

# The King of the North -and- THE FINAL CONFLICT

. . . Every soul is to put himself to the task of searching out the truth as it is in Jesus, to know it for himself by the study of the sure word of God. We are not to ask, What is the popular opinion? What saith brother A. or brother B. or any other man? What saith the fathers? But what saith the Lord our God in regard to the saving of the soul? And when we have found what saith the Scriptures, let us act upon the written word; for it is perilous to sit in judgment on the words of inspiration. That which has been written is for our instruction, admonition, and comfort.

Review and Herald, December 20, 1892.



# The King of the North \* \* \* \* \* \* and \* \* \* \* \* \* The King of the South

R. D. Brinsmead

"And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. 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. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. 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 be found written in the book." Daniel 11:40-12:1

Before considering this vital passage point by point, some fundamental principles of interpretation should be considered.

1. *The Bible Its Own Expositor.* We are on dangerous ground if we choose our text from the Bible and preach from the newspaper. The Bible, with its own history of past events and its own interpretation of symbols, is the only safe guide if we would not stray into the field of fancy.

2. *The Purpose of the Prophecies of Daniel.* The prophecies that were made known to Daniel were given during the period of Israel's captivity to Babylon and the Jews' exodus to rebuild the temple and the city of Jerusalem. These prophecies go beyond the captivity and restoration of Daniel's time, however, to the final restoration of God's people to the everlasting kingdom in the time of the end. The restoration of the sanctuary and the rebuilding of Jerusalem after

the Babylonish captivity serves as a type of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the coming kingdom of glory that would follow the papal captivity. If we keep the purpose of these prophecies before us, it will help prevent our interpretation from straying along some tangent theme.

3. *The Repetition in the Four Prophetic Outlines.* There are four prophetic outlines in the book of Daniel: chapters 2,7,8,11. Adventists recognize that the first three cover the same ground, each being an enlargement of the other. The last prophecy of the eleventh chapter is no exception. Each prophetic outline begins with the ruling power in the time of Daniel, and traces down the history of the great powers that came into direct conflict with the people of God. In each outline of kingdoms Rome receives the greatest attention. Daniel 11 is no exception. The comments of the greatest pioneer Adventist, James White, are worthy of notice:

"The field of Daniel's prophecy embraces five universal kingdoms. These are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Grecia and Rome, and the eternal kingdom of God. The ground of the four perishable kingdoms, reaching to, and introducing the immortal kingdom, is covered by four distinct lines of prophecy. These are given in chapters two, seven, eight, and eleven." *Signs of the Times*, July 22, 1880

"Let us take a brief view of the line of prophecy four times spanned in the book of Daniel. It will be admitted that the same ground is passed over in chapters two, seven, eight, and eleven. We first pass down the great image of chapter 2, where Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome are represented by the gold, the silver, the brass, and the iron. All agree that these feet are not Turkish but Roman. And as we pass down to the lion, the bear, the leopard, and the beast with ten horns, representing the same as the great image, again all will agree that it is not Turkey that is cast into the burning flame, but the Roman beast. So of chapter 8, all agree that the little horn that stood up against the Prince of princes is not Turkey but Rome. In all these thus far Rome is the last form of government mentioned.

"Now comes the point in the argument upon which very much depends. Does the eleventh chapter of the prophecy of Daniel cover the ground measured by chapters two, seven, and eight? If so, then the last power mentioned in that chapter is Rome." *Review and Herald*, November 29, 1877

4. *The Use of Palestinian Terminology.* Each line of prophecy commences in the time of Daniel when God's people were national Israel, situated in Palestine. God placed His people in the cross-roads of the world. To the north there was one great center of world civilization in the region of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. To the south there was the other great center of civilization along the Nile river. As each line of prophecy comes down to the time of the Christian dispensation and to the rise of the papacy, it swings away from the localized Palestinian setting to describe a world-wide conflict between the Israel of God and antichrist. It should not surprise us that in Daniel 11 Palestinian terms are employed to describe the closing conflict. Those who understand

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that other prophecies relating to the time of the end--such as Joel 2, which refers to the latter rain on the land and deliverance for the Remnant in Mount Zion--and recognize that the symbolism is not to be taken literally to mean anything Palestinian, should readily realize that the same principle applies to Daniel 11.

5. *The Final Conflict of the Church.* The special burden of Daniel's last prophecy is explicitly stated by the angel: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days." Daniel 10:14 In the time of the end the enemy enters "the glorious land," overthrows many of the professed people of God, goes forth "to destroy and utterly to make away many," plants "the tabernacles of His palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain," but fails in this final assault against the church, for, ". . . 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 be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:1,2 If we recognize that those for whom Christ stands up at the close of probation are not literal Jews, and that those whose names are found to be written in the book are not literal Jews, we shall have no trouble understanding that the verses immediately preceding, in the eleventh chapter, do not refer to activities in literal Palestine and environs.

6. *Complemented by Revelation.* Daniel was not given to understand the prophecies relating to the time of the end. (See chapter 12:4-11) These were sealed until after the end of the 1260 days, which terminated in 1798 A.D. The sealed portions of Daniel are unsealed in the book of Revelation. Daniel and Revelation must be studied together. If the interpretation given to the closing verses of Daniel 11 is not dependent upon necessary information contained in Revelation, we can be sure the interpretation is incorrect.

