else, the various false christs that will appear during the “forty-five days” and try to deceive even if it were possible, the elect. It is for this reason that the Lord admonishes us at length, “if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. ... if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. ... Behold, I have told you before.” Then He tells us the secret of His second coming, “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” This means, since when lightning appears every body sees it whether they are in the east or in the west, so also will be the coming of the Son of Man, every one will see Him equally, and no one needs to be told about His coming, for “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him.” (Rev 1:7)

Since every eye shall see Him, then it would be foolish to listen to others telling us that he has already come! And a further clue is given us in the same verse, “Behold He cometh with clouds.” So, Christ, unlike **Antichrist** and the false christs that will come after he is gone, will come on the clouds, from heaven and not from earth.

This will be the desperate attempt that Satan will put forward, hoping that if it were possible, to deceive the very elect. But God forbids that those who endure the **Great Tribulation** in the sure knowledge that Christ will come and save them, should follow those false christs.

SATAN’S FINAL ASSAULT ON THE CHURCH:

Having failed to destroy the elect by tricking them into going after the false christs, Satan now plays his last desperate card: an all out assault on the Church using whatever forces remain at his disposal in a world already half destroyed. Revelation 20:7-9 summarizes for us this final assault of Satan on the elect:

And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.

The thousand years has ben dealt with in a previous chapter. The Church believes that the thousand years began with Christ’s redeeming death on the cross, by which the strong man (Satan) was bound and his goods (the souls that were his captives in Hades) were spoiled (Matt 12:29). It will end in the last days before the second coming of the Lord.

Satan will use nations that have not taken part in the events that ended in the destruction of Babylon. These nations are called Gog and Magog. Note that we are told that they “compassed the camp of the saints about” that means they came against the place prepared by God for the “Woman clothed by the Sun” (the Church) where she shall be kept away from the tyranny of **Antichrist**, (see Revelation 12 and our chapter on the flight of the Church.) More details about this final war against the church are given to us in Ezekiel 38, 39 and Zechariah 14:

Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh,¹ Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Kush, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee. (Ezek 38:2-6)

Almost all commentators agree that Gog, the land of Magog refers to parts of the former Soviet Union. Specifically it refers to the lands north of the Black Sea. Some people think that Rosh symbolizes modern day Russia and Meshech symbolizing Moscow. Tubal may refer to either the Tobol river which runs for a 1000 miles (1,600 km) through Kazakhstan and ends in Siberia near Tobolsk or Tobolsk itself. Whether we accept these views or not, the consensus of opinion is that this refers to the former Soviet Union, a great force that so far has not been involved in the turmoil close to the end.

We are also told that together with the former Soviet Union, Persia (modern day Iran,) Kush (modern day Sudan) as well as Libya will come marching against the Church of the elect.

Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord GOD; It shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought: And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, To take a spoil, and to take a prey; to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations. (Ezek 38:9-12)

¹KJV has “chief prince” instead of Prince of Rosh, but almost all other versions including the Arabic version have “prince of Rosh” The Septuagint has “prince of Rohs”

Notice that the Church in its place of refuge will have no fortifications or walls or gates since the only defense she will have are the two wings of the great eagle.

"And to the woman were given two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." That refers to the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (the half of the week) during which the tyrant is to reign and persecute the Church, which flees from city to city, and seeks concealment in the wilderness among the mountains, possessed of no other defense than the two wings of the great eagle, that is to say, the faith of Jesus Christ, who, in stretching forth His holy hands on the holy tree, unfolded two wings, the right and the left, and called to Him all who believed upon Him, and covered them as a hen her chickens.¹

Note also how the place is described as "desolate places that are now inhabited" which agrees with Revelation 12, where we are told that the Church will be given "two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." (Rev 12:14)

The Church will be kept safe and "nourished" or looked after by the Lord during her sojourn in the wilderness in the same way that the Lord nourished and protected the Church of the Old Testament for forty years in the wilderness of Sinai. The prophecy of Ezekiel tells us that the Church will be at rest and dwelling safely. We are also told in the same prophesy that the "camp of the saints" or the place of refuge of the elect during the **Great Tribulation** will be made up of "peoples that are gathered out of the nations," that means the elect from all over the world will be gathered in this one place.

Satan's final assault on the Church will fail, even as his first assault on the fleeing Church failed, as we are told in Revelation 12:15-16:

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.

¹Hippolytus of Rome: Treatise on Christ and Antichrist

Revelation 20:9-10 tells us how God will defend his elect against this final assault of Satan, and his armies of Gog, Magog and their allies:

and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The destruction of the armies gathered by Satan will herald the destruction of the world, since immediately after that verse we are told that the great day of Judgment will come about:

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. (Rev 20: 11-12)

Now we have to pause a little, for before the destruction of the world will come about some very important events that are narrated for us in various parts of the scripture, which we will summarize here.

THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matt 24:30)

Here is what St.Cyril tells us about the sign of the Son of Man:

But what is the sign of His coming? lest a hostile power dare to counterfeit it. And then shall appear, He says, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. Now Christ's own true sign is the Cross; a sign of a luminous Cross shall go before the King, plainly declaring Him who was formerly crucified.¹

¹St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical lectures, lecture XV

A luminous Cross will appear in heaven, then the Lord will be seen by all in His second coming, awesome and full of glory. To the elect, this will be the sign of victory, to the rest of the world, this will be the sign of doom, as we are told in Rev 1:7:

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.

Revelation 6:15-17 gives us more detail of the terror of the people of the world at seeing the Lord in His Parousia (second coming):

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

On the contrary, when the elect see the sign of the Son of Man, and then see the Lord coming on the clouds, they shall sing this song that Isaiah 25:9 prophetically proclaims:

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

THE SOUND OF THE TRUMPET:

Saint Paul tells us another detail about the second coming of our Lord:

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (I Thes 4:16)

The Church Fathers always believed that the Archangel (Michael) will sound his trumpet to announce the resurrection of those who died in Christ. That is why, in the hymns of Easter, we call Archangel Michael

“the trumpeter of the resurrection.” The trumpet is also mentioned in I Corinthians 15:52:

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

THE RAPTURE:

Immediately following that, Christ will send His angels, to gather the rest of the elect who are alive at His second coming, and bring them up to meet Him on the clouds. They will not die, but will be suddenly changed into the body of the resurrection, a body similar to the body of the resurrection of the Lord (an immortal body). Please note that in I Corinthians 15:52, we are told that when the trumpet sounds, the dead (in Christ) shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. St. Paul emphasizes this again in I Corinthians 15:51 “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” St. Paul here is speaking about the elect that will be alive at the second coming of our Lord, who will not sleep (die), but will be changed. That the change will make our mortal bodies similar to the glorified body of the resurrection of the Lord is explained to us in Philippians 3:21, “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” St. Paul emphasizes that the resurrection of those who died in Christ will precede the “change” of those who are alive at the second coming:

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. (I Thes 4:15-16)

The change of the bodies of the elect will be followed immediately by “the rapture,” a technical term applied to the gathering of the elect unto the Lord in the clouds, as we are told in 1 Thessalonians 4:17:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

So, the dead in Christ shall rise first and come with the Lord in His second coming, since St. Paul tells us that those which are alive at the second coming will be caught up **with them** (*i.e.*, with the risen saints) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. This agrees with what St. Jude tells us in Jude 1:14-15 about the saints coming with the Lord:

Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

This taking up of the elect to meet the Lord on the clouds has already been declared to us by the Lord Himself in Matthew 24:30-31:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Revelation 14 tells us that this gathering of the elect will precede the punishment of Gog and his armies, and the destruction of the world:

And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. (Rev 14:14-20)

This scene, which St. John saw in heaven clearly shows us two events following one another in sequence. The first sickle that reaps the earth corresponds to the angels gathering the elect to meet the Lord in the air, the ‘rapture of the elect.’ The second sickle is the destruction of the wicked represented by the enormous blood shed. Note that the second reaping is ordered by the angel having power over fire, for the destruction of the world will be by “fire which comes down from God.”

THE FIERY DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD:

There are many verses in the Bible that tell us that the day of the Lord (the second coming of the Lord) will be associated with a fiery end of the world. Here are some of these verses:

Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. (Ps 50:3)

A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. (Ps 97:3)

For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. (Isa 66:15-16)

The strongest indication of this, however, is given to us in St. Peter’s second epistle, chapter 3:

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (II Pet 3:7)

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (II Pet 3:10)

To me, personally, the image given by St. Peter for the fiery end of the world looks like that of a major thermo-nuclear war. Another passage in the Old Testament that strongly suggests this is found in the Book of Zechariah:

And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. (ZEC 14:12)

Jerusalem here refers to the Church, the true Jerusalem rather than the earthly Jerusalem that killed the prophets and stoned those that were sent unto her, and to whom the Lord said, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” (Matt 23:37-38) The people that are fighting against her are Gog and Magog and all the earth that is now gathered around Satan in his final assault on the Church. There was a movie made about what would happen in a Thermo-nuclear war. The movie was actually very well researched, it was called “The Day After.” Any one who had watched that movie will relate to the words “Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.” The Bible even tells us how this massive thermo-nuclear war will come to pass:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, **and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.** (Zec 14:13)

And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: **every man's sword shall be against his brother.** (Eze 38:21)

What this suggests is that the Lord will cause confusion among the multitude of nations coming to destroy the Church, so that, instead, their weapons shall be deployed against each other. Imagine if all the nuclear warheads that are left in the apostate world would be fired in all directions. That is what these passages suggest to me. The whole earth will be a gigantic ball of fire. The prophet Isaiah gives us the grim result in Isaiah 34:9

And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

The elect, of course, will be spared this, since they will be “caught up to meet the Lord in the air” moments before God passes His righteous judgment against the world and the prince of the world.

The general resurrection will have to follow so that the judgment takes place. Those who died in Christ will be resurrected first, and will come with the Lord in His second coming. Those who are alive at the Lord’s Parousia will change and will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The rest of the dead will then be resurrected to be judged. That is why we say that Christ will come to judge the living and the dead.

THE HERESY OF THE “LEFT BEHIND”:

For 19 centuries, the Church believed that the “rapture” or the snatching of the elect from earth will happen on the great day of the Lord, just before the end of the world. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a mercenary preacher decided to change this universal understanding of the rapture and substitute it with his own erroneous views. The error spread like fire among many who call themselves “Evangelicals” and millions are now lead astray by this fallacy. Here is what Time Magazine recently wrote about the preacher and his innovation:

An Anglican priest turned travelling evangelical preacher named John Nelson Darby, who arrived in the U.S. in 1862 for the first of seven visits, bearing a radical new eschatology. His most striking innovation was the timing of a concept called the ‘Rapture,’ drawn from the Apostle Paul’s prediction that believers would fly up to meet Christ in heaven. Most theologians understood it as part of the Resurrection at time’s very end. Darby repositioned it at the Apocalypse’s very beginning, a small shift with large implications. It spared true believers the Tribulation, leaving the horror to non believers and the doctrinally misled, thus moving Christianity’s us-vs. -them concept of heaven and hell into a new and exciting theatre.¹

¹Time Magazine July 1, 2002

According to this fantasy, true believers (meaning Evangelical Christians) will be caught up into heaven just before the **Great Tribulation** and thus being spared the tyranny of **Antichrist** or the agonizing decision whether to follow him or be banished with the rest of the elect. They leave this to the rest of us, who disagree with their fantastic but wrong doctrine. The heresy lead into literally hundreds of books, tapes, videos and even movies showing the snatching of the “true Christians” from among the others, who will be “left behind!”

The danger of this heresy is that it gives those who believe it a false sense of security. It makes teaching about **Antichrist** and the **Great Tribulation** unnecessary, since according to the myth, “true Christians” will be taken up to heaven to be spared all of the above! Of course those who are deceived by this myth will be caught unawares by the coming of **Antichrist** and the **Great Tribulation**, and, having allowed themselves to be duped into this false sense of security, will be among the first that will join themselves to the Tyrant, since they will be totally unprepared to deal with the situation at hand.

The videos and movies that are made about this are very entertaining! But they are more science fiction than doctrine!

THE JUDGMENT:

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye

gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (Matt 25:31-46)

This is how the Lord Himself describes the day of Judgment. The day of Judgment, of course has to be preceded by the general resurrection, because, as St. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done **in his body**, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” So, the judgment has to be for both body and soul in as much as both body and soul have been partners in the deeds whether they be good or evil, so, both have to give account of these deeds and receive the wages of these deeds. This is also clear from the words of our Lord in John 5:28-29:

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Note that the deciding factor here is works! “Those that have done good” and “they that have done evil.” The same is said in Proverbs 24:12, “Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?” And again in Matthew 16:27 we are told, “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

There is nothing said here about faith! No verse in the Bible says that the judgment will be according to faith! So, what will happen to the unbelievers? To those who do not believe in God? Psalm 1 answers this question for us, “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.” (Ps 1:5) Why would the ungodly or the unbelievers not stand in the judgment? Our Lord answers this question for us in John 3:17-18:

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already.

According to the Bible, the unbelievers have already been condemned. They do not deserve to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Only those who believe will be judged, and only on the basis of works!

This brings us to another error that has crept into some Christian congregations recently. This is called “The doctrine of eternal security” or “assured salvation.” This error that has crept into Christian thought within the last 100 years, states that a “believer” has already been saved by the grace of God. He is assured of a place in heaven on account of God’s own purpose and election. According to this view, works are worthless. Some people even teach that works are an “insult” to the all-sufficient grace of God. Those people depend on verses like the one quoted above “He that believes on him is not condemned” to prove their error.

