

EndTime Issues...

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE – MINISTERS, TEACHERS, BIBLE STUDENTS

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MEDDLING IN WORLD AFFAIRS ?



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EndTime Issues... e-Magazine

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Manuscripts are welcomed for consideration. They should relate to something that has recently been happening, to a clearer understanding of prophecy or have a deep spiritual end-time concern, be simply written and well documented with a focused interest to Christians. Length should be limited to 10 double-spaced pages. The ongoing appeal: “Issues of concern to the final generation.”

Letters to the editor: We welcome your letters of encouragement, deepening insight on relevant topics and plain feedback relative to *EndTime Issues...*. Please keep your communiques brief. Your letters will be the property of Christian Heritage Foundation. Personal answers normally cannot be made. Selected letters may be published in subsequent issues of *EndTime Issues...*

Supporting This Work

As the demands for the services of this ministry increase, so does the need for its support. This work started with **great sacrifice and faith**. It continues under those same banners.

We need your support in prayers and funds. If our financial basis was broadened, it would open the doors for a greater number to hear and see these special truths for this time.

Donations (tax deductible) can be made by check or money order to the Christian Heritage Foundation, 12000 W. Engebretsen Road, Granite Falls, Washington 98252. Credit card donations are under consideration.

***EndTime Issues...* Reaches a Milestone**

With this issue comes our first web based *EndTime Issues...* magazine. The decision to make the transition was most difficult. There always was a sense of accomplishment and completeness when the magazine came back from the press each month ready for mailing. Yet, for over five years we have realized its distribution was to only a “few” when it should have been to many.

Now, individuals can not only review it on the web from around the world, they can print out as many copies as desired (black and white or colored) and distribute them to friends. As this goes to the web administrator, e-mail addresses are pouring into this office. Many who received the magazine by mail in the past now want five, ten and even more friends to have the benefits this new e-publication.

We have received a special donation just to setup and mature this web site and create an e-mail distribution. Evidence that the Lord is leading in a profound way in these new efforts continues to mount. Suddenly, we are now able to reach large numbers of individuals previously unreachable.

There is growing evidence that other ministries are linking to our site and others waiting to be able to copy and paste articles to distribute through their outreach to others around the world.

Some have had concerns that this magazine has not provided cozy, easy-to-read, Christian articles like others have. That is exactly why we don’t – there are already so many other publications that have “devotional,” “rallying cry,” “say that again” messages. This magazine is a *reference* journal for teachers, ministers and students interested in deeper understanding into prophecy, Biblical issues, current events, religious liberty, and end-time subjects – attempting at all times to have good documentation.

An every increasing number of ministers and expositors not only use this magazine but have begun to contribute manuscripts. This is heartwarming and adds to the growing richness of thought that continues to mature this publication. As this happens, we continue to set internal demands for ever higher standards in what goes out to each of you.

This transition will take 3-4 months to complete. During this time “bugs” will be worked out – please be patient with us. We remain wide open for your ideas and suggestions.

Finally, beyond the mechanics, marketing and administrative issues is the most important challenge that will ever crescendo – bringing issues before each readers that creates a desire to be more like Jesus and to be fully ready for His soon return.

An hour has come to this world that makes those decisions urgent. Never before have we had truly *objective* Biblical evidence that the end is near as we have now.

As our understanding of prophecy increases and the meaning of hidden previously, sealed and difficult to understand Scriptural issues suddenly make sense, we can conclude unequivocally that a sequential march of events is underway that will lead very soon to the great consummation.

"The perils of the last days are upon us, and in our work we are to warn the people of the danger they are in. Let not the solemn scenes which prophecy has revealed be left untouched. If ... [God's] people were half awake, if they realized the nearness of the events portrayed in the Revelation, a reformation would be wrought in our churches, and many more would believe the message. We have no time to lose; God calls upon us to watch for souls as they that must give an account. Advance new principles, and crowd in the clear-cut truth. It will be as a sword cutting both ways.... Let Daniel speak, let the Revelation speak, and tell what is truth. But whatever phase of the subject is presented, uplift Jesus as the center of all hope, "the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star."¹

We urge that every article you see published in this magazine be neither supported nor rejected. Study the issues yourself. Be ready to understand the hope we have. Be a Berean who so nobly studied the Bible "daily." Why? To see if these things are true. But be warned:

"There are men among us who profess to understand the truth for these last days, but who will not calmly investigate advanced truth. They are determined to make no advance beyond the stakes which they have set, and will not listen to those who, they say, do not stand by the old landmarks. They are so self-sufficient that they cannot be reasoned with. They consider it a virtue to be at variance with their brethren, and close the door, that light shall not find an entrance to the people of God.... Light will come to God's people, and those who have sought to close the door will either repent or be removed out of the way. The time has come when a new impetus must be given to the work. There are terrible scenes before us, and Satan is seeking to keep from our knowledge the very things that God would have us know. God has messengers and messages for his people. If ideas are presented that differ in some points from our former doctrines, we must not condemn them without diligent search of the Bible to see if they are true. We must fast and pray and search the Scriptures ... to see if these things are so. We must accept every ray of light that comes to us. Through earnest prayer and diligent study of God's word, dark things will be made plain to the understanding."²

Pray for us as we have special prayer for the Biblical research team and each of you receiving this publication every morning. If God lays upon your heart to help support this ministry, this work would be additionally blessed. This work is dependent on the faithful support of its readers.

References

¹E. G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 119.

²E. G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, 5/26/1890, p. 12.

POPEDOM

From Inception to the Demise of Pope John Paul II, Its Nature and Purpose

By Richard Bennett



Richard Bennett

We are honored to have this insight from Richard Bennett, a former priest in the Roman Catholic Church. He was Jesuit trained in Ireland by the Dominican Order and later at the Angelicum University, Rome, Italy. He finished his studies in 1964. After a life-threatening accident, he spent 14 years contrasting Biblical truth with Catholicism. In 1986 he made the step, by God's grace, to leave the Roman Catholic Church because of what he discovered. He is articulate and a deep thinker, evangelist, writer and apologist now working at Dayspring Fellowship, Reformed Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.
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Because of the fascination of the world with the office of the Pope and his power, and because of current discussions regarding who will be the next Pope, it is important to study the topic historically and in the light of Biblical truth. Part I is an overview of the history of the Papacy from its inception to the demise of the present Pope. Part II, in the next issue, is a biblical analysis of the basis on which the Office of the Papacy claims to be the Rock of Matthew 16:18.

Part I: An Overview of the History of the Papacy

Early church at Rome

The church at Rome was in the beginning a community of brothers and sisters, guided by a few of the brothers. The four Gospels and letters of the Apostles settled the great questions of doctrine. A pompous title and position of one man lording it over the others did not exist, as such is forbidden by the Holy Scriptures. The lives of the believers and the doctrine taught were in accord with the Lord's words, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."¹ The Scriptures, however, warned that from the midst of the brotherhood would arise a

power that would attempt to destroy the Gospel and the simple brotherhood of believers. This was nowhere more graphically fulfilled than in the rise of the Office of the Papacy out of the church that had been established in Rome.

Gradual rise of Papal Rome

The respect enjoyed by the various Christian elders in the second century was roughly proportionate to the rank of the city in which they resided. At that time, Rome was the largest, richest, most powerful city in the world, the queen of the Imperial Roman Empire. If Rome was the queen of cities, why should she not be the one to have a bishop to be the king of bishops? Thus, even when pagan Rome fell to the barbarian nations, some of the political esteem that she had won from the nations of the earth remained. The Barbarian overthrow of the Western Roman Empire was succeeded by the gradual rise of Papal Rome. Gradually, bishops from different parts of the empire, seeing themselves as above ordinary elders, yielded to the bishops of Rome some portion of the honor similar to that which the world gives to a prince. From this approbation, the Bishops of Rome began to demand submission as the third, fourth, and fifth centuries passed. In these centuries

also, as the true Gospel was watered down, there came in its place the growth of ritualism in the churches, in which true worship of God and the inner conviction of the Holy Spirit was replaced by ceremonialism and idolatry. Pagan practices took on a veneer of Christianity. The clergy-laity division of the people of God became the accepted base. This further devolved into a hierarchy of the ruling clergy. By the end of the fifth century, the early ministers of the Gospel, who had taught the Scripture, had become replaced by a sacrificing priesthood in which the priest presumed to mediate between God and men. The church was no more the fellowship of believers under Christ Jesus, but rather an institution dominated by a hierarchy, with the most powerful individual being the Bishop of Rome.²