#### Defining the Symbols

As with the great prophecies of Joel 2 and 3, the symbols are Palestinian, although the reality is the final conflict and deliverance of the church.

The three main identities of Daniel 11:40-45 are: "the king of the north," "the king of the south," and "the glorious land." This arrangement has its type in the history of ancient Israel. The Jews were placed in the crossroads of the world. To the north and the south were their traditional enemies. While the enemy to the south was constantly Egypt, the power to the north was variably Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and the Grecian dynasty that ruled Syria under the Seleucian kings. Of these, Babylon was the most significant, for the city of Babylon was an important center, if not the capital, of each power. For centuries it remained the greatest religious center of the world, a rival to Judaism. Many times does

the prophet Jeremiah refer to Babylon as the great power of the north. (Jeremiah 1:13,14; 4:6; 6:1; 16:15; 25:26; 46:10) This is significant, not only because *north* designated geographical direction, but because Babylon was the kingdom of Satan. ". . . Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, . . . thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in *the sides of the north*:" Isaiah 14:4,13 "The sides of the north" is said to be the place of God's throne. (Psalm 48:1,2) Being cast out of heaven, Satan established his kingdom upon the Euphrates, "in the sides of the north."

Time and time again the great power from the north engaged in war against the Egyptian power of the south. The armies of either side, in making an offensive, marched through "the glorious land." Palestine was as a buffer state between the two age-long enemies. Assyria, Babylon, Persia, the Greek house of the Selucidae, and the Roman emperor Augustus all engaged in momentous struggles with Egypt. In each conflict Egypt went down before the power from the north, and became a part of the kingdom of the north. In all these struggles, Israel was not only a spectator, but she suffered as the armies of the north swept through her territory en route to crush the south. How significant that the conflict in which the church will be involved in the last days is couched in language so reminiscent of centuries of ancient Biblical conflict. "The king of the north" is Babylon, the kingdom of antichrist, not now the Babylon of the literal Euphrates, but the great mystical Babylon of the Apocalypse. This is the greatest enemy of "the twelve tribes of Israel." Revelation 7:3

While "the king of the north" in these days is Babylon, the king of the south is Egypt, not Egypt of the literal Nile any more than the king of the north is Babylon of the literal Euphrates. The Egypt of Bible prophecy in the last days is brought to view in Revelation:

"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." Revelation 11:7,8 As Adventists have recognized, this prophecy of Revelation 11 is about the enemy's war on the Bible, first during the 1260 years when it was in the obscurity of "sackcloth"; and then when it was destroyed during the French Revolution at the close of the period of Papal supremacy. *The Great Controversy*, p. 269, makes this comment on this Egypt of the last days:

"The 'great city' in whose streets the witnesses are slain, and where their dead bodies lie, 'is spiritually Egypt.' Of all nations presented in Bible history, Egypt most boldly denied the existence of the living God, and resisted His commands. No monarch ever ventured upon more open and high-handed rebellion against the authority of Heaven than did the king of Egypt. When the message was brought him by Moses, in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh proudly answered, 'Who is Jehovah, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not Jehovah, neither will I let Israel go.' *This is atheism*; and the

nation represented by Egypt would give voice to a similar denial of the claims of the living God, and would manifest a like spirit of unbelief and defiance."

*Egypt is atheism!* Egypt is not France, but during the Revolution atheism was manifested in France. Modern atheism sprang out of France. According to the statement just cited, a nation which gives voice to the denial of the existence of the living God is Egypt. No longer does the French government do this, but the great Communist power of the world certainly has followed in the footsteps of France. Leading political historians recognize that modern Communism had its roots in the French Revolution.

### Final Struggle for World Supremacy

Thus, in this time of the end, we find a repetition of what ancient Israel witnessed for centuries--the world is divided into two great camps. There are not just two political foes in the present world struggle, but two opposing ideologies--*Babylonian* and *Egyptian*. Everyone in the world must be involved in this struggle, for the natural man will choose one ideology or the other. *Babylonian* is to profess to be Christian, to have a form of godliness, but to deny the power thereof. *Egyptian* is to repudiate the Christian religion and to deny the very existence of God. Over against the anti-Christ and anti-God camps of Babylon and Egypt there stands the truth revealed upon the glorious holy mountain, the place of God's sanctuary, where is revealed the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

As the Jews in Palestine often witnessed the struggle for world supremacy of the king of the north and the king of the south, so in this time of the end we witness the final struggle for world supremacy. "And at [or *in*] the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him [the king of the north]." Since the time of the end, the atheistic forces of the world have been pushing back the frontiers of the Papacy and its allies. In the Western world, it has been the Catholic countries which have proved most vulnerable to Communism, and this despite Rome's claim that she is the bulwark against Communism. Catholicism breeds Communism! At times it has seemed as if this modern Pharaoh would bury Christendom. Yet prophecy foretells a remarkable recovery of power by the king of Babylon, and more than a recovery, an overwhelming victory: ". . . And the king of the north shall come against him [the king of the south] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." Daniel 11:40

With surprising suddenness, the king of the north will come against *Egypt* like a whirlwind, and will sweep through the countries of the world like a river breaking its banks and flooding the country. "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." Daniel 11:42,43.