What is meant here is that there are two stages for the judgment, one based on faith, and this decides whether you will stand trial or be summarily condemned. And according to the verse quoted above, if you are an unbeliever, you have already been condemned and you don’t deserve to stand trial. Those who believe, are not condemned in this “triage” to separate the believers from the unbelievers, but they still have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to their works!

Those on the left (the goats of Matthew 25) protest their judgment by saying, “Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?” People who say these words are not unbelievers! They address the Judge as “Lord” and insist that they would have done these good works had they realized that it was the Lord indeed that needed food and drink and raiment! The same is very clearly stated by our Lord in Matthew 7:21-23:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto

them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

What this means is that you can be a believer, and a “prophet” even an exorcist and a miracle worker in the name of the Lord and yet if you “work iniquity” you will not be saved on that judgment day. The same we are told in Luke 13:23-28:

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Those who are going to be left behind once “the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door,” are all believers! They plead with Him saying, “Lord, Lord, open unto us!” They acknowledge Him as Lord, and they want to be with Him. They even give evidence of knowing Him by saying, “We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.” Probably meaning, “we have often taken Communion and listened to many sermons,” but they hear the awesome words, “depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” He did not say “depart from me, all ye unfaithful ones” or “O ye of little faith” but “all ye workers of iniquity.” There shall be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The Parable of the ten virgins illustrates this very clearly:

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them

that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (Matt 25:1-12)

You see, all ten were virgins, which means pure and dedicated. All were invited to the wedding, which means they were among those who were called. They all went to meet the Bridegroom, that means that they all knew the Bridegroom and believed in Him. They all wanted to be with Him. The difference is that five took their lamps (faith) but did not take oil (works). The rest is history. You see, faith without works is like a lamp without oil, it cannot shine. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 5:16) The works are the light that shines, and without works your faith cannot shine. Listen to what St James tells us, “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?” (Jas 2:20) “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also!” (Jas 2:26) So, according to Biblical teachings if you think that faith alone gives you “eternal security” or “assurance of salvation” you are “foolish” (Matt 25:2) and “vain.” (Jas 2:20) The Book of Revelation gives us more information about the day of Judgment:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man **according to their works**. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:12-15)

We are told that books were opened, books that record our works, for we are told that people will be judged, “out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**.” And once again we are told, “and they were judged every man **according to their works**.”

What about the other Book, the one called “the Book of Life”? The Book of life is a record of all believers. Your name was entered into the Book of Life when you were baptized. When the priest inquires into the name of the baptized and enters it into a register, he is not only doing this for book-keeping purposes. He is doing this as a symbol that the name of the baptized has been entered into the Book of Life.

However, having your name in the Book of Life is no guarantee that you will inherit Eternal Life because, through your works, you can have your name blotted out of the Book of Life! The Lord himself tells us so, in Rev 3:5, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

A condition for having your name **Not blotted out, out of the book of life**, is that, you have to **overcome!** Overcome what? Overcome the world like the Lord, Who told us, “I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) Overcome sin and the lusts of the flesh. To overcome means to strive to enter through the strait gate, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” (Luke 13:24)

This is very frightening! “Many shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able!” How come? “For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt 22:14) Every one that has been baptized is “called” but few are the chosen, those who strive and overcome! This “calling” only gives us hope not assurance as St. Paul tells us in Eph 1:18, “The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the **hope** of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” And again, in Ephesians 4:4, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one **hope** of your calling.” The calling gives us hope that we may be “Chosen” or “elected.” St. Peter reinforces this in II Peter 1:10, “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” So, we have to be diligent to make both our calling and election “sure.” St. Peter does not say “do nothing, just believe and your calling and your election shall be assured.” He says, be diligent to make your calling and your election assured! And St. Paul very clearly tells us the same thing in different words, “**work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**” (Phil 2:12) With **fear and trembling**, he says, not **assurance and security**. I think we have said

enough about the fallacy of “eternal security” or “assured salvation.”

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH:

God promised us a new heaven and a new earth, in which He will live forever with His elect, in eternal happiness. God will restore the world and all the creation into the happy state in which He had created it, before the fall of Adam and Eve brought a curse on the earth. (Gen 3:17) God’s new creation is called the New (or Heavenly) Jerusalem. Many passages of the Bible speak about this new world:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (Isa 65:17-19)

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (II Pet 3:13)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (Rev 21:1)

What these verses tell us is a new creation, a new heaven and earth, in which God will dwell with His people, His elect, those who had pleased Him since the beginning. We are told that there will be joy, no more weeping or crying. There will be sin no more, for righteousness shall dwell in the new world. The Book of Revelation tells us that the sea will be no more, for the sea in Apocalyptic language symbolizes sin. That is why Revelation 13, tells us that the Beast (**Antichrist, Abomination of Desolation**) will come out of the sea which symbolizes sin. Note that St. Paul calls him “that man of sin.” (II Thes 2:3) The theme of joy and lack of sorrow is further emphasized for us in Isaiah 35:10:

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Book of Revelation gives more information about this new world:

And I, John, saw the holy city, **new Jerusalem**, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Rev 21:2-4)

Here we are once again assured that pain, sorrow, and even death will be found no more in this **new Jerusalem**. The Book of Isaiah also tells us about the demise of death:

He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. (Isa 25:8)

In this new world there will be no need for sun or moon, for God Himself will be the light of this heavenly Jerusalem:

The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. (Isa 60:19-21)

The Book of Revelation has a parallel passage to this:

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, **the holy Jerusalem**, descending **out of heaven** from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the

light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. (Rev 21:10-11, 22-24)

Another very important aspect of the heavenly Jerusalem, is that, there we will be able to see God face to face:

And they shall see **his face**; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev 22:4-5)

St. John lets us in on a secret, we will be able to **see God** because we will be **like Him**: “when he shall appear, we shall be **like him**; for we shall **see him** as he is.” (I John 3:2) Not only will we be able to see God, but we will be able to see **Him as He is**. That means we will be able to know Him perfectly. “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (I Cor 13:12) Because we will see God face to face, we will be able to know him perfectly, even as much as he knows us! Because we will be like Him, we will be able to see Him as He is, in His Divinity! It is this vision of God and knowledge of God that is the most wonderful aspect of the heavenly Jerusalem.

There are certain difficult passages about this new world that are “hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” (II Pet 3:16) We would like to discuss these passages and see how the “unlearned and unstable” use them to teach “diverse and strange doctrines”: (Heb 13:9)

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. (Isa 11:6-9)

The “unlearned and unstable” use these verses as “proof” of a thousand year rule of Christ on earth, the so called millennial rule. The Church has condemned this teaching in the Second Ecumenical council. What these people say is that this description of the wolf co-existing with the lamb and the lion eating straw must happen on earth during Christ’s millennial rule. What they fail to understand is that these prophecies pertain to the new earth that the Lord promised us: to the heavenly Jerusalem. They shake their heads when we tell them this! They ask, “Will the heavenly Jerusalem have animals?”! We answer, Why not?