Bishop of Rome becomes the Pope

The power of the Bishop of Rome ascended as the imperial power of the Emperor declined. Edicts of the Emperor Theodosius II and of Valentinian III proclaimed the Roman bishop "as Rector of the whole Church." The Emperor Justinian, who was living in the East in Constantinople, in the sixth century published a similar decree. These proclamations did not create the office of the Pope but from the sixth century there was such advancement of power and prestige that from that time the title of "Pope" began to fit the one who was Bishop of Rome.³

Fraudulent documents aid rise of Papacy

It was not until the middle of the eighth century that serious contentions were made claiming the transfer of power and authority from the Emperor Constantine to the Bishop of Rome. The Donation of Constantine was purported to be the legal document in which the Emperor Constantine donated to Sylvester, the Bishop of Rome (314-335), much of his property and invested him with great spiritual power and authority. The vastness and splendor of the inheritance *allegedly* given by Constantine to

Sylvester in this spurious document is seen in the following quotation from the manuscript, "*We attribute to the See of Peter all the dignity, all the glory, all the authority of the imperial power. Furthermore, we give to Sylvester and to his successors our palace of the Lateran, which is incontestably the finest palace on the earth; we give him our crown, our miter, our diadem, and all our imperial vestments; we transfer to him the imperial dignity. We bestow on the holy Pontiff in free gift the city of Rome, and all the western cities of Italy. To cede precedence to him, we divest ourselves of our authority over all those provinces, and we withdraw from Rome, transferring the seat of our empire to Byzantium; inasmuch as it is not proper that an earthly emperor should preserve the least authority, where God hath established the head of his religion.*"⁴

The Donation of Constantine was probably forged a little before A.D. 754. Of it, Wylie says,

*"In it Constantine is made to speak in the Latin of the eighth century, and to address Bishop Sylvester as 'Prince of the Apostles, Vicar of Christ'. During more than 600 years Rome impressively cited this deed of gift, inserted it in her codes, permitted none to question its genuineness, and burned those who refused to believe in it. The first dawn of light in the sixteenth century sufficed to discover the cheat. In the following century another document of a like extraordinary character was given to the world. We refer to the Decretals of Isidore. These were concocted about the year 845. They professed to be a collection of the letters, rescripts, and bulls of the early pastors of the Church of Rome. . . The writer, who professed to be living in the first century, painted the Church of Rome in the magnificence which she attained only in the ninth, and made the pastors of the first age speak in the pompous words of the Popes of the Middle Ages. Abounding in absurdities, contradiction, and anachronisms, it affords a measure of the intelligence of the age that accepted it as authentic. . . It became the foundation of the canon law, and continues to be so, although there is not now a Popish writer who does not acknowledge it to be a piece of imposture."*⁵

As early as 865, Pope Nicholas drew from these forgeries a way to demand submission from bishops and princes. The arrogance of the popes

grew from this time onward. Popes became intoxicated with their own pride; some in their teens and twenties lost their senses in drunken immorality.⁶ The infamous women of history, Theodora and Marozia, for many years governed the papal throne. That unholy See, pretending to rise above the majesty of kings and bishops, was sunk in the dregs of sin. Theodora and Marozia installed and deposed at their pleasure those who sat in the pretended chair of St. Peter. For two centuries, the Papacy was one wild arena of disorders as the most powerful families of Italy disputed and fought over it like a possession.

Lusts of the mind

The year 1073 was a turning point from the centuries of gross immorality. Rigorous discipline filled the papacy. Reaching above the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of papal minds began to clutch at the things of God. Pope Gregory VII, the noted Hildebrand, ambitious beyond all who had preceded him, took to himself the idea that the reign of the Pope was but another name for the reign of God. He resolved never to rest until he had subjected all authority and power, both spiritual and temporal, to the "chair of Peter". Hildebrand's successors continued his project, and strove by trickery, by arms, by crusades and by anathemas, to place the world under the scepter of the papal throne. For two centuries from the time of Hildebrand's reign, the papacy increased in power and glory, and was maintained by thousands of destroyed lives, many deposed kings and princes, many sacked cities, and many fields deluged with blood.

Popes Innocent III (1216) and Boniface VIII (1303) put the final touches to Papal triumph in spiritual and temporal power. Seventy-five popes, one after another, from Pope Innocent to Pope Pius VII, approved of torture, murder, and burning at the stake, and the confiscation of property of believers in the horrific centuries of the Inquisition.⁷ Many of those slain were true Bible believers.

"The most ghastly abomination of all was the system of torture. The accounts of its cold-blooded operations

make one shudder at the capacity of human beings for cruelty. And it was decreed and regulated by the Popes who claim to represent Christ on earth. In 1252 Pope Innocent IV solemnly authorized it. Confirmatory or regulatory decrees about it were issued by Alexander IV, Clement IV, Urban IV and Clement V."⁸

The Papacy had become "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."⁹ No other kingdom or power has ever drunken so deeply of this blood as had Papal Rome. Thus as streams are traced to the fountain, so is the Papacy traced to the prophecies of Scripture, which correctly interprets the Papacy. This is "the same horn [that] made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."¹⁰ "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."¹¹

The Papacy and Modern Times

A partial list of the successes of the Papacy under Roman Catholic dictators in twentieth century includes: Adolf Hitler in Germany, 1933-1945; Benito Mussolini in Italy, 1922-1943; Francisco Franco in Spain, 1936-1975; Antonio Salazar in Portugal, 1932-1968; Juan Peron in Argentina, 1946-1955; Ante Pavelic in Croatia, 1941-1945; and Engelbert Dollfuss and Kurt von Schuschnigg in Austria, 1932-1934. The Vatican's legal agreement with those nations is well known; few, however, see the Nazism of Germany and the Fascism of Italy, Spain, Portugal, Croatia, and Latin America as consequences of the Papacy's economic and social teachings, and legal agreements between the Vatican and these nations.¹² The Crusades and the 605 years of the Inquisition have stopped, but *the power of the Papacy to influence and to control governments, social, economic, political life and the destinies of peoples, has continued.*

Power through law

What had looked like a mortal wound to Papal power took place in 1798.¹³ A general of Napoleon's army entered the Vatican, removing Pope Pius VI from his throne; and so it was that

Popedom lost its basis as a civil power. Pope Pius IX, not having territorial or civil power, sought to re-establish the Papacy. An internally important part of his design brought about the declaration of Papal infallibility. With remarkable ingenuity against not only the Scriptural absurdity of the concept, but also in spite of the historical fact of heretical popes, this was made doctrine at Vatican Council I in 1870. Further, the Papacy re-established itself internally by re-organizing Roman Catholic law into the 1917 Code of Canon Law.¹⁴ The apparent mortal wound of 1798 was to be healed in 1929 when under Mussolini, the Vatican was again recognized as a civil power and seated on all seven hills. The concordat with Mussolini was just the beginning of many civil concordats, one of the most infamous being that between Pope Pius XII and Adolf Hitler.¹⁵ The Papacy had again consolidated its power from within by the 1917 Code of Canon Law and from without by legal concordats with the various nations. Thus the Vatican, with its own citizens as part of sovereign nations across the world and with her civil agreements with the same nations, has a double cord of power. The individual Catholic, fearing for his salvation, and laden with his first allegiance being to "holy Mother Church" is a pliable pawn in the hand of the Papacy.¹⁶

The major change of direction made visible by Vatican Council II (1962-1965). That council moved from separation from other religions to false ecumenism, not only with the religions of the world, but also with Bible believers in particular. "Separated brethren" was a new term for those always considered heretics, while the pagan religions of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism now became accepted ways to God.¹⁷ This new approach was established by the RCC to win the world to herself by means of dialogue, the rules and goal of which she has carefully spelled out in her post-Conciliar Document No. 42 on ecumenism, which states that "dialogue is not an end in itself...it is not just an academic discussion."¹⁸ Rather, "ecumenical dialogue...serves to transform modes of thought and behavior and the daily life of those [non-

Catholic] communities. In this way, it aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible."¹⁹

The Pope's official position is that "ecumenical encounter is not merely an individual work, but also a task of the [RC] Church, **which takes precedence over all individual opinions.**"²⁰ The Papacy expects this process of dialogue to take time. The Roman Catholic Church's stated aim of bringing all Christian churches under her authority is clearly her goal. She says,

*"...little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, **all Christians will be gathered, in a common celebration of the Eucharist [the Mass] into that unity of the one and only Church.**...This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something we can never lose."*²¹

Pope John Paul II, while initially having been thought to be liberal and modern, consolidated further the dictatorial powers afforded him by the 1917 Code of Canon Law and by his purported infallibility, bequeathed him by Vatican Council I. This he did by revising the 1917 Code, making it even more conservative than it had been, and has been careful to appoint new bishops in line with his centralized way of thinking.