As in the case of the conflict of ancient times, the king of the north will overcome the king of the south so that all will become but one kingdom. The Revelator says that "all the world" will wander "after the beast" (chapter 13:3). Not so much through ordinary military power will this be accomplished; but the Revelator shows that it will be accomplished through "fire from heaven," or the last great false revival of Christendom wherein the whole world will be swept into the ranks of Babylon. (Revelation 13:13,14; 16:13,14) The whole world will be "converted" to Christianity after the modern order of things (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 588, 589). Through signs and lying wonders, Satan will quickly unite his forces under one head--the Papal head--for the last conflict against Christ and His people.

### Crisis for the Church

Are we prepared for this rapid change which is coming in our world? For in this time when the king of the north sweeps through the countries of the world, gathering all into his kingdom, he will pass through "the glorious land." As Sennacherib, king of Assyria, marched through "the glorious land" on his way to subjugate Egypt, so God's people today will face an "invasion" of the enemy just before the final subjugation of the atheistic world to the Babylonian camp. Revelation shows us that this test will come in connection with the beast, his image, and his mark. When the decree goes forth forbidding buying or selling unless worship be given to the beast and his image, the church of God will face a great test. "He shall enter also in the glorious land, and many countries [a supplied word, actually meaning many people in the glorious land] shall be overthrown." Daniel 11:41 (See *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 81,136; *The Great Controversy*, p. 608) The prophet Habakkuk saw this same event. First he complained to the Lord about conditions among Israel:

"O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save! Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." Habakkuk 1:2-4

Then the Lord told Habakkuk that He was about to correct the situation in the church by sending the king of the north to punish His people:

"Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. They shall come all for vio-

lence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold; for they shall heap dust, and take it. Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god." Habakkuk 1:5-11

When Habakkuk heard that the Babylonians were going to sweep through "the glorious land," he protested to the Lord:

"Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?" Habakkuk 1:12,13

The Lord replied to the prophet: "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." Habakkuk 2:4

If we lived in Palestine during the time of an impending invasion by the king of the north, it might be that we would sense the danger of living in one of the little, defenseless cities of Israel, and would desire to get up to Jerusalem where more protection was afforded. Especially since the sanctuary, the dwelling place of God's name was there, we might cry unto the Lord at the sanctuary as did Hezekiah when Sennacherib threatened to destroy Jerusalem. Now, in a sense which is just as real, "the northern army" (Joel 2:20) is about to sweep in upon us. God calls upon His people to fulfill the conditions of this great antitypical day of atonement:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Joel 2:15-17,32

Only those who make that necessary preparation for the crisis, only those who have an anchor in the second veil of the sanctuary and who are following their High Priest by faith on this antitypical day of atonement, will remain "written among the living in Jerusalem." (Isaiah 4:3) In the terrible ordeal, the church will be thoroughly shaken and sifted. (See *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 380)

And so the king of the north sweeps through "the glorious land," and seems to overthrow all. He proceeds on to Egypt, overthrowing

the king of the south and "the Libyans and the Ethiopians." (The latter were blood relatives of the Egyptians, since all this territory belonged to the land of Cush. Anciently, Libya and Ethiopia leagued with Egypt to fight the king of the north, and were all overthrown. See Jeremiah 46) As the Revelator says: "All the world wonders after the beast." All the atheistic forces of the world become "converted after the modern order of things." Such unparalleled victory attends Babylon, that the Revelator depicts the mother church as saying: "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Revelation 18:7 Thus the whole world, indeed all religions, seem securely in her grasp. Even the troublesome sect of Adventists have "appeared to fall." (*Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 380) There is none left to trouble her now--so it seems.

### The Latter Rain - Loud Cry

In this time of crisis, the faithful people of God are represented as being on Mount Zion, around the sanctuary, pleading for "pardon and deliverance through Jesus their Advocate." (*Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 473) Sensing their weakness and unworthiness, their impotency to proclaim the message of God in such a crisis, they cry unto God for deliverance:

"Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them." Psalm 54:1-3

"Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord." Psalm 35:23

The Spirit of Prophecy portrays very graphically how Jesus stands in the judgment of the living for those who afflict their souls before Him, and bestows upon them the blessing of the sealing latter rain. (See *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 472-5; Vol. 1, pp. 179-183) With great power the Remnant give the loud cry of the third angel's message. This comes suddenly and unexpectedly to the king of the north. ". . . Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him. . . ." Daniel 11:44

The sealing and its attendant glory, which lightens the earth, is represented as coming from the east.

"And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." Ezekiel 43:2 "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." Revelation 18:1 "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: . . ." Revelation 7:2

During the night of trial and weeping and persecution for the truth's sake, right at the time when Sunday-keeping becomes the mark of the beast, Sabbath-keeping becomes the seal of the seal of the living God. Those who receive this seal reflect the image

of Jesus fully. (*Early Writings*, p. 71) This is the glory by which they lighten the earth in the last warning message against "the king of the north."

Not only is the king of the north troubled by these tidings from the east, but also from the north. It is interesting to note that Babylon, Persia, the Greek kingdom of the Selucidae, and Rome were all overthrown from powers to the north. Although modern Babylon has placed its throne "on the sides of the north," it will be overthrown by Him whose throne is "in the sides of the north." (Isaiah 14:13; Psalm 48:1,2) The last message brought to view in Revelation 18:1-4 is represented as proceeding directly from heaven, or the throne of God. Hence it may be said to be tidings from the north. Those who give the loud cry, being sealed, have such a living connection with heaven, having been made one with God through the final atonement, that their message is represented as coming direct from the throne of God.