The new heaven and the new earth are a restoration of heaven and earth to their pure state before the fall of man. And, before the fall of man, the lamb and the wolf co-existed, and the lion ate straw, as we are told in Genesis 1:30:

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.

The whole creation was vegetarian, including man, as we are told in Genesis 1:29:

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

Animals lived in peace with each other and with man. There was no violence among humans nor among animals, nor between humans and animals. The whole creation of God lived in perfect harmony, until that fateful day when Adam and Eve disobeyed God.

When Adam and Eve fell, human nature fell too. Adam’s first born killed his brother because of that fallen nature. The rest of the creation suffered because of the fall. The earth was cursed:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. (Gen 3:17-18)

Because of Adam's sin, the nature of the earth became corrupted, instead of bringing up "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (Gen 2:9) it started to bring up thorns and thistles.

The nature of the animals too became fallen. God created all the animals tame and under the authority of Adam and Eve:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Gen 1:26-27)

Man was created in God's image of authority, that's why we say in the liturgy of St. Gregory, "Thou hast inscribed in me the image of Thine Authority."

God gave Adam the honour of naming all the creatures, and by doing so, God has established Adam's authority over all other creatures, for he that names another is greater than he who receives the name.

And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. (Gen 2:19-20)

But when Adam fell, he lost this authority over other creatures. In Genesis 37:20 we learn that beasts can devour a man:

Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

You see, even the beasts became evil after the fall of Adam. But, in the restoration of the seed of Adam, the earth that has been cursed will also be restored with all the creatures on it. Here is what St. Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-23:

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

What this means is that even as we are groaning within ourselves awaiting for that restoration of our nature to incorruptibility, the whole creation is also groaning and waiting with us for this restoration, because once we are restored to incorruptibility, they too will be “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” Then the wolf shall co-exist with the lamb, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

THE LAKE OF FIRE:

If God's elect will live happily ever after in the heavenly Jerusalem, the wicked and the unbelievers will be eternally tormented in the lake of fire.

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh. (Isa 66:24)

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Rev 21:8)

THE DAY WILL COME SUDDENLY:

All these things will happen suddenly and unexpectedly, that is why we should watch and be sober and prepare ourselves for that day, hoping to stand on the right hand of the Lord, so that we may enjoy the delights of the heavenly Jerusalem.

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. (Luk 17:26-30)

For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. (I Thes 5:2-3)

St. Paul later on tells us that we should not be afraid of this:

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (I Thes 5:4-6)

Even though we as children of light should not be afraid of that day, yet we have to “watch and be sober” St. Peter tells us the same thing:

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. (IIPet 3:17)

WE SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID:

As Christians, we should not be afraid to think about these things, but, if we stay sober and faithful, should rather look forward to that Day of the Lord. For, even though it will bring destruction to the world, it will bring salvation and eternal life for us. We should encourage each other and strengthen those who are weak.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. (Luk 21:28)

Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. (II Pet 3:11)

Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. (Isa 35:3-4)

Surely I come quickly.

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. (Rev 22:20)

IS ANTICHRIST ALREADY IN THE WORLD?

In the last issue of PAROUSIA, of November 2002, we published the final chapter of our series, THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. It never occurred to me that we will re-visit that subject so soon! Things, however, worked differently than we anticipated, as I will explain.

Sometime during the month of December, I was researching something on the Net when this screen attracted my attention in one of the web-sites:

Maitreya is the Biblical Antichrist... 666!*

He exists on Earth right now, and this is NO JOKE.

Very soon, he will make his presence known,
and by then it will be too late!

Mankind is in real danger!

I remembered that we wrote something about this Maitreya in one of our previous chapters on THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION. I looked into my files and indeed, in the December 1998 edition of PAROUSIA, I found the following passage:

In the article "The Reign of Antichrist" referred to above and which was published in Parousia six years ago, it was mentioned that **Antichrist** will be introduced as "universal teacher." A few days ago, while on the plane back from St. John's, NF, I read this ad in the Globe and Mail (December 12, 1998):

AS THE BUDDHA of Compassion, Messiah, Imam Mahdi and Christ, Maitreya the World Teacher is now here. All humanity will see him soon. How will we recognize him? What is he saying? Free info: 1-888-278-TARA.

At the time I made no further comment on this small ad in the classified section of Canada's largest newspaper. I merely pointed to the similarity between the word "World Teacher" in the ad and a previous article published in PAROUSIA, December 1992, in which **Antichrist** was presented as "universal teacher".

The next step was to do a search of the word “Maitreya” on the Net. The shock came when “Yahoo” search engine churned out 89,500 sites, not only in English, but also in French, Italian, Russian, Romanian, Japanese, Korean, and a whole pile of other languages. What I saw on these sites was mind boggling, and I intend to share with you some of these things, adding my two pennies worth of thoughts, as I usually do.

A few sites attacked him outright as **Antichrist**, including an influential Catholic site. One site tried calculating his name and came up with 666, but the article is not very convincing. Some sites advertised books about him, others CD’s or tapes. There were retreats offered and youth clubs named after him, as well as all sorts of places where you can buy water blessed by him. A pharmacy in France even had “water tablets” made from springs he is supposed to have “magnetized”!

It was quite obvious that he had a powerful organization working for him, promoting him as Lord, Saviour, Teacher and Christ. This is how he is introduced to first time visitors to the sites:

Many now expect the return of their awaited Teacher, whether they call him the Christ, Messiah, the fifth Buddha, Krishna, or the Imam Mahdi. Few know that the Teacher who fulfills all these expectations already lives among us now.

Although the names are different, many believe that they all refer to the same individual: the World Teacher, whose personal name is Maitreya (pronounced my-tray-ah). Preferring to be known simply as the Teacher.

HIS SOCIAL AGENDA:

The world is portrayed to be in a hopeless condition and in need for a great social reformer with a new agenda that caters to the needs of the masses:

At this time of great political, economic and social crisis Maitreya will inspire humanity to see itself as one family, and create a civilization based on sharing, economic and social justice, and global cooperation. He will launch a call to action to save the millions of people who starve to death every year in a world of plenty. Among Maitreya's recommendations will be a shift in social priorities so that adequate food, housing, clothing, education, and medical care become universal rights.

Under Maitreya's inspiration, humanity itself will make the required

changes and create a saner and more just world for all. He is here to inspire us to create a **new era** based on sharing and justice, so that all may have the basic necessities of life: food, shelter, health care, and education.

Maitreya's social concerns are reflected in his list of priorities: an adequate supply of the right food, adequate housing for all, healthcare and education as universal rights. His social message can be summarized in a few words: "Share and save the world." Maitreya knows we will accept his message and that we are on the threshold of an era of peace and goodwill.