Like another Hildebrand, the present Pope is determined to build, by both Church and civil law, the structure by which the Papacy can again at the appropriate time wield might and power among the nations.²² This same Pope John Paul II has been adamant in his efforts to update the laws of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the days of Hildebrand, popes have seen the necessity of making iron and inflexible church laws before attempting to control her subjects and those not Catholic by compulsion and violence, if necessary. In 1983, John Paul II's revision of the 1917 Code of Canon Law added to the Roman Catholic laws, for example, "The Church has an innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions."²³ Examination of these laws shows them to be even more absolute

and totalitarian than those of the past. If one rejects submission of his intellect and will to the Pope, or some of the other laws of the Papacy, Canon 1371, Para. 1 states that "The following are to be punished with a just penalty: 1 a person who...teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff...." Canon 1312 outlines specified penalties that are to be carried out, "Para. 2. The law can establish other expiatory penalties which deprive a believer of some spiritual or temporal good and are consistent with the supernatural end of the Church."

The perverse vindictiveness of these laws contravenes the repeated Scriptural commands to be not despotic, as are the rulers of this world. From the creation of the Papacy in the sixth century, its heart has been that of law and force. Grace and the Gospel have been superseded by decrees and coercion. A veneer of Christianity has always been upheld, yet this surface ritual religion has always repressed and persecuted true godliness. The history of the Papacy shows that unequivocally it is a power structure built on forgeries, craft, persecution, a false gospel, church law, civil power, and concordats. Nonetheless, the Papacy for most of its history has succeeded in deluding millions. Present day Catholicism continues to insist that its Papal Office is of God, and the world for the most part bows down before her shrine and her Christ, the Pontiff himself.

[End of Part I]

Endnotes

¹ Matthew 23:8.

² See J. A. Wylie, *The History of Protestantism*, originally published in 1878 (Kilkeel, N. Ireland: Mourne Missionary Trust, 1985) Vol. I, Book I, pp. 3-14. See also J. H. Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century, A New Translation* (New York: John B. Alden, Publisher, 1883) Book I, pp.1-34.

³ D'Aubigne, Book I, p. 81.

⁴ Quoted from copy Matthew 23:8.

Of the document in Pope Leo's letter in Hardouin's Collection, Epistola I., Leonis Papoe IX; Acta Conciliorum et Epistoloe Decretales, tom. 6, pp. 934; Parisiis, 1714. The English reader will find a copy of

the pretended original document in full in *Historical Essay on the Power of the Popes*, Vol. II, Appendix, Tr. from French, London, 1838

⁵ Wylie, Vol. I, p. 29-30. See also Roman Catholic historian Ignaz Von Dollinger, *The Pope and the Council*, Auth. Tr. from German, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1869) Sect. 7 "Forgeries", pp. 94-142.

⁶ Peter De Rosa, *Vicars of Christ: The Dark Side of the Papacy* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1988) p. 47-56.

⁷ De Rosa, p. 175.

⁸ William Shaw Kerr, *A Handbook on the Papacy* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott Ltd., 1950) p. 239.

⁹ Revelation 17:6.

¹⁰ Daniel 7:21.

¹¹ Revelation 13:7.

¹² For fuller documentation of this see John W. Robbins, *Ecclesiastical Megalomania: The Economic and Political Thought of the Roman Catholic Church* (Unicoi, TN 37692-0068: The Trinity Foundation, 1999) ISBN: 0-940931-52-4.

¹³ "Edward King, insightful in 1800 wrote about this defeat as the mortal wound or end of Pontifical Power, "THIS IS THE YEAR 1798.-And just 1260 years ago, in the very beginning of the year 538, Belisarius put an ed to the Empire, and Dominion of the Goths, at Rome...He had entered the City on the 10th of the preceding December, in triumph, in the name of Justinian, Emperor of the East: and had soon after made it tributary to him: leaving thenceforward from A.D. 538 NO POWER in Rome, that could be said to rule over the earth, excepting the ECCLESIASTICAL PONTIFICAL POWER." Remarks on the Signs of the Times (Philadelphia ed., 1800) pp. 18-19 in LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1950) Vol. II, p. 767.

¹⁴ RC writer John Cornwell states, "At the turn of the century [1900], Pacelli [later Pope Pius XII]...collaborated in redrafting the Church's laws in such a way as to grant future popes unchallenged domination from the Roman center. These laws, separated from their ancient historical and social background, were packaged in a manual known as the Code of Canon Law, published and brought into force in 1917. The code, distributed to Catholic clergy throughout the world, created the means of establishing, imposing, and sustaining a remarkable new 'top-down' power relationship. As papal nuncio in Munich and Berlin during the 1920s, Pacelli sought to impose the new code, state by state, on Germany...." *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII* (New York, 10014: Viking, 1999) p. 6.

¹⁵ Cornwell, p. 7 "In 1933 Pacelli found a successful negotiating partner for his Reich Concordat in the person of Adolf Hitler. Their treaty authorized the papacy to impose the new Church law on German Catholics and granted generous privileges to Catholic schools and the clergy. In exchange, the Catholic Church in Germany, its parliamentary political party, and its many hundreds of associations and newspapers 'voluntarily' withdrew, following Pacelli's initiative, from social and political action. The abdication of German political Catholicism in 1933, negotiated and imposed from the Vatican by Pacelli with the agreement of Pope Pius XI, ensured that Nazism could rise unopposed by the most powerful Catholic community in the world..."

¹⁶ See RC author Cornwell and Presbyterian author Robbins.

¹⁷ No. 56, *Nostra Aetate*, 28 October 1965, Austin P. Flannery, Ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1975, 1984).

¹⁸ Flannery, No. 42, "Reflections and Suggestions Concerning Ecumenical Dialogue", S.P.U.C., 15 August 1975, p. 549.

¹⁹ Flannery, No. 42, pp. 540-1. Bolding in any quotation indicates emphasis added in this paper.

²⁰ Flannery, No. 42, p.545.

²¹ Flannery, No. 42, p. 541.

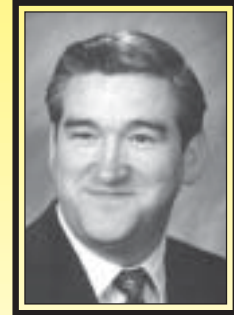
²² For more details see our article on *Vatican Prepares to Control Through Civil Law*.

²³ *Code of Canon Law Latin-English ed.* (Washington DC: Canon Law Society of America, 1983) Canon 1311. All canons are taken from this source.

Revelation Revisited

Historical Perspectives

By David Clover



David Clover

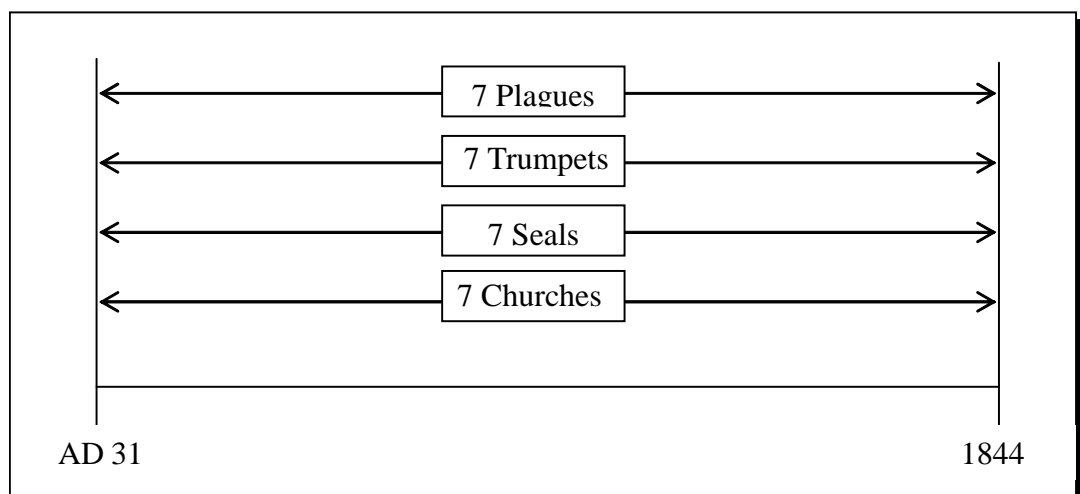
[We welcome this new author to this publication. He has been a student of prophecy since his teens and has made indepth studies into the book of Revelation. In this article he logically tackles the growing questions that the *historicist* method of interpretation raises. He ends with a persuasive plea to lay aside Biblical investigative techniques that are tainted too heavily with man's methods.]