Well might these tidings from the east and north trouble Babylon! Ancient Babylon received such tidings from the east and north, and was shortly thereafter overthrown. (See Jeremiah, chapters 50 and 51; Isaiah, chapters 41 and 42.)

"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 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, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 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." Revelation 18:1-4

In the last remnant of time, there are some who are snatched from the fallen churches of Christendom as Lot was hurried from Sodom before its destruction. (*Early Writings*, p. 279) These could be represented as "Edom, Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." Anciently, these tribes were half-brothers to the Jews, although they were their traditional enemies. No such people exist literally today, but there are prophecies which speak of their being converted to the truth before the coming of the Lord. (See Isaiah 11:14; Amos 9:12) They escape from "the king of the north" by joining the Remnant "in mount Zion and in Jerusalem." Joel 2:32

### Final Crisis and Deliverance

"But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." Daniel 11:44

The power attending the last warning message will madden the king of the north. Measures will be taken to crush the Remnant.

"And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in [literally "and"] the glorious holy mountain; . . ." Daniel 11:45 The reason why the king of the north makes his final onslaught against Mount Zion is because the sealed Remnant are depicted as standing on Mount Zion. (See Revelation 14:1) Isaiah corroborates this attack on Mount Zion in the last days:

"For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them: so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it." Isaiah 31:4,5

"It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and, behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite: so shall the multitude of all the nations be, that fight against mount Zion." Isaiah 29:8

Joel says: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." Joel 2:32 It is encouraging to know that the safest place to be is where Satan is directing his onslaught!

". . . Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him. 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 be found written in the book." Daniel 11:45-12:1

The book of Revelation shows that when the saints are all numbered and sealed, Christ leaves His ministry in the most holy place, and commences pouring the seven last plagues upon the king of the north. Thus he comes to his end with none to help.

May the knowledge of these coming events help us to realize the nature and urgency of our present work of preparation. May the crisis find us gathered by faith to the heavenly sanctuary in sympathy with our great High Priest!

"Just as soon as any one crosses you, or offends you, does there arise in your heart a feeling of bitterness, a spirit of rebellion? If this is the spirit you have, bear in mind that you have not the Spirit of Christ. It is another spirit. It is the Satan side of your character that is ruling rather than the Spirit of Christ."--Review and Herald, Dec. 21, 1886.

# Revelation 17

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY

Editor

Revelation 17 is a chapter which is intensely interesting and dramatic in its portrayal of the apparent triumph and final overthrow of the great power of Rome. There are several different views taught on this chapter among God's people today. As on any other subject, we must compare Scripture with Scripture and precept with precept and decide upon the weight of evidence presented. Let us study together, verse by verse, the message of Revelation 17.

## Verse 1:

*"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:"*

Revelation 17 follows on from Revelation 16, showing the events which lead to the destruction of Babylon. You will notice here that the great harlot is sitting upon many waters. In prophecy, waters are used to symbolize peoples and nations. (Revelation 17:15) In the Old Testament, Babylon is also represented as dwelling "upon many waters."-- Jeremiah 51:13. In another place she is represented as ruling the nations (Isaiah 14:4-6). Thus this picture of the great Babylon sitting upon many waters is a symbol of her despotic rule over the nations of the world. Truly she ruled as an absolute tyrant for centuries.

## Verse 2:

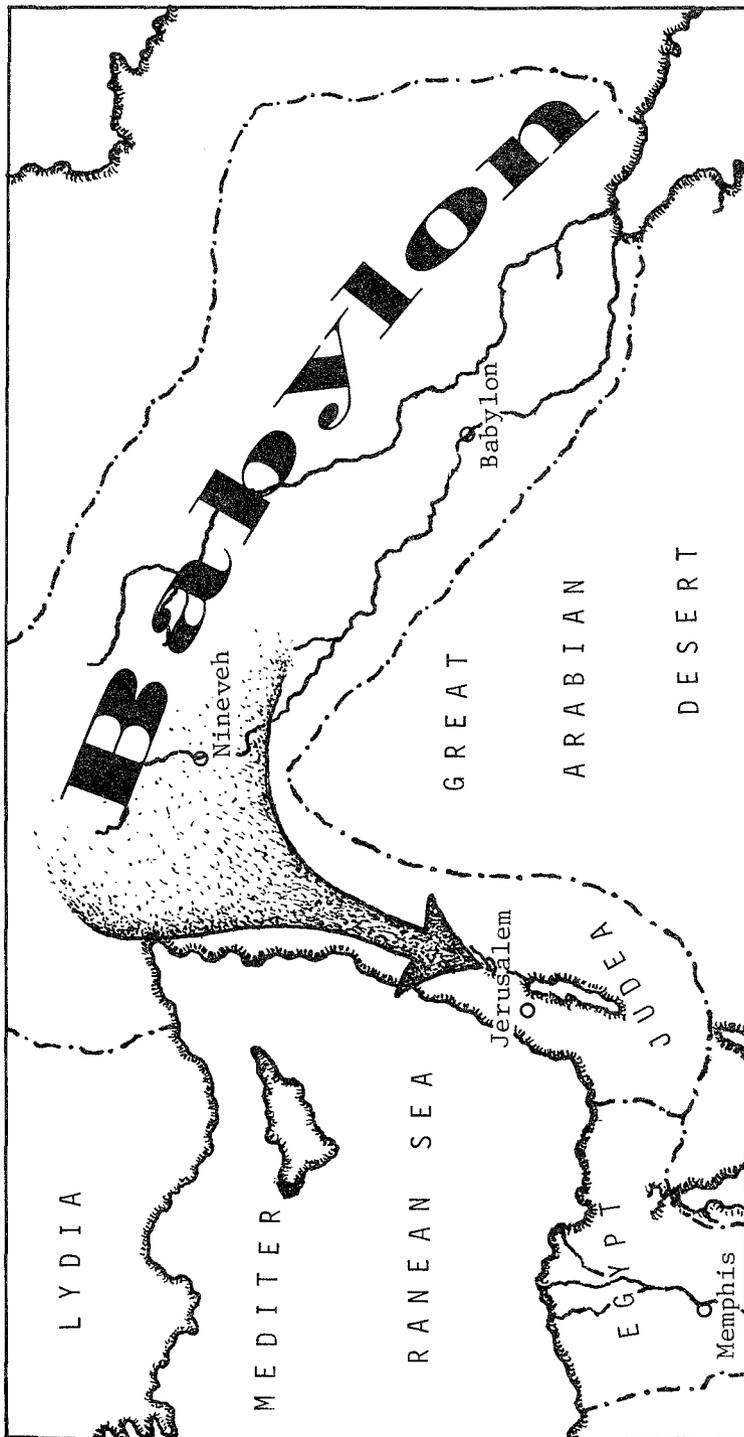
*"With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