In our December 1999 issue we wrote the following:

He will offer a plan for the successful resolution of the world crisis, based on social and political wisdom - the establishing of a uniform political and social structure over the whole world. Mankind, being spiritually blind, will not recognize this project as a cunning snare luring it into the most merciless, continual slavery. To the contrary, man will hail **Antichrist's** manifestations of great erudition, wisdom and genius. Worldwide publicity of **Antichrist** as a genius-thinker, a new leader and a saviour of all peoples will flash throughout all nations in the shortest period of time.

HIS TEACHINGS:

In the same issue we wrote concerning **Antichrist**:

Most of the Fathers believe that **Antichrist** will present to the world a false facade of piety and righteousness that will make him look blameless to the eyes of the naive and unspiritual. Faced with corrupt politicians and money-crazed Tele-evangelists, the world will see in the **Beast (Antichrist)** a fresh leader, whose reputation is so impeccable, that any one trying to warn people against his deceiving exterior will be looked upon as a raving fanatic or even a lunatic!

Maitreya's "sermons" portray him as a champion of morals and family values. Here are excerpts from a sermon on "The Family":

The family unit is the basis of all social life. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized. Today, this pre-eminence is being eroded by neglect, experiment and a misunderstanding of the essential needs of children. All children need a stable background in which to grow and the

exemplars of that process, a mother and father. That not all parents provide that stability or offer worthy examples is, sadly, all too true, and many factors are involved in this unfortunate condition: lack of education, poverty, inadequate housing, illness, and irresponsible and feckless adults, immature and unfit for the rigours of family life.

The young couples commence the subtle and difficult art of upbringing and nourishing of souls in incarnation with little more than their conditioning to guide them. That conditioning they duly pass to their children and so the follies and ignorance perpetuate. Thus the need for the light of a new approach to this sacred service.

Today, there is an added and growing twist to the problem. Mounting sexual experimentation in the field of family life is leading to a distortion and misunderstanding of the true nature of the parent-child relation. The child is a soul in a family of souls. Hierarchy is not the enemy of homosexuals, but the growing demand of homosexual men and women for the right to raise children is mistaken and unhelpful to the child. All people, of whatever sexual persuasion, should think deeply about the nature and purpose of incarnation: the nurturing of souls who need a mother and a father to provide the examples, guidance and karmic opportunity to grow and evolve according to the Plan. If, for whatever reason, people feel inadequate to the task, a wise self-sacrifice for this life may be the wisest course.

Any one reading this will certainly be impressed. Even the position towards homosexuals and their demands for parenting are very reasonable. Certainly, anyone calling such a man “**Antichrist**” will be ridiculed, on account of the “great words”(Dan 7:11) that he is saying.

A PEACE MAKER:

Maitreya’s political views are in no measure less wise than his views on values. Here is what he says about September 11:

The minds of most are focused on the political crisis which threatens to destabilize the world. This is natural and inevitable. The hysteria engendered in the United States by the events of 11 September 2001 has swept across much of the world. The fighting talk and tone of the American President has fanned the flames of fear, making it all but impossible to take a balanced view. That such a balanced view is to be desired is obvious if correct assessments and responses are to be made. Speculation and rumour hold sway in the present situation and drain the vitality of the watching world.

On the Palestinian-Israeli situation, he says:

There can't be true peace in the world until 'the Middle East' question is settled. ... So deep are the feelings aroused in both sides, so entrenched are the positions which each adopt, that I believe Maitreya alone has the spiritual authority to point to the solution and achieve its implementation.

I have always been of the opinion that whoever solves the Arab-Israeli conflict will be **Antichrist!**

On the war with Iraq, he says:

The first priority is true knowledge of the facts. This, however, is hard to find. So many voices chant or scream their various conflicting information, so many opinions are elevated to the status of facts, that few can be believed or listened to with respect. Under such conditions caution and restraint are wisely counselled.

Comprehensive actions are under way and planned, and few can see whereto they lead. Our view is that they will be both positive and negative in effect: the destruction of a bleak and punitive tyranny at the cost of many innocent lives, and the further destabilization of an area already in crisis.

There are voices in America and elsewhere which call for caution but, it would seem, they are not strong enough to stem the passion of the group of zealots around the President. They are lost in the glamour of power and will take much to bring to reason. The oil-rich sands of Iraq are too tempting a target for their unconstrained greed and urge to dominate.

This indifference to world opinion can be maintained for a time only. World events, events of a different nature, are moving now so fast that they will outstrip these men of the past, locked in the outworn methods of the past, and consign them, silently, to that vanishing yesterday. Maitreya, the Great Lord, is emerging and will show the way. Be not discouraged for all will be well.

What wisdom! And what a balanced approach! The last paragraph actually gives me shivers. A war with Iraq that goes wrong can be the opportunity Satan is waiting for (or working hard to achieve) in order to bring about his "Great Lord" that will fix everything.

THE SPIRITUAL SAGE:

Maitreya speaks words of spiritual wisdom that almost match those of the Desert Fathers. Here is a sample:

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” There can be few, especially in the Western world, who are unfamiliar with this ancient Christian maxim. Passed down the generations from adult to child, it has found its way into the moral framework of countless millions. However, despite this long conversance, there are relatively few who appear to understand its meaning, and even fewer who live its wisdom. Essentially, it concerns detachment. The evil -- the criticism, destructive gossip and actions -- which abounds in most so-called ‘spiritual’ groups, succeeds in its intent where there is no detachment. Its bitter and corrosive venom flourishes where it is given the energy of constant thought and defence.

When evil strikes the best defence, then, is detachment. When the hunted animal stands, silent and still, the hunter, baffled, goes empty-handed. When a man is detached -- free from fear and the need to retaliate -- he can calmly leave the Great Law to fight his battle for him. Thus the evil gains not, nor waxes in strength. This profound teaching of the Christ is usually expressed as an injunction against carrying injury or hurt from day to day -- thus prolonging its life and further hurting the victim. This relates closely to the Christian concept of forgiveness. When a man is truly detached he has already forgiven. He waits patiently for the originator of the evil to realize the harm he does to himself, the victim and the group, and to make amends. Thus is the evil blunted and thus is it “sufficient unto the day.”

How can anyone attack a person that says these words of wisdom? How can you tell people, “This could be **Antichrist**, the **man of sin**, the **Beast** of Revelation 13.” Here is a comment by one of his helpers:

When Maitreya, the Great Lord, emerges fully and publicly, He will devote much time to the concept of detachment. Not for nothing is it central to His Teaching: He has already given His thoughts on honesty of mind, sincerity of spirit and detachment. Not all, at first, will be able to follow His thoughts but in time His energy of Love will awaken men to the practicality of His wisdom. Gradually, the old, mechanical reactions of hate and envy will disappear as the social needs are met, as more and more are lifted up by the joy of working for Maitreya's cause.