Most Adventists today approach the unraveling of Revelation's mysteries armed with the Historicist method of interpreting apocalyptic prophecy. We come by this approach naturally enough since it's the primary interpretive principle that we were raised with. By and large, we all sat at the feet of Uriah Smith, who himself learned this method from great Christian scholars of earlier ages, including such notables as Isaac Newton. We learned that this was *the correct way* to view this magnificent book.

The Historicist view is that the major story lines of Revelation point backward to events that are already past. The Historicist gains comfort in being able to see how God has lead out in the affairs of men and of nations. Perhaps the greatest work based on this view is the 4-volume work *Horae Apocalypticae*, by Edward B. Elliot, first published in 1844.

Since this was the dominant method of apocalyptic interpretation among Protestants in the 19th century, William Miller and the other founders of Adventism inherited this view. The reason for their affinity for it is clear enough. William Miller taught that the next event on the prophetic horizon was the Second Coming of Jesus. Therefore, **all the other events** of Revelation must already have taken place. The Historicist view seemed to confirm his personal expectations.

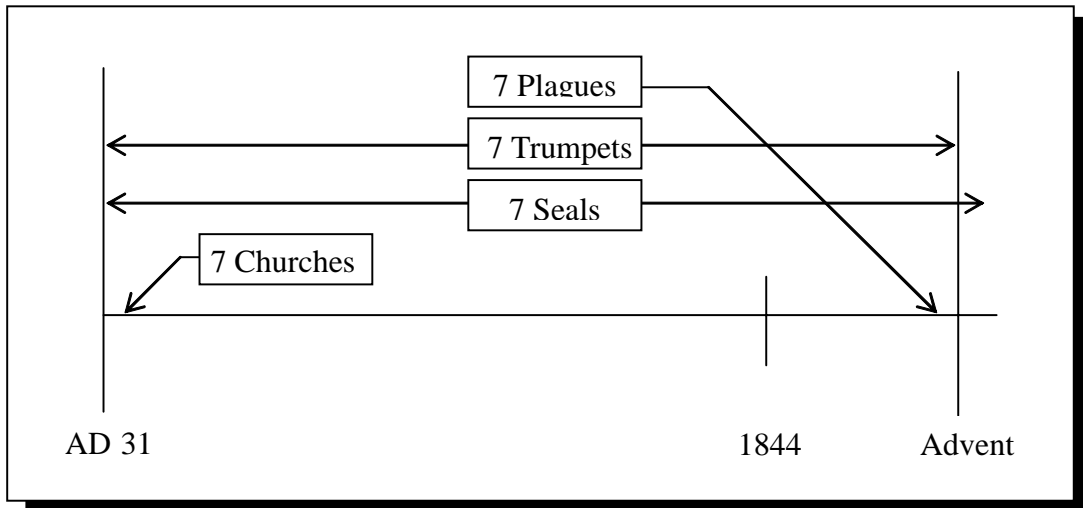
William Miller was remarkably consistent in his view. Not only did he hold that the 7 churches, the 7 seals and the 7 trumpets were all representations of historical events that had occurred between 31 AD and 1844, but he also held that **the 7 plagues** had also occurred, and could be seen in historical events. His view can be pictured as this:



No Adventist alive today would agree with William Miller on this view. Shortly after Jesus “failed” to appear in 1844, Adventist scholars and theologians modified the above view. After studying them in full, it was seen that the 7 last plagues were in fact yet ahead of us, and would directly precede the 2nd coming of Jesus. Ellen White confirmed this view.

For us this may seem like a very minor adjustment. But to reach this conclusion, our forefathers had *to set aside* their principal principle of interpreting Revelation. They could no longer say that one method - the Historicist - could be used to understand all of Revelation. Instead, we had moved into a new phase of interpretation. We now had to study the literal meaning of the words to see if they had future application. If the meaning could not be seen as being literal and future, then it was assumed that the message applied to times that were behind us, and the Historicist method was utilized to determine that application.

At the time that our position on the 7 last plagues was reevaluated, we could see no logical future application of the Seals and the Trumpets, so they were left locked in the Historicist mold. Valid questions have been raised about the applicability of the Historicist method to the pastoral messages given to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. Not only are the messages couched in different language than the rest of the book, but they also lack the deliberate numeric sequencing that is utilized in the Seals, Trumpets and Plagues. Furthermore, Jesus’ statements in Rev 1:19 and Rev 4:1 clearly separate these messages from the “prophecy” portion of Revelation. This has lead many to view the messages to the 7 churches primarily as wise spiritual council, first to the seven literal churches to whom they were addressed, and secondarily to all of us. Allowing for this adjustment in our schema, our modified Historicist view of Revelation would now look like this:



... leaving only the Seals and Trumpets in the Historical mode.

Further revisions of the above may become necessary, as many Adventists presently studying Revelation are concluding that the 7 trumpets are **also** end time events, and that they will take place in order prior to the 7 last plagues. Such investigation naturally leads to the question, what about the Seals? And perhaps more importantly, what about the Historicist method of interpretation?

And so the questions must be asked. Was there ever a valid reason to believe that the meaning of Revelation could be determined by searching history? Should we view *prophecy* as a flashlight that only works when we point it behind us? Does the Bible itself tell us that the meaning of prophecy is to be derived by looking back through history to find events that seem to match the prophetic parable?

Actually, the answer to all these questions is “no.” Plain and simple. Again and again, God tells us that the purpose of prophecy is to enable us to know **in advance** when things are going to happen. Jesus said in Matthew 24: 32-33 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.”¹ It is God’s ability to tell us what is going to happen **in advance** that gives us confidence in His ability to guide us through these events. It is a sign of his Divinity. Isaiah recognized this when he taunted the false gods, “Declare the things that are going to come afterward, That we may know that you are gods.” (Isaiah 41:23) And Revelation itself declares its mission statement: “to show to His bondservants, the things which must shortly take place.” (Rev. 1:1)

Now, if the purpose of the book of Revelation is to show us “the things that must soon take place,” shouldn’t it point forward instead of backward? Yes, you may say, but what if it *was* pointing forward (at the time it was given) to those things that are now behind us? The Bible is full of examples of already-fulfilled prophecies.

If that were the case, shouldn’t the contemporary Christians – at the relevant times of history – have been able to say **with certainty**, “Well, the second seal is over, the third one ought to be opened any day now”? Evidence shows this was not the case. The noted historian Eugen Weber points out in his book *Apocalypses* that when the Goths attacked Rome in 410, the Christians stated; “From Adam all the years have passed... and now comes the day of Judgment.”² He further notes that when later in the same century the Vandals invaded, calculations were produced to show the world would end in the year 500, and that the name of the Vandal king added up to 666. While the contemporary Christians saw these as momentous events, they linked that significance not to the fulfillment of the first, second, or third trumpet, but to their mistaken expectation that these events heralded the soon return of Jesus.

Why did many *hundreds of years* have to pass before we could look back and see the significance of these events, and see in them the fulfillment of prophecy that was lost upon those who lived through them?

[Yes it is true that Fromm and others make a case for people in all ages making applications from the text of Revelation to the events in which they found themselves. But in retrospect, most of those applications were in error. At no time was there a universal understanding that a particular Church, Seal, Trumpet or Plague event had occurred, which has not subsequently been questioned or set aside completely.]