This verse reminds us of the second angel's message which will be repeated with great power under the proclamation of the loud cry.

*"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."-- Revelation 14:8.*

*"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, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." -- Revelation 18:3.*

What is this "wine" which makes all the inhabitants of the world drunken?



". . . This cup of intoxication which she presents to the world, represents the *false doctrines* that she has accepted as the result of her unlawful connection with the great ones of the earth. Friendship with the world corrupts her faith, and in her turn she exerts a corrupting influence upon the world by teaching doctrines which are opposed to the plainest statements of Holy Writ." -- *The Great Controversy*, p. 388.

"The theory of eternal torment is one of the false doctrines that constitute the wine of the abominations of Babylon, of which she makes all nations drink. . . ."-- *Ibid.*, p. 536.

". . . Babylon has been fostering poisonous doctrines, the wine of error. This wine of error is made up of false doctrines, such as the natural immortality of the soul, the eternal torment of the wicked, the denial of the pre-existence of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the first day of the week above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, 'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' It is a wrath which is created by false doctrines, and when kings and presidents drink this wine of the wrath of her fornication, they are stirred with the false and satanic heresies which exalt the false sabbath, and lead men to trample underfoot God's memorial." -- *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 61,62.

Thus we can see that this wine is the false doctrines of Babylon. Since 1844 God has had a movement on earth which has been entrusted with the pure truths of the gospel in contrast to the wine of Babylon. All the accumulated light which has been given to God's people in every past age is to shine upon the last church. God's character has been brought into reproach because of the wine of Babylon's false teachings and the remnant will clear away this misapprehension by presenting the truth as it is in Jesus which will forever separate a people from Babylon.

### Verse 3:

*"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."*

It is important that we take note of the symbols here used so that we might properly interpret this chapter. What does this woman and the beast which she sits upon represent?

Down through the ages the devil has had a "bride" -- a false system of religion -- to corrupt the nations of the earth, and to persecute the people of God. This "woman" has one unmistakable earmark -- the union of her religion with the civil powers. She is always carried by the state, as prophecy says: "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." -- Revelation 17:9. However, the devil's masterpiece of deception, corruption, and persecution was fully manifested in the Mother Church of Christendom, the Roman Catholic church. That is why the symbolism of the woman in Revelation fits the Roman church so remarkably. But we must not suppose

that the apostate church so accurately described in this chapter is the only manifestation of "Babylon the Great," for when she is finally slain, the Revelator says: "In her was found the blood of the prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." -- Revelation 18:24.

What power is symbolized by the beast that the woman sits upon? Some say it is Communism, and others say it represents Satan himself. They feel that it could not be the papacy or you would have the papacy riding the papacy, which would not seem logical. But there is no contradiction here. The beast depicted here is the very same beast presented in Revelation 13:1, "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." This being so, this beast must be identified with the papal power which ruled in Europe for 1260 years. In Revelation 13 there are crowns upon the horns and the name of blasphemy upon the heads which indicates a church-state power. In Revelation 17, the fact that the woman [representing false religion] saddles the beast [representing civil power] is to show that we are dealing with a religio-political power. Yet, just as the woman includes more than the Catholic Church, and embraces the religion of Satan down through the ages, so the beast not only embraces the civil power of the papacy, but also the civil powers that the devil has used down through the ages to carry the woman [his false religions].

The verse that we are now considering is also very important because it gives the chronological setting for Revelation 17 which is vital in resolving the mystery of the seven heads and the powers represented by them. There are three points in this verse which give us the proper setting for the chapter.