Maitreya's "sermons" are collected in a book that people can buy on the Net titled: "Messages from Maitreya the Christ"

HIS MIRACLES:

No one who is familiar with the scriptural passages concerning **Antichrist** will be ignorant of the fact that his coming will be accompanied by great false miracles wrought by Satan. People who promote Maitreya, list many miracles that they attribute to him, complete with very impressive pictures on the Internet.

Weeping and bleeding statues; healing crosses of light and springs of water; divine messages inscribed by the seeds within fruits and vegetables; bronze and stone sacred statues that appear to drink milk -- through such steadily increasing signs and manifestations, now widely reported in the media, he has touched the hearts of millions, preparing them for his imminent emergence.

The age of miracles has no end. Miracles? What sort of miracles? And why do we need them? Why? Because Maitreya hopes, by means of these 'miracles', to strengthen the climate of hope and expectancy in to which he can emerge as the Teacher for all humanity. And indeed, over the last couple of years the world has seen thousands of them. So many, in fact, that Life editor Peter Bonventre, in a cover article wrote: "I started investigating and it would seem that there is a real flood of spiritual phenomena taking place all over the world."

CROSSES OF LIGHT:

Before 1988, no one had heard of them. Today, they dazzle people on every continent: crosses of light suddenly appearing in windows. Even science has taken an interest. In a tiny church in Knoxville, Tennessee, they seemed to be 30 or 40 feet high. Weeks before the first one appeared, Benjamin Creme announced that Maitreya was going to amaze the world through a highly unusual light phenomenon.

Up to the present day, new crosses continue to be discovered from Canada to New Zealand, Slovenia to the Philippines, Japan to Germany. "Hundreds of people have visited the home of Carlos and Ines Alvarez in Bakersfield, California, since the couple discovered a large cross of light in their bathroom window on 7 March," the Bakersfield Californian wrote in 1996. "A lot of people think it's a message God is trying to send us because we're in the last days," said Mrs Alvarez. According to the article, the family said a priest told them the cross was a sign of the Second Coming.

The most dangerous deception is that people confuse the coming of **Antichrist** with the second coming of Christ. One simple fact: **Christ comes on the clouds. Antichrist** comes to earth and does miracles.

CIRCLES OF LIGHT:

Share International magazine receives large numbers of photographs from around the world showing ‘circles of light’ which suddenly appear on buildings, pavements and other surfaces reflected when the sun shines, and which often appear and disappear over a period of days and weeks. Benjamin Creme’s Master confirms these light miracles are another sign of Maitreya’s presence in the world. Here is a small selection of photographs from the numerous packages received from Share International readers. (Sorry, we can’t show you the pictures!)

WORLDWIDE HINDU MILK MIRACLE:

On Thursday 21 September 1995 the news swept around the world of the extraordinary miracles of milk-drinking Hindu statues. Never before in history has a simultaneous miracle occurred on such a global scale. Television, radio and newspapers eagerly covered this unique phenomenon, and even sceptical journalists held their milk-filled spoons to the gods -- and watched, humbled, as the milk disappeared. The media coverage was extensive, and although scientists and ‘experts’ created theories of “capillary absorption” and “mass hysteria,” the overwhelming evidence and conclusion was that an unexplainable miracle had occurred.

At the Southall temple in London the chairman Mr Bharbari offered his explanation. “All I know is that our Holy Book says that wherever evil prevails on earth then some great Soul will descend to remove the bondage of evil so that right shall reign. We believe this miracle, and those happening at other Hindu temples, may be a sign that a great Soul has descended, like Lord Krishna or Jesus Christ.”

APPEARANCES AND VISIONS:

Equally impressive is the explosive growth in the number of miraculous appearances. All over the world, people claim they have seen the Virgin Mary or Jesus, or both. Many others talk about having met “angels.” And hundreds of people see Maitreya in dreams, in visions, or in reality.

MAITREYA'S HAND:

The web site shows a picture of a mirror with a big life-like hand imprinted on it. It is scary! Here is the caption:

This is the hand of Maitreya, portrayed on a mirror in a bathroom in Barcelona. The lady-owner went into the guest bathroom and saw a handprint on the mirror and cleaned it off. She thought no more about it. A few days later when she went into her own bathroom she saw the same handprint on the mirror. Like the Turin Shroud, it is a fantastic hand. It is 'real', three-dimensional in appearance, similar to the print on the Turin Shroud of the body of Jesus after the Crucifixion.

HEALING WELLS:

Since his appearance in Nairobi, Maitreya has re-enacted this event by suddenly showing up in the midst of large audiences, usually groups of fundamentalists. In advance, Maitreya often energizes water sources in the vicinity of spots he is about to appear. So far, healing waters have been discovered in Mexico, Germany, China and India.

PRIVATE APPEARANCES:

From 1991 to the present, Maitreya has been appearing miraculously before gatherings of orthodox religious groups worldwide. He addresses them briefly in their own language and is recognized by the majority of people in attendance as their awaited Teacher. Maitreya also creates healing springs of water in the areas near these appearances. These healing waters in Mexico, Germany, and India have drawn millions of visitors.

The promoters have a log for these appearances. They last on the average 17 minutes and they involve religious congregations of 100-200 people: Christians, Moslems, Hindus, and Buddhists. In countries where more than one religion exists, he appears to different religious congregations. For in India, there are separate appearances to Moslems, Hindus and Christians. Christian denominations are not identified except Orthodox denominations which are recorded as Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, etc. One appearance in Egypt is claimed on September 30, 2001 in Luxor to 200 Moslems. There were no appearances to Copts, but there was one appearance in Asmara, Eritrea to 100 Orthodox Christians. The most puzzling appearance, however, is the following:

MAITREYA IN NAIROBI:

On 11 June 1988, a man suddenly appeared before a vast crowd in Nairobi, Kenya, gathered to witness healing prayers. Instantly recognizing the tall, white-robed figure as “Jesus Christ,” the crowds fell down overcome with emotion. The editor of the Swahili edition of the Kenya Times, veteran journalist Job Mutungi, witnessed the event and took some pictures. A summary of his article as it appeared in his newspaper follows. About 6,000 worshippers at Muslim Village, Kawangware, Nairobi, believe they saw Jesus Christ, in broad daylight last week. The scene was at the Church of Bethlehem, where Mary Sinaida Akatsa conducts miracle prayers, praying for the sick, the blind, cripples, mad people, and the barren. Worshippers were singing Mungu ni Mwema, a popular Swahili hymn, when Mary Akatsa interjected. She announced that God had spoken to her and told her to “await a miracle because a very important guest would be coming to give her a very vital message.”

Five minutes later, she asked those who were singing to stop as the messenger had arrived. “Jesus! Jesus! Jesus of Nazareth!” went the loud whispers from the crowd as they raised up their hands in divine welcome.

The tall figure of a barefooted white-robed and bearded man appeared from nowhere and stood in the middle of the crowd. He was walking slowly towards the new church building away from the tent. Mary walked with him, side by side. I stared at the stranger without blinking. Strange, sporadic light wafted on top of his turbaned head, his feet and his entire body.