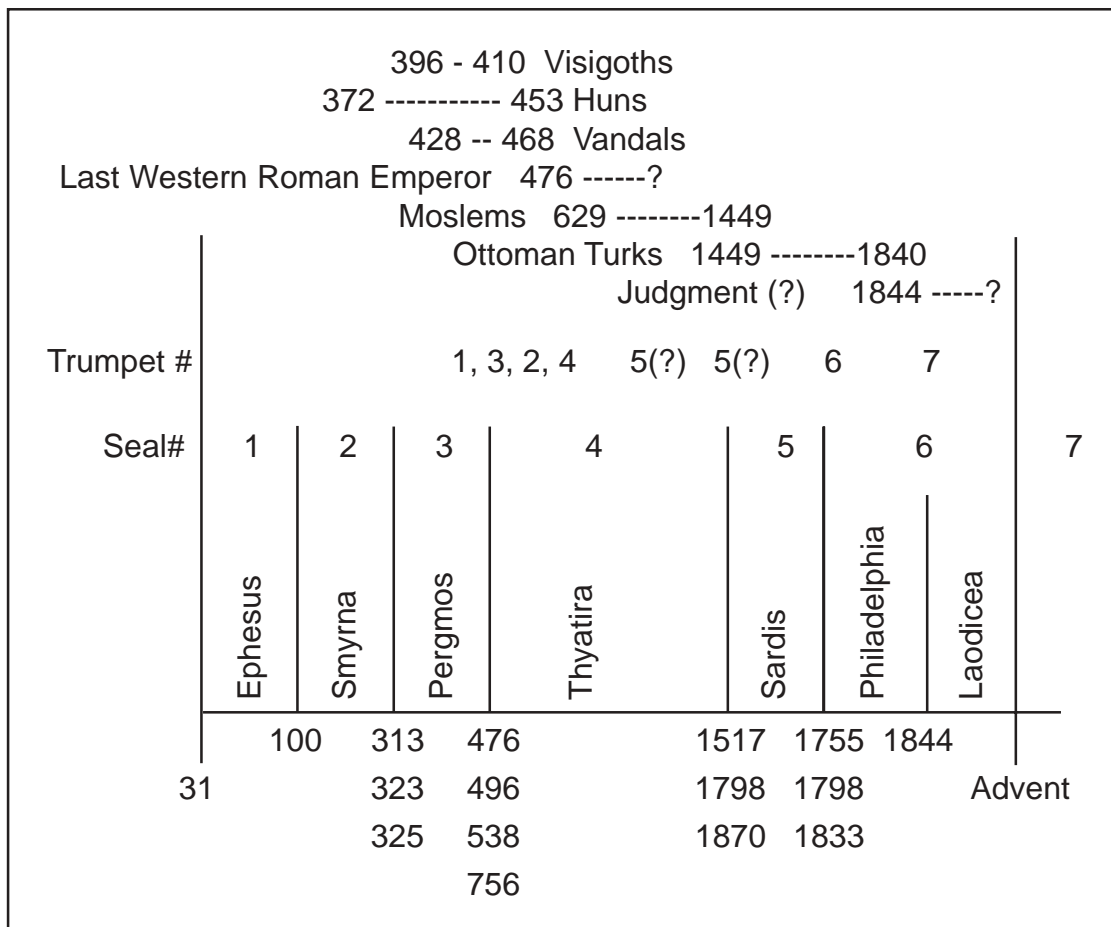
Many prophecies were recorded in the Bible, many of which were fulfilled in Biblical times. Often the fulfillments were anticipated. Usually they were understood to have taken place. **The basic presumption of Historicism – that a prophecy can be fulfilled, but its fulfillment not be perceived or understood for hundreds of years – cannot be supported from scripture.** So to use Historicism as the *default* hermeneutic for interpreting Revelation’s prophecies is untenable.

Not surprisingly, Historicism has proven to be a very tricky methodology. By definition, facts have been chosen to fit, and in some cases even our own scholars resorted to distortions and/or omissions in order to make historical “facts” fit the prophetic mold. Though countless scholars have agreed to the validity of the Historicist method, that unanimity has never produced a consensus opinion on what is meant by specific passages. Hundreds – if not thousands – of changes have been made in the Historicist Model as time has stretched out more and more.

¹ All scripture quotes are from the *The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update* , (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1996.

² *Apocalypses*, p.34, Vintage Canada, 1999.

Let's look a little closer at the Historicist view of the Churches, Seals, and Trumpets:



The closer you look the more complex things get! You'll notice the string of dates at the bottom of the graph. Each of these is suggested as a possible start or stop date for the events listed. In fact, since we are in most cases dealing with subjective (rather than objective) interpretations, the SDA Bible Commentary leaves a large amount of leeway for various interpretations. Peter referred to the "sure word of prophecy." What we have above is the "unsure" word! We are unsure about almost all the dates! The following statement from Volume 7 of the SDA Bible Commentary, p. 753, on the close of the Pergamos period, is typical of these discussions: "Any one of various events might serve as an acceptable boundary marker for the close of this period. The deposition of the last Roman emperor in 476 marks it as one such date. The conversion, in 496, of the Frankish king Clovis, the first Germanic ruler to embrace Roman Christianity and to ally himself with the interests of the church in the conquest of other Germanic peoples, is another. In 538 Justinians decree of 533, according the pope plenary ecclesiastical power in East and West, began to become effective.... Gregory the Great('s) (590-604)... reign as pope might be considered another such boundary.... The year of 756 marks the beginning of papal territorial rule...."³ If one event serves just as well as the other, how can we even contend that the prophecy has a unique meaning, and that unique meaning has been fulfilled?

³ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p 753, Review & Herald Publishing Assoc., Hagerstown, MD, 1980.

The 5th seal, we contend, ends in 1755, the year of the Lisbon earthquake. The 5th seal speaks of martyrs. I wish that we could conclude that there will be no more martyrs in God's cause because the period of martyrdom is past, but I'm afraid this is not the case.

In the case of the trumpets, you'll note that the 3rd comes before the 2nd! That's right! The Huns, lead by Attila disappeared from history's radar screen in 453 AD when Attila died. The Vandals "vandalized" Rome for two weeks in the year 455 AD. And yet we say that the Vandals are the 2nd trumpet and the Huns are the 3rd.

The 5th and 6th trumpet are so complex that the SDA Bible commentary spends considerable time on them and then concludes: "It should be made clear, however, that commentators and theologians in general have been greatly divided over the meaning of the 5th and 6th trumpets." (Vol.7, p.796) On the one hand we want to use the description of the locust to describe the spread of the Moslem religion starting in about 629 AD. On the other hand, we want to use the 5 months (150 prophetic days = 150 literal years) to describe the 150 year struggle between the Ottoman Turks and the Greek Empire represented by Constantinople, which took place between 1299 and 1449. It clearly can not apply to both.

We have generally adhered to the interpretation of the 6th trumpet as originally exposted by Josiah Litch, who declared that the "hour, day, month, and year" were to be understood as 391 years, 15 days. These, he believed, started with the Battle of Bapheum on July 27, 1299, and would extend to August 11, 1840, upon which date he expected the Ottoman Empire to be overthrown. On that very day, an emissary arrived in Alexandria with the terms of the London Convention, in which Britain, Austria, Prussia and Russia agreed to enforce an agreement between the Ottoman Turks and the upstart country of Egypt. Josiah Litch declared the prophecy to be fulfilled, and many were said to be converted. (This understanding of the 6th trumpet is recorded in *The Great Controversy*.)

Several years later, however, Josiah Litch retracted his statements, declaring that he was in error, and stating that we must look to some future fulfillment of this prophecy. Clearly, the Ottoman Empire was not overthrown - in fact, it continued until WW1. There are other problems with this prophecy as well. In calculating his ending date of August 11, Josiah Litch failed to take into account the 10 day shift that took place when the Gregorian calendar was instituted in 1752. His target date should have been August 21. More telling however is the "hour, day, month, and year" spoken of in Revelation 9:15. The Bible does not speak of this as a **period** of time. Instead, it is pinpointed **as an exact moment** in time. These angels were prepared for the very moment of their release.

Given all these problems – problems with the meaning of the time period, problems with the calculation of the event, problems with the failure of the Turkish empire to expire as predicted – we should not be surprised to find that it's true meaning and fulfillment are other than what we have traditionally taught.

As can be seen from this brief review, there are many unresolved difficulties in the Historicist view of Revelation when the details are examined. In fact, however, the biggest problems are seen when we try to back away from the details to view the comprehensive picture. Remember the game played in the first couple of years of school, where a group of objects are shown, and you have to pick out the one that doesn't fit? Let's play that game now.

The 7 Churches fill the time from 31 AD until the return of Jesus. They are said to trace the story of the true followers of Jesus throughout history. Nice and neat. Every thing fits.