1. The woman riding the beast is "in the wilderness." This indicates a state of desolation or loss of power. In 1798 the "woman" lost its power to persecute as it did during the 1260 years of papal supremacy. The religio-political kingdom of Satan was placed in a state of obscurity. During the 1260 years the papacy reigned supreme and God's true church had to flee into the wilderness [obscurity] for safety. (Revelation 12:6, 14, 15) In 1798 the tables were turned and the power which had led God's people into captivity received a deadly wound [loss of its political power] and went into captivity. (Revelation 13:3,10)

2. There are no crowns upon the ten horns of the beast as was the case in Revelation 13:1. This indicates that these crowns [civil power] had been removed which was what happened in 1798.

3. The beast is scarlet colored. This is a fitting symbol, for what has the beast been doing during the 1260 years? Persecuting the saints. So the scarlet is indicative of the fact that by the time the deadly wound was given in 1798, the beast was truly covered with the blood of millions of God's faithful people who would not bow down in obedience to its mandates.

In view of these points, we are in the setting of after 1798 and should study this chapter from this viewpoint if we are to arrive at sound conclusions.

#### Verse 4:

*"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."*

Very similar language is also used in other verses of Scripture to depict the material wealth of Babylon.

"But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. . . . But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." -- Daniel 11:38,43.

"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!" -- Revelation 18:16.

#### Verse 5:

*"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."*

In contrast to the words written upon the forehead of great Babylon, we have the description of the words written upon the foreheads of the 144,000:

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."--Revelation 14:1.

We should also notice the comments of the servant of the Lord identifying Babylon and her daughters as presented in this verse.

"Babylon is said to be 'the mother of harlots.' By her daughters must be symbolized churches that cling to her doctrines and traditions, and follow her example of sacrificing the truth and the approval of God, in order to form an unlawful alliance with the world. The message of Revelation 14, announcing the fall of Babylon, must apply to religious bodies that were once pure and have become corrupt. Since this message follows the warning of the judgment, it must be given in the last days; therefore it cannot refer to the Roman Church alone, for that church has been in a fallen condition for many centuries. Furthermore, in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, the people of God are called upon to come out of Babylon. According to this scripture, many of God's people must still be in Babylon. And in what religious bodies are the greater part of the followers of Christ now to be found? Without doubt, in the various churches professing the Protestant faith. At the time of their rise, these churches took a noble stand for God and the truth, and His blessing was with them. Even the unbelieving world was constrained to acknowledge the beneficent results that followed an acceptance of the principles of the gospel. In the words of the prophet to Israel, 'Thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through

My comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.' But they fell by the same desire which was the curse and ruin of Israel,-- the desire of imitating the practices and courting the friendship of the ungodly. 'Thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown.'" -- *The Great Controversy*, pp. 382,383.

#### Verse 6:

*"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."*

This verse again emphasizes the activities of this corrupt woman during the 1260 years. She is drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. (Compare Daniel 7:21,25; 11:33; Revelation 13:7)

#### Verses 7,8:

*"And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. 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."*

Now the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her is to be explained. First of all, three stages of the beast are set forth:

1. "was" -- period of papal supremacy from 538 to 1798 A.D.
2. "is not" -- after 1798 to present time.
3. "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" -- time when the deadly wound is healed and the power of the beast is restored once again.

These three stages can be easily illustrated by a diagram. See page 23.

After the beast ascends out of the bottomless pit, it is to "go into perdition." This shows the final end of this power which shall reign for a short time in the last days. These three stages of the beast are also set forth in Revelation 13:

1. Verses 1,2 -- the rise of this beast with the 7 heads and 10 horns, and crowns upon the horns.
2. Verse 3 -- the deadly wound is given. [1798]
3. Verse 3, last part -- this deadly wound is healed and all the world wonders after the beast.

Revelation 17:8 also refers to the judgment of the living. It says that everyone whose names were not in the book of life [all those that do not pass that great judgment and have their names sealed in the book of life] will be found wondering after this beast which "was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit." The judgment of the living is the time when we either receive the seal of God or the mark of the beast. (See *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 130; *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 234,235)

#### Verse 9:

*"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."*

In Bible prophecy, a mountain is used to symbolize a kingdom (See Isaiah 13:4; Jeremiah 5:24,25; Daniel 2:35,44). You will notice that the woman [Satan's false religious system] sits upon all seven of these mountains or kingdoms. So the seven heads represent the seven religio-political powers that Satan has used in past ages. History tends to repeat itself over and over. This is very evident as we trace the relationship of God's kingdom to the kingdom of Satan from the inception of sin right down to the final conflict.

#### Verse 10:

*"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."*

You will remember that the setting of this chapter is *after 1798*. It is not in the time when the prophecy was written [96 A.D.]. John was carried in the Spirit to the wilderness (verse 3) and there [after 1798] saw the woman riding the beast. The "wilderness," the "was not" and "the bottomless pit" are all used in this chapter to denote the stage of the papacy since 1798 when its crowns were removed, or its political power was taken away.

We are told here that five of these heads are fallen. Looking backwards from 1798, after the papacy had fallen, we would have the following kingdoms which had all passed from the scene of action: (1) Papal Rome; (2) Pagan Rome; (3) Grecia; (4) Medo-Persia; (5) Babylon.

"One is" would denote the power which arose around 1798 that gave to the beast its deadly wound. This beast is also depicted as being "from the bottomless pit" in Revelation 11:7,8. In Daniel 11:40-44 it is represented as "the king of the south." (See study on Daniel, chapter 11) This is none other than that atheistic power which arose in Revolutionary France at the end of the 1260 years of papal supremacy. This atheistic power now finds its expression in the Communist State.