In clear Swahili, which had no traces of accent, the strange man announced that the people of Kenya were blessed, especially those who had gathered at the venue that afternoon. “We are nearing the time for the reign of heaven. But before that I shall come back and bring a bucketful of blessings for all of you,” the man said. It took the crowd nearly 20 minutes to recover after the man left the meeting in a car belonging to a Mr Gurnam Singh, who offered to give him a lift. But it will probably take Mr Singh his lifetime to recover from the shock he got two minutes later. On reaching the bus terminus, the man informed Mr Singh to stop the car. On getting out, he walked a few paces beside the road and simply vanished into thin air

The promoters comment on the appearances by saying:

The people before whom he appears are in every case fundamentalists of one persuasion or another. Denominationally they vary tremendously but the consistent factor is that they are all extremely dogmatic in their beliefs. Maitreya appears to them to soften them up. These are the groups from whom, throughout the world, he expects the major opposition and rejection. He speaks to them in their own language and many healings take place during the process. He does not say: "I am Maitreya," "I am the Christ," or "I am the Imam Mahdi," he just appears, out of the blue, but in a form which they will recognize -- as he did in Nairobi in Kenya, on 11 June 1988, an appearance of which we have photographs.

The pictures from Nairobi are certainly very impressive. They were published in a Nairobi newspaper, and show a man in his thirties, dressed in an Old Testament style white Robe, with a thick black beard, and a turban on his head that bears a lot of similarity to the Biblical turban worn by Aaron and the other priests of the Old Testament. His face is attractive, and one can sense a charismatic aura about him.

HIS APPEARANCE TO THE WORLD:

A major American television network has requested an interview with Maitreya, which he has accepted. This interview will take place at the earliest possible moment, to be determined by Maitreya. It is believed that the timing is relative to the global financial collapse Maitreya predicted and which is now coming to pass.

This interview is expected to be followed by major network interviews in Japan and most probably in the UK, which will lead to an international press conference and, ultimately, Maitreya's 'Day of Declaration.'

Let me make a guess that the invitation is from CNN's Larry King! This interview will be followed by a world wide Television appearance, that is called, "The Day of Declaration":

At the earliest possible moment, Maitreya will demonstrate his true identity. Through a growing public response to his presence, Maitreya will be invited to speak to the entire world via the linked television satellite networks. On this Day of Declaration, we will see his face on television, but he will not actually speak. Instead, each of us will hear his words telepathically in our own language as he simultaneously

impresses the minds of all humanity. His energy of love will enter the hearts of all, galvanizing humanity to save the world. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of spontaneous healings will take place throughout the world. In this way we will know that Maitreya is truly the World Teacher for all humanity.

In our article of December 1999, we wrote:

The **false prophet** will order everyone on earth to make an **image** of the **Beast** (Rev 12:14). “And he had power to give life unto the image of the **Beast**, that the image of the **Beast** should speak. (Rev 12:15). Many people believe that this image that comes to life and speaks is none other than the almighty Television! Saint John in the Revelation saw an image of **Antichrist** in every house and the image was “alive” and speaking. Of course, St. John did not know that something called T.V. would be invented nineteen centuries later.

This means that **Antichrist** will use Television to its maximum potential. He will be on every channel and people will be worshipping him even at home when they see him on T.V. delivering his sermons or giving his “blessing” to his “flock”.

The promoters give us some more information on this “Day of Declaration” on which their “Christ” will appear to the world:

This [Day of Declaration] will be a repetition, only now on a world scale, of the true happenings of Pentecost, 2,000 years ago. . . . In celebration of this event, Pentecost will become one of the major festivals of the New World Religion which, eventually, Maitreya will inaugurate.

In the same issue of December 1999, under the heading “**Antitheotokos**”, we analysed in depth the pretensions of an evil spirit that pretends to be the holy Virgin Mary. We gave this evil spirit the name “**Antitheotokos**” (false Theotokos) This false prophetess also spoke about a “second Pentecost.” Here is what she said about this:

The glorious reign of Christ will correspond to a general flowering of holiness and purity, of love and justice, of joy and peace. For the hearts of men will be transformed by the powerful force of the “holy spirit,” who will pour himself out upon them through the miracle of the second

Pentecost.

The miraculous event of the second Pentecost must now be accomplished, implored and expected by you. Again, there will be descending upon the church and upon all humanity miraculous tongues of fire.

RELATIONSHIP TO ANTICHRIST:

Every Christian who knows the Bible, knows that **Antichrist** has to come first before Christ makes His Second Coming as we are told in II Thes 2:3-4:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that **man of sin** be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

The problem now is the first one that comes is **Antichrist**. Maitreya has to solve this problem if he wants to have any chance with Christians. Here is how he does this:

The Anti-Christ is a sum total of all that is negative in the world today. Just as there is light and those who work in the light, there are those who prefer the darkness. Their belief is that they are in truth, but they are in their illusion. They do believe that they are right, and that those in the light, who are positive and happy, are wrong.

The Anti-Christ is an energy. An energy made up of the collective thought of anyone who is negative. Just as there is the Ultimate Being, the God of the Light, there is the God of the dark, the Anti-Christ. The more positive you are, the less fear you have, the more faith that you have, the more you support the Light, the more you will move forward.

Here is the trick, tell people that **Antichrist** is not a person but an “energy” and then you don’t have a problem.

HIS BLASPHEMY:

Perhaps the most dangerous teaching of Maitreya is his teachings about Christ. Here is where we can comfortably expose his false piety and say with confidence he is an antichrist. Here is what he says:

Jesus of Nazareth and the Christ are not one and the same person. This is one of the most difficult claims for many Christians to accept in connection with Maitreya, the World Teacher, and it therefore needs some further explanation.

In fact, the title Christ does not refer to an individual at all. It is the name of a function in the Hierarchy of Masters of Wisdom, that group of advanced beings who guide the evolution of humanity from behind the scenes. Whoever stands at the head of this Hierarchy automatically becomes the World Teacher.

Maitreya, who embodies the energy we call the Christ Principle, has held that office for over two millennia. In Palestine he manifested himself as the Christ to inaugurate the Age of Pisces, then beginning. The method he used is called spiritual overshadowing, that is, his consciousness informed and guided the actions and teachings of his disciple Jesus. It was, therefore, the consciousness of the Christ, Maitreya, which was seen and experienced by those around Jesus.

Here you have it! Jesus is a disciple of Maitreya! He almost fooled us with his sermons and his false righteousness. Here is some more:

The events from Jesus' life and his words have been greatly misinterpreted due to this little-understood connection between his work and that of Maitreya the Christ. This has given rise to the age-old theological point of contention -- namely, whether Jesus was God or man, or perhaps both together. The answer is that Jesus was a man who, as a result of the process of evolution, became a Son of God --. Others had gone before him on that path and many have taken it since.