The 7 Seals are said to trace the spiritual environment the church would find itself in. Certainly this can be said of the first 5 Seals. The 6th, however, is said to depict the 2nd coming, and the 7th is a 1/2-hour "quite time" in heaven, apparently after the Second Coming. Something in this picture doesn't square up with the rest of the elements. This half-hour of silence doesn't fit in with the purported meaning of the rest of the Seals. Why is it grouped with them? And while we're asking

questions, why is the story of the 144,000 told here instead of in the story of the 7 Churches, where the true church is said to be traced?

The 7 Trumpets are said to trace the political events that would impact the church. So we see attacks on the Roman Empire, the rise of the Moslem powers, — and the Judgment? Oops! Not a good fit! Why are these seven “trumpets” strung together? What is the common thread? Shouldn’t a correct understanding of the 7 Trumpets allow us to make sense of this? And if we are tracing political events that would have impact on the church, where is the rise of Soviet Russia or the persecution in Red China?

A weaver can’t see all the problems in his work from up close. He needs to step back and look at the entire tapestry. Likewise, as we step back from the details of interpreting each of these elements, we see problems with the overall picture that weren’t apparent close up.

What other “broad-view” problems does our Historicist view create? Several.

- ◆ We have made Revelation seem dry, uninteresting, and unrelated to our daily lives. After all, if it’s a mere recitation of dusty history, where is the relevance?
- ◆ We have made it so complex, that the average person feels that this is a book for the experts. It certainly isn’t for the average person.
- ◆ We’ve cut it up into so many pieces that we have destroyed the flow of the story. We’ve forgotten that the major elements of Revelation were given “in their order.”⁴
- ◆ We have let our system of interpretation tell us what the words mean, rather than looking for meaning within the Bible-based context of the words themselves.
- ◆ Jesus used language that indicated world-spanning events. “All the world,” “Hated by all nations,” etc. Clearly the end of the world will affect the whole world. Our interpretation of Revelation’s prophecies focuses on localized, parochial events instead.

I believe that the time has come to revisit Revelation, and to reopen our investigation into its mysteries, laying aside our indoctrination, our presumptions, and our prejudices. Let’s ask God what He wants to show us. In particular, we need to be willing to look very seriously at those portions of the book that were previously thought to be too “impossible” to be literal. Knowledge in the natural world and scientific communities has advanced tremendously in the past 100 years. Can that explosion of knowledge impact our understanding of this book? I believe so.

It is interesting to note that Ellen White wrote almost nothing about the Seals and Trumpets of Revelation. Why? Is it possible she was not allowed the understanding of the truths that we may be allowed to uncover? Are we not closer to the consummation of these events than she? Shouldn’t we realize that we have a responsibility to study these issues for ourselves – to do our own original research? Shouldn’t we wonder what Ellen White meant when she wrote: “Solemn events before us are yet to transpire. Trumpet after trumpet is to be sounded; vial after vial poured out one after another upon the inhabitants of the earth?”⁵

Often we are urged to remain loyal to “Historical Adventism,” as if there is value or merit in being an automaton that merely memorizes and recites the doctrines and positions that we inherited. We do **no** honor to the memory of our Adventist pioneers by such aping. They were men and women that studied deeply, and had the courage to go where Bible truths directed. Should we – their heirs – do less? Shouldn’t our guiding question be, “Where is the truth?” not “Where is the path?”

⁴ *Testimonies to the Church*, Volume 8, p 302.

⁵ *Selected Messages*, Volume 3, p. 426 (cf. Hans LaRondelle, Th.D.; *EndTime Issues...*, vol. 5, No. 6 (2002)).



The Power Play of a "Moral" Voice

Few executive leaders in this country's history have exhibited the restraint in dealing with open resistance as has President Bush. From inside his own cabinet, to congress, foreign countries, U.S. evangelicals and the media have come demands for "more time," obtain U.N. resolutions or "we need more allies" on the Iraq situation.

This delay, which the President cautiously bowed to, has had enormous risk. One distinctly related to the increased ability of the Iraq regime to hide weapons and woo the sympathies of the world. Another sinister and unexpected challenge emerged as the anti-war voices became louder and the U.N. Security Council resolution for war was sought.

The Vatican began a major anti-war campaign on a fascinating paradigm – "A just war" concern. Catholic literature, the media and papal speeches capitalized on this in an expanding aura of "questions." These were based on:

"... a kind of ethical calculus, in which moral reasoning and rigorous empirical analysis are meant to work together, in order to provide *guidance to public*

authorities on whom the responsibilities of decision-making fall"¹

This opened the door for "philosophical" debate on the "moral grounds" for the U.S. involvement in Iraq. Note how the Vatican formulated the ground rules for this:

"... the eminent Protestant [Protestants drawn into the debate] theologian Paul Ramsey argued that the just-war tradition is an attempt to think through the public meaning of the commandment of love-of-neighbor. In today's international context, 'justice' includes the defense of freedom (especially religious freedom), and the defense of a minimum of order in international affairs. For these are the crucial components of the peace that is possible in a fallen world.

"This presumption – that the pursuit of justice is a moral obligation of statecraft – shapes the first set of moral criteria in the just-war tradition, which scholars call the 'ius ad bellum' or 'war-decision law:' Is the cause a just one? Will the war be conducted by a responsible public authority? Is there a 'right intention' (which, among other things, precludes acts of vengeance or reprisal)? Is the contemplated

action 'proportionate:' Is it appropriate to the goal (or just cause); is the good to be accomplished likely to be greater than the evil that would be suffered if nothing were done, or if the use of armed force were avoided for the sake of other types of measures? Have other remedies been tried and found wanting or are other remedies *prima facie* unlikely to be effective? Is there a reasonable chance of success?

"It is only when these prior moral questions have been



Pope John Paul II addresses Vatican-accredited diplomats from some 174 countries January 13 at the Vatican, giving his view of the state of the world, especially areas which he believes deserves special attention.

The Catholic World Report, February 2003: "The Pope's 'State of the World' Address – In his annual speech to the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, the Pope offers a rare glimpse of his foreign-policy agenda."

answered that the second set of just-war criteria – what scholars call the ‘*ius in bello*’ or ‘war-conduct law’ – come into play, logically. The positive answers to the first set of questions, the ‘war-decision’ questions, create the moral framework for addressing the two great ‘war-conduct’ issues: ‘proportionality,’ which requires the use of no more force than necessary to vindicate the just cause; and ‘discrimination,’ or what we today call ‘non-combatant immunity.’”²

This opened the door for the pope on January 13, in his “State of the World” address to 174 ambassadors and official representatives to the Vatican to say:

“In Iraq, ‘the land of the Prophets,’ ... the population is ‘already sorely tried by more than 12 years of embargo.’ And in a clear indication of severe misgivings about American military plans, he cautioned: ‘War is never just another means that one can choose to employ for settling differences between nations.’ The Pontiff went on to list the demanding criteria for a just war: a clear and grave harm to the *common good*, the exhaustion of all diplomatic means to resolve the problem, and strict adherence to military policies that avoid disproportionate damage and civilian casualties.”³

Just three days later the Vatican released a strongly worded new document on the responsibility of politicians as world public leaders. It stated that they have “... ‘legitimate freedom’ to pursue any policy that is ‘compatible with the faith and the natural moral law.’ However, the diction observed that ‘a well formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals.’”

Then the Jesuit *La Civiltà Cattolica* in January 2002, a very precise and “Holy See”

representation of the minds of the “insiders” declared, “If the Bush administration chooses to go to war with Iraq, it will do so over the heated opposition of the Holy See.” The journal accused President Bush of “not telling the truth about the real reasons for threatening war with Iraq” and questioned the wisdom of his foreign policy. “There is in the depths of the heart of the United States a messianic vocation on behalf of the human race.” Its words were blistering, acid and close to hateful.



Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Pope John Paul’s personal peace envoy, speaks to reporters after he arrived at Saddam airport in Baghdad, February 11, 2003. Etchegaray planned to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to discuss ways to avert a possible war with the United States. REUTERS/Suhaib Salem

To “rub” the Roman Catholic’s point deep, Pope John Paul II dispatched a special envoy headed by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to Baghdad on February 10 to help “prevent” a U.S. led attack. The day before the pope told thousands at St. Peter’s Square:

“In this hour of international concern, we all feel the need to turn ourselves to the Lord to implore the great gift of peace.”⁴ By the time you read this, the pope will have personally met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tarig Aziz at the Vatican to

introject papal diplomacy through him to the U.N., U.S. and Iraq.

To gain Catholic support the U.S. enlisted theologian Michael Novak to *defend* “Preventive War.” The Catholic U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Jim Nicholson, *pled* for the U.S. cause. Cardinal Angelo Sudano, Vatican See of State, began *negotiations* with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Thus, the U.S. government, the strongest in the world, was forced to negotiate with the Vatican and work with the Catholic church. Out of this incredible power position, the Catholic Church, housed in 108 acres of Rome, helped create pressure for delays in the war, wielded unprecedented control over many decisions in Washington, including seeing Bush address many Roman Catholic issues in his State of the Union Message.⁵

This is reminiscent of time in history where the Roman Catholic Church controlled civil governments, then its leaders and, finally, their peoples – to Rome's wishes. That era was called the "Dark Ages."

In its most recent "political play" the Sacramento,

California bishop William Weigand personally told Governor Gray Davis on January 27, "Pick abortion or communion." He then announced to the press he may forbid Davis from receiving communion if he doesn't obey the church dictims.⁶

Recently, a Catholic orphanage in California blocked Gray Davis from visiting because of his "anti-life stance." A document from the congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on January 16 entitled *The Participation of Catholics in Political Life* had called Catholic politicians (everywhere) to be "morally coherent" in abiding by church standards.

Finally, there are published questions coming out in the Catholic press, as this document is



Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Pope John Paul's personal peace envoy (L), meets with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan (C) and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz in Baghdad February 12, 2003. Pope John Paul's personal peace envoy arrived in Baghdad for a planned meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on ways to try to avert a possible war with the United States. Photo by Akram Saleh/Reuters

completed under such titles as *Bush or the Pope – Your Choice*.⁷

What is all this doing? It brings the papacy into a position to work at the highest levels of civil governments. It gives them opportunity to promote "answers" to the world's problems. Finally, it gives unprecedented

"moral" influence to political decisions. Never has a church, since the Dark Ages, wielded so much power over civil leaders. These trends bear careful study and watching. Prophecy makes clear this antichrist leadership would do exactly what is being seen here. The "man of sin," the beast of Revelation 13 and 17, has come to the forefront.

References:

- ¹ George Weigel, Author of *The Catholic Difference. Getting a "Just-war" Straight*.
- ² Zenit, 10/13/2001.
- ³ *The Catholic World Report*, Feb. 2003.
- ⁴ AP, 2/9/03 on Fox News.com
- ⁵ *National Catholic Register*, 1/26–2/1/03.
- ⁶ *National Catholic Register*, 2/2-8/03.
- ⁷ *National Catholic Register*, 2/9-15/03.



HEALTH QUEST

The Good Cholesterol

Misunderstanding among our readers continues regarding HDL-C (high density lipoprotein – cholesterol). This is often called “HDL cholesterol,” “good cholesterol,” or simply HDL.

The HDL-C is an independent risk factor for heart disease. The higher the level, the greater it protects the arteries from arteriosclerosis. In fact, it is so important, the risk of not having enough is as bad as heavy smoking.

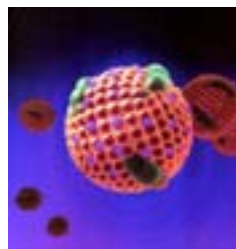
There are different kinds of HDL-C, depending on their composition. They are all made up of:

1. Fats (phospholipids)
2. Cholesterol
3. Triglycerides
4. Proteins (apolipoproteins)
5. Enzymes
6. Lipid transfer proteins

Thus, it is apparent that they are a special chemical *bundle* that is part of the serum or liquid part of the blood.

How does it work?

In general, by removing bad cholesterol from the artery walls and placing it in a little storage chamber called *apolipoprotein B-100* which is in the blood. Or, it can also transport cholesterol to the liver where it is excreted as waste. See also Table I.



HDL-C Particle

What causes the HDL-C to be low (less than 40 mg/dL)?

The most common reason is being overweight, especially abdominal obesity. Other risk factors include elevated triglycerides (over 150 mg/dL), physical inactivity, type 2 diabetes (adult onset) and insulin resistance.

This, in fact, is so important that if a person has three or more of the above, it is called “the metabolic syndrome.” This is a new “disease” and is now being seen as a major risk for morbidity and death.

Other things that suppress the good HDL-C is excess carbohydrates in food, saturated fats and transfatty acids. Diet is extremely important.

Certain medicines such as beta blockers, diuretics and progesterone will also drop the levels, along with smoking.

What makes HDL-C rise?

Regular physical exercise tops the list. Medicine like dilantin and estrogen elevate this cholesterol also.

Another powerful observation recently found that for each 4-5 pounds of weight loss the HDL-C rose 0.8 mg/dL.

Table I – HDL Benefits

- i Prevents the activation (oxidation) of the bad cholesterol LDL-C (low density lipoprotein)
- ii Prevents monocytes (a blood cell) from sticking on the artery wall. (When they do, they attract bad cholesterol)
- iii Slows down the activity of prostacycline (which blocks the artery wall from relaxing)

Table II

| Incidence of CHD (%) in 4 years | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|-------|
| HDL cholesterol (mg/dl) | < 40 | 11.24 | 11.91 | 10.7 | 12.50 |
| | 40-49 | 4.67 | 6.56 | 11.91 | 6.6 |
| | 50-59 | 4.15 | 4.85 | 5.53 | 9.05 |
| | ≥ 60 | 3.77 | 2.78 | 2.06 | 3.83 |
| | | < 200 | 200-229 | 230-259 | ≥ 260 |
| Total cholesterol (mg/dL) | | | | | |

Source: Castelli WP, Garrison RJ, Wilson PW, et al., Incidence of coronary heart disease and lipoprotein cholesterol levels: the Framingham Study. *JAMA*, 1986;256:2836-2838.

at room temperature, especially Canola and Olive oils.

2. Weight reduction – vital. May need professional help and patience over months to years.
3. Exercise – aerobic activity at least 15 minutes/day, 5 days/week (may need physician's advice if older than 50).

Finally, medicines may play a crucial role in this. But after the above changes have been applied. One medicine, niacin, is a vitamin and often dramatically makes the HDL-C cholesterol rise (see Table III). This should be used under strict medical guidelines.

How important is HDL-C?

For every rise of 1 mg/dL of this good cholesterol, coronary artery disease decreases by 2-3%, and deaths decrease by 11% (see Table II – next page).

If the HDL-C is less than 40 mg/dL, intervention is needed... BUT – first, the weight, exercise and diet must be addressed. If this level persists, then consultation with a physician is needed. If the LDL-C cholesterol is elevated, treating that (medications, likely) takes precedence over the HDL-C. If the triglycerids are over 200 mg/dL along with the good cholesterol being down, the "metabolic syndrome" is likely present and needs urgent medical attention.

It is becoming increasingly clear that life-style habits can dramatically decrease years off of life.

Recommendations:

1. Eating habits – vital
 - a. Avoid Crisco, margarine, basically any fats solid at room temperature, including meats.
 - b. Use monosaturated fats that are liquid

References:

- ¹Castiglioni, Analia, et al., "HDL Cholesterol: What Is Its True Clinical Significance?," *Emergency Medicine*, January 2003, p. 30.
- ²Bersot, MD, PhD, Thomas P., "Strategies for raising HDL cholesterol levels," *Patient Care*, Jan. 15, 2000; p. 151.

Table III

Modifiable factors affecting HDL cholesterol level

| Factor | Maximal effect on HDL levels |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Diet (fat type and content, ethanol) | About 20% |
| Drugs | About 25% |
| Exercise | 2%-3% |
| Obesity | About 20% |
| Smoking | Variable |



Why Jesus is Coming Soon

~ Reason Three ~

Political Corruption

In writing to the Corinthians, Paul passionately wrote, "We ... beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." II Corinthians 6:1. He outlined the meaning of preserving the integrity of truth and honor of a Christian life – at all cost. Then, he pointedly warned against certain activities that would mar the purity of that commitment. They were to avoid being "unequally yoked" to unbelievers, to come out and be "separate" so Jesus would be able to receive them and be a "Father" unto them. II Corinthians 6:14, 17-18. The importance of this counsel goes deep.