How can the Communist State be represented as carrying "the woman" today? The form of atheism that finds its expression in Communism is just as much a religion as the Paganism of ancient Rome or the Catholicism of Papal Rome. Man was created to worship, and worship he must. The dialectic materialism of the Communist system has its

millions of zealous worshippers. Furthermore, as with the false religions of all ages, it is supported and propagated by the State.

Since the one woman sits on all seven heads, how can it be said that the woman who sat on the nations of Europe is the same woman who sits on the Communist State today?

This is the information God wants us to know. Catholicism is anti-Christ; Atheism is anti-God. What is the difference? The first is simply a religion wherein the carnal man covers over his worship of self with a Christian garb; the second is simply a religion wherein the carnal man worships himself with no Christian garb. In Revelation 11:8 the "great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" is called "Egypt [Atheism] where also our Lord was crucified" - in the person of His saints. In Revelation 17:6 the same city is called Babylon [Catholicism] "drunken with the blood of the saints." Thus God's Word in Revelation shows that Atheism and Catholicism are the one "woman"; the "one city," the one religion, only in a different garb. This fact should not surprise the student of prophecy, for Daniel clearly showed us that the religion of the papacy was only the religion of paganism dressed in Christian garb. Furthermore, Daniel 11 shows that the King of the North and the King of the South are only divisions of the one kingdom.

Many are led to suppose that Catholicism and Communism are diametrically opposed systems. But a close analysis will prove the accuracy of the Bible. A few years ago, Paul Blanshard wrote: "But cannot the Church which made a concordat with Hitler, and kept it until he destroyed himself, compromise also with Moscow -- at a price? That speculation seems idle now, but it should not be banished altogether from serious discussions of Vatican policy. There is so much basic kinship between the doctrinal absolutism of the Vatican and that of the Kremlin that the possibility of ultimate collaboration on a basis of mutual self-interest cannot be dismissed as unthinkable. Both organizations believe in censorship and reject democracy as a form of government for themselves. Both are seeking to extend their authority by developing groups of loyal followers within other jurisdictions. The distorted Communism of the Kremlin is a fanatical religion with commissars instead of priests. Communists and Catholics, as Reinhold Niebuhr has said, are 'rival absolutists.' It is not too difficult for men to pass from one absolutism to another. 'If we are to judge by the writings of the outspoken apologists of Catholicism in Europe and America,' says Professor Sidney Hook, 'they are just as ready, if necessity arises, to baptize Marx as they once baptized Aristotle.'

"The kinship between Catholic and Communist political policy has been noted by Europe's leading Protestant theologian, Karl Barth, in an acid comment that he made to a Jesuit journalist in 1948: 'To be honest, I see some connection between them [Roman Catholicism and Communism]. Both are totalitarian; both claim man as a whole. Communism uses about the same methods of organization (learned from the Jesuits). Both lay great stress on all that is visible. But Roman Catholicism is the more dangerous of the two for Protestantism. Communism will pass; Roman Catholicism is lasting.'" -- *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 2nd ed. p. 293.

Since Catholicism is to enjoy a revival to world supremacy, this must be that the Communist State, in carrying the woman, is advancing the cause of Catholicism. How can this be?

Just as Catholicism bred the atheistic French Revolution, and just as it has manifestly bred Communism, it will just as certainly be proven that Communism will breed Catholicism. Be it known that everywhere the Communist State carries its system, it is carrying "the woman", and when it suits that great strategist, the devil himself, the "Egyptian" garb will be readily converted for the "Babylonian" one. As Blanshard aptly observed, "It is not too difficult for men to pass from one absolutism to another."

Catholicism has done the "impossible" before, and with incredible speed. One moment she was fighting for her very life against Paganism, and the next moment Paganism was baptized with its great patron, Constantine, and the whole empire of Rome was Catholic. Later she was struggling for her very existence against the barbarians, and almost overnight Clovis was baptized into the faith as a mighty warrior for Rome. Prophecy shows that the Papacy, who has been fighting for her very life against Communism, will suddenly baptize Marx as readily as she baptized Aristotle, and sweep in the whole world.

Meanwhile, the anti-Communist atmosphere in the West is driving Christendom forward in that great ecumenical movement in the United States and Western Europe which will result in both the formation of the seventh "head" and the re-formation of the fifth.

"The other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." This is the seventh kingdom. The last power in the line of beasts that will tread down the saints is the United States. When Protestant America forms an "image to the beast [Rome], which had the wound by a sword, and did live," the seventh head is formed, and the woman in the form of apostate Protestantism will rule for a "short space" through the United States. (For more details, see *The Great Controversy*, p. 439-450; and *Revelation* magazine, pp. 78-87.)