Now we know that he is an imposter (not that we thought otherwise!) For anyone who denies the divinity of Christ is **Antichrist**. Hear some more blasphemy:

Two thousand years ago in Palestine, the Lord Maitreya's consciousness entered into that of His disciple Jesus, at the Baptism. For three years, Jesus demonstrated the consciousness of the Christ -- the Lord Maitreya -- and became Jesus, the Christ, or Messiah.

The imposter claims that our Lord will be assisting him in his role when he manifests himself in the world:

With the emergence of Maitreya, the Master Jesus is playing a major role for the second time. This open collaboration, which will be visible to all, will end any lingering doubts concerning the true relationship between Maitreya the Christ and his disciple, the Master Jesus.

He then tries to woo the Christians by saying that he and Christ are one! Here is how it goes:

Thus the seemingly paradoxical claim that Jesus and the Christ are not the same person, in the literal sense of the word, is more reasonable than it would appear. Those Christians who find it difficult to accept that “their” teacher is not the highest leader of all humanity may, however, take solace in a second paradox: Jesus and Maitreya the Christ were (and are) one, in the sense that they, each on his own level, work together in perfect concord to further the divine Plan.

THE ULTIMATE BLASPHEMY:

I am the creator of the universe.
 I am the Father and Mother of the universe.
 Everything came from Me.
 Everything shall return to Me.
 Mind, spirit and body are My temples,
 for the Self to realize in them
 My Supreme Being and Becoming.

RESISTANCE AGAINST HIM:

Maitreya knows that he cannot fool the elect (but that will not stop him from trying) so, he warns those who are fooled by him that some people will actually resist him:

Not all men, however, will recognize Maitreya as the One awaited by all the nations. Steeped deeply in the world's scriptures, however fragmented, and however discoloured by time, many will turn away, at first, from this latest manifestation of God's continuing Plan for the world. They will find it hard to reconcile Maitreya's simple and practical approach with their mystical expectations and dogmas. Do not be surprised, therefore, by their angry and anxious rejection. Thus it was in Jesus' time. Thus, also, when the Buddha began His work. Thus, too, did Krishna know dissent and condemnation. Thus has it always been when the New has presented itself to the Old.

He expects opposition to come first and foremost from priests and bishops and especially those who wear distinctive priestly clothes, so he warns his followers about this:

Be not afraid, therefore, when the “men of cloth” raise their voices against the Great Lord, naming Him anti-Christ and arch-deceiver, for they know little of the laws which underlie their faiths and act and speak from ignorance and fear. They, too, are tested in this fashion.

RESISTANCE IS FUTILE:

Maitreya is trying to warn the elect that resistance is futile and that sooner or later, he will prevail:

The ‘status quo’ cannot be upheld. Needless to say, the ‘status quo’ can never be upheld for long; change and evolution are the very nature of life, and, for good or ill, impose the pattern of the new. The form and quality of the new structure are conditioned by men themselves. Thus useless it is to resist the Great Magnet that drives all life forward on its perfecting course.

When Maitreya and His Group walk freely among men, much will be revealed of the laws which govern life. Men’s bafflement will give way to a dawning understanding and a wiser response to the phenomenon of change. The old die-hards, of course, will remain, but their influence will ebb as the new takes hold. Thus will it be, and thus will men realize better the nature of the adventure we call life.

Notice how he is called “the Great Magnet.” In one of my articles, published December, 1998, I used the same imagery:

I often explain the perils of coming near the **Abomination of Desolation** by using a parable! If you have a compass, it will always direct you in your way. For it will always point to the North Pole (elementary physics!) The compass is your free will, always directing you to heaven. (The North Pole is on the top of the globe towards heaven!) Now, if you bring your compass close to a **strong magnet**, it will no longer point to the North Pole, but will always point to the magnet. The magnet is the deceiver, and if you come near him he will captivate your free will and you will not be able to go back to your previous condition. That is why the Lord in a most urgent way admonishes us to “flee” and to “remember Lot’s wife.”

The second important point here is the fact that we were not told by the Lord to resist him but rather to avoid him and run away from him, as we are instructed in Matthew 24:15-18:

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

We have explained this sufficiently throughout the series that we published over the last five years, and which is now available in book form for the benefit of those who would like to learn more about surviving **Antichrist** and the **Great Tribulation**.

Now we are left with the million dollar question, Is Maitreya *the Antichrist*? I am not so sure. I have my doubts. Mainly, because he is following the script given to us by the Fathers, so closely. There are no variations or twists. The plot is so simple and unsophisticated. Perhaps I am mistaken. Perhaps the spiritual ignorance in the world has reached such a degree that even this simplistic plot will work.

But, if he is not the real McCoy, who is he and why is he here? I can offer two theories to explain this.

THE WEATHER BALLOON THEORY:

When governments want to introduce a controversial piece of legislation or implement a controversial project, they sometimes leak the information to the press, in order to gauge the reaction of the people. Like scientists who release “weather balloons” to find out which way the wind is blowing. Satan may be using Maitreya to find out the reaction of people to the idea, and then use the information gained in doing a better job on the real thing.

THE FALSE ANTICHRIST THEORY:

Throughout the series, I tried to present as much as possible the complete sayings of the Fathers concerning **Antichrist** and the end of the world. I have however, omitted some sayings because they were against the Biblical facts. As an example, are the medieval “prophecies” that spoke of **Antichrist** as a horrible person, who will kill the Pope of

Rome and usurp the papacy. They claim that when the elect cry to God for help, God will respond by sending into the world a righteous king (invariably called “The Great Monarch”), who will rid the world of the tyrant and institute a reign of peace and prosperity in the world.

It is obvious that this is unbiblical, since St. Paul tells us that it is the Lord that will “consume [him] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of his coming.” (II Thes 2:8) Daniel 8:25 and Revelation 19:20-21 confirm this.

Why then did Satan propagate these false “prophecies”? Here is the scenario that I imagine. Satan knows that Christians expect **Antichrist** to come first, then Christ comes. So, he sends a false **Antichrist**, allows him to do some mischief in the world, and after a while, lo and behold, a knight in shining armour comes to rescue the world from the bad **Antichrist**. And, guess who is the knight in shining armour? He is the real **Antichrist**. It seems too complicated a scenario, but one really worthy of the Father of lies.

Regardless of whether this theory or that will come to pass, one thing is for sure, if Maitreya is not **Antichrist**, then **Antichrist** is around the corner. The magnitude of this Maitreya thing is frightening. I refrained from reproducing the pictures in order that I may avoid starting a real panic among our readers.

A final warning to our dear readers, **do not try to go to the internet to find out more!** It may be dangerous. And, if it does happen that this Maitreya should make a “world wide” T.V. appearance, do not watch. Just go to your room and pray. Remember the magnet analogy. **Curb your curiosity and “remember Lot’s wife.”**

“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.” (Isa 26:20)

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