"If our citizenship is above, what right have we to be engaging in political strife? We are not called to any such service [II Corinthians 6:17-18 quoted] ... What more could we ask? We shall be members of the royal family, children of a heavenly King, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to an immortal inheritance. We shall have the crown of life that fadeth not away."¹

Though not to be meshed with nor be engrossed over political issues, political corruption is a sign of the end. It is to be watched.

Contentious words and actions are on the rise in the U.S. political arena as never before in its history. Corruption in government and scandle among its leaders is reaching epic proportions.

This has always been part of politics to some degree in its never ending vying for power. In Old Testament times deceit and force were among the evils recorded by its writers. In Christ's day contentious political favors were extended from and to the Roman government when appointing the high priest for Israel – "God's people."

Though the world is the theater where the final battle between right and wrong will be fought, the power players in the last scenes are the United States and the papacy, the *sea beast* and the *land beast* (Revelation 13).

Since the United States will be the final catalyst and force to bring unholy demands on the world



Clinton and Reno

in support of the papacy, that nation's use of power, its political trends and sympathy to Rome reveal a pacesetting evolution which will fulfill prophecy. Deception, centralization of power and imposing arbitrary standards on

conduct are becoming part of the foretold actions.

The most corrupt administration to lead the U.S. came to power in 1992. This was analyzed at Princeton University in New Jersey in 1998 and again in 2000. They noted:

"ADMINISTRATION RECORDS SET

- The only president ever impeached on grounds of personal malfeasance
- Most number of convictions and guilty pleas by friends and associates
- Most number of cabinet officials to come under criminal investigation
- Most number of witnesses to flee country or refuse to testify
- Most number of witnesses to die suddenly

- First president sued for sexual harassment
- First president accused of rape
- First first lady to come under criminal investigation
- Largest criminal plea agreement in an illegal campaign contribution case
- First president to establish a legal defense fund
- Greatest amount of illegal campaign contributions
- Greatest amount of illegal campaign contributions from abroad²

Members of the executive branch cabinet or staff during his tenure were *convicted* of these crimes:

- Drug trafficking
- Racketeering, extortion and bribery
- Tax evasion, kickbacks and embezzlement
- Fraud
- Conspiracy
- Fraudulent loans, illegal gifts
- Illegal campaign contributions
- Money laundering

Numerous non-governmental agencies that investigate corruption in the U.S. government and Congress during those years were investigated themselves.³

During those years major security breaches occurred with top secrets on defense and technology. New levels of demonizing Christianity were reached, even at the cabinet level, and by the president's wife. Public denouncement of opponents occurred regularly of deeds the administration and Democratic party were guilty of.⁴

Congress was bypassed as the Executive Branch began to negotiate international treaties.⁵

During that era the rule of law was propelled into political waters. The constitution became "fluid" and subject to opinion.⁶



Chinese cop stops a North Korean from entering Japanese consulate.

World, July/Aug. 2001

And in the final few days of office, 30,000 pages of new federal regulations were passed by executive order.⁷ Again, bypassing Congress.

A spin-off of those years has developed where lying at all levels has brought shameless honor.⁸

Though party changes came into the federal government with the presidency of George Bush, old time corruption with new twists have emerged. Rep. James Traficant was stripped of his house membership in July 2002, Sen. Robert Torricelli was charged with accepting bribes and gifts. Hush money is circulating in Washington, and investigators are discovering that an individual that was pardoned by the outgoing president is a donor to the ex-president.⁹

Because of the above, web sites have sprung up reporting on scandals, impropriety, charges and indictments of our country's leaders.¹⁰

Perhaps the most important spin-off of this, which is occurring with blinding force, is the growing voice for a moral mandate in public office. This is coming from many sources, as has been reported many times in this publication and well documented by Alan Fine's work in the January 2003 issue of *EndTime Issues...* magazine.¹¹

At the same time, politics is getting dirtier with strong media support.¹²

Hate speech against the Bush administration is being encouraged by many elected leaders. Voices of unreason are rising in the political arena. Blatant deception in reporting is affecting American thinking.

In Revelation 7:1 John saw four angels on the four corners of the earth, holding the four "winds" of the earth that they should not blow. In apocalyptic language *winds* represent *strife* or *destructive judgments*.



Daschel and Gephart anti-Bush

World, Sept./Oct. 2002



Destruction due to political turmoil - Middle East

U.S. News & World Report, 02-22-02

These angels were told to hold back the winds so they would not hurt the earth, sea or any tree. This has been shown to mean limiting earthquakes, tempest and political strife from creating devastation or chaos.¹³

"The Lord God of heaven will not send upon the world His judgments for disobedience and transgression until He has sent His watchmen to give the warning...."

"While the angels hold the four winds, we are to work with all our capabilities."¹⁴

"... while already nation is rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, there is not now a general engagement. As yet the four winds are held until the servants of God shall be sealed in their foreheads. Then the powers of earth will marshal their forces for the last great battle."¹⁵

"... when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there will be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture."¹⁶

"Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old."¹⁷

This imagery suggests the four winds will be loosened suddenly. But, earthquakes are on the rise, tempest and destruction is increasing and politics is becoming more scurrilous. Why?

The "hands" of the angels are loosening. God has restraining control of these powers, but He has permitted their hands to *partially let go* of those controls.¹⁸

"Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come *in full*. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing, by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads."¹⁹

Political strife is one of the end-time signs that

God is holding in check. Yet that restraint is lessening as a warning and a sign; *the end is near*. A warning to repent, a sign that we might be "children of the light (I Thessalonians 5:5)."

"We are living in the midst of an 'epidemic of crime,' at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand aghast. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of *political strife*, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body?"²⁰

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¹³*Testimonies to Ministers*, p444; *Review and Herald*, 06-07-1887.

¹⁴*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 14, 17.

¹⁵*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 14.

¹⁶*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 408.

¹⁷*The Great Controversy*, p. 614.

¹⁸*Early Writings*, p. 38.

¹⁹*Review and Herald*, 06-07-1887.

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Prophecy Unfolds

CYRUS – A GREAT BIBLICAL EXEMPLAR

BY PAT ROBERTSON



Pat Robertson

[This document comes to us from a lady with long experience in deep Biblical research. She has been active in church administration and formally conducting community Bible studies. Her penetrating thoughts are welcomed in discussion groups. This fascinating article draws on the vast imagery and metaphor used in God's word.

Cyrus Typifies Jesus

A bloodless hand appears upon the palace wall, the drunken feast becomes strangely silent. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin. What does it mean? "Belshazzar cried aloud to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers." "Then came in the king's wise men: but they could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof." At the queen mother's suggestion Daniel, the servant of the most high God was sent for. . . After reviewing the history of Babylon, he reminded Belshazzar that "the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour. . . but when his heart was lifted up" pride brought insanity to Nebuchadnezzar. For *seven times* the insane head of Babylon ate grass with the beasts of the field and was wet with the dew of heaven. Although he had observed this, Belshazzar failed to learn that *self-sufficiency* and *pride*, key Babylon principles, end in disgrace and destruction. Now Daniel interprets the writing for the king.

MENE – "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it."

TEKEL – "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

PERES – "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and the Persians."

God's "appointed hour" for the overthrow of Babylon had come. At that moment Cyrus was outside the wall ready to overthrow the city. That great kingdom, that head of gold, was coming to a close! Cyrus became God's instrument to fulfill that hour. He was greatly favored by God and became a metaphor for many good Biblical illustrations.

Cyrus symbolized Jesus – Parallels for Us

God said of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd" (Isa. 44:28)

Jesus is "the good shepherd" (John 10:11, Heb. 13:20). Does He envision a shepherding role for His people? John tells the story of an early morning breakfast with Jesus beside Galilee. The disciples had been fishing on the lake. Jesus' campfire was sited on the shore, Peter couldn't wait for the boat to land. He jumped into the water and waded ashore. As the others arrived Jesus invited them to share the breakfast He had prepared. After eating Jesus gently gave Peter, who had denied Him three times, three opportunities to reaffirm his love for his Savior. "Peter do you love me?" "Feed my sheep." "Peter, do you love me? "Feed my sheep." This means "Shepherd!" "Peter, do you love me?" "Shepherd!"

The Lord Jesus, that good shepherd of the flock, wants those of us who love Him to "Shepherd" also.

God called Cyrus "His anointed" (Isa. 45:1)

Jesus was anointed at the Jordan in 27 A.D. Peter states, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38).

He has anointed us and given us an earnest of the Spirit (2 Cor