Some would begin the seven heads with Egypt or Assyria, but this is inconsistent with the prophecies which have gone before in the books of Daniel and Revelation. We should ever keep in mind that "*The books of Daniel and Revelation are one.*" -- *S.D.A. Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971. The book of Daniel begins with Babylon, not with Egypt or Assyria, and so we also begin with Babylon in reckoning the seven heads which perfectly fits in with the specifications of the prophecy. Thus, in summarizing the seven heads, we would have the following:

1. The lion (Daniel 7:4) -- *Babylon*
2. The bear (Daniel 7:5) -- *Medo-Persia*
3. The leopard (Daniel 7:6) -- *Grecia*
4. The ten-horned, non-descript beast (Daniel 7:7) or the ten-horned red dragon (Revelation 12:3) -- *Imperial or Pagan Rome*

5. The ten-horned composite beast (Revelation 13:1) -- The civil power of *Papal Rome* ("The Holy Roman Empire")

6. The beast from the bottomless pit (Revelation 11:7,8) -- *The Atheist State* (i.e., The Communist State)

7. The lamb-like beast when it speaks as a dragon (Revelation 13:11-17) -- *The United States of America*

#### Verse 11:

*"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."*

Other translations of Revelation 17 clearly bring out that this "eighth" is an eighth *head or king*. Also they substantiate that this eighth head is *one of the seven*. This is verily the beast mentioned in verse 8 that "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [captivity]." He is the beast of Revelation 13 whose deadly wound is healed. This is the fifth head, the papacy, resurrected once more to power and supremacy.

Once again the nations of Western Europe will support the old mother church, and "the woman" will rule through these nations. When does this take place? Clearly as Protestant America is forming the "image of the beast," because Revelation 13 clearly says that the lamb-like beast "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast [Papacy], whose deadly wound was healed," and that he says "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." Protestant America will evidently be impressed with what takes place regarding the revival of the Papacy in Europe, and will be lead on by the "spirits of devils" to form in America "an image" (a replica, likeness) to the Papal system. That the United States (seventh king) and the revived power of the Papacy (eighth king) rule together is evident from the third angel's message: "If any man worship *the beast and his image.*" -- Revelation 14:9. The Papacy will take the lead and under its power all the world will unite in the last warfare against God in the person of His people.

The wording of the Spirit of Prophecy is interesting in the light of Revelation 17 and the eighth head. "*Yet under one head-- the papal power -- the people will unite to oppose God in the person of His witnesses.*" -- *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 182.

#### Verses 12,13:

*"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."*

This chapter shows how the Papacy will be revived in the Old World. As we have seen from Daniel 2 and 7, these ten horns are the nations of Western Europe. During the 1260 years they gave their strength and support to the Catholic Church, especially as they united in

that institution called "The Holy Roman Empire." But by 1798 this whole system had disintegrated, and there was not one nation in Europe who would support the Papacy. That is why John saw the beast in the wilderness with no crowns on the ten horns. But it is destined to return again (see verse 8). This would mean that the nations of Europe would again unite in a common purpose to restore the beast -- the political power of the Papacy.

"In both the Old and the New World, the papacy will receive homage in honor paid to the Sunday institution, that rests solely upon the authority of the Roman Church." -- *The Great Controversy*, p. 579.

Revelation 13:3 says that all the world will wonder after the beast, i.e., all except those who have their names sealed in the Lamb's book of life (chapter 17:8). Notice the inspired comments on the words, "These have one mind."

"There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan's forces. 'And shall give their power and strength unto the beast.' Thus is manifested the same arbitrary, oppressive power against religious liberty, freedom to worship God according to the dictates of conscience, as was manifested by the papacy, when in the past it persecuted those who dared to refuse to conform with the religious rites and ceremonies of Romanism.

"In the warfare to be waged in the last days there will be united, in opposition to God's people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah. In this warfare the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be the great point at issue; for in the Sabbath commandment the great Lawgiver identifies Himself as the Creator of the heavens and the earth." -- *S.D.A. Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 983.

Verse 14:

*"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."*

All of the combined forces of evil existing upon the earth will unite to destroy the people of God. The righteous are pictured here as being with the Lamb. They have become one with Christ and have entered fully into fellowship with Him in His sufferings. They also have "one mind," yea, the mind of Christ. They have the seal of God upon their foreheads (Revelation 7:3; 14:1). The character of the Lamb, that of gentleness and peace, is revealed in their lives fully. The Lamb, the very weakest of all the beasts upon the earth shall overcome the beast, all of the wicked powers of the earth united. Praise the Lord for this!

Verses 15-18:

*"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 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. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."*

These verses are an enlargement of Revelation 16:12 -- the drying up of the River Euphrates. As the wicked rush upon the people of God, they are suddenly arrested. They turn their swords upon one another, especially upon their religious leaders who have led them astray. (See *Early Writings*, p. 290; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 635, 636, 656.) The kings of the earth suddenly awake to the great deception which has been practiced upon them. The terrible scenes of the French Revolution will be repeated when the whole world, with maddened fury, turns upon that great apostate system of religion. The sword of every man is raised up against his neighbor and from one end of the earth to the other, there will be one vast scene of unprecedented carnage. (See Jeremiah 23:1,2; 25:34,35; Zechariah 14:12,13; Isaiah 26:21; Jeremiah 25:33)

May we each one indeed be among that company who are represented as with the Lamb on Mt. Zion that we might escape when the overflowing scourge shall pass through the land.

"I saw a covering that God was drawing over His people to protect them in the time of trouble; and every soul that was decided on the truth and was pure in heart was to be covered with the covering of the Almighty." -- *Early Writings*, p. 43.

"I dreamed of seeing a temple to which many people were flocking. Only those who took refuge in that temple would be saved when time should close. All who remained outside would be forever lost." -- *Ibid.*, p. 78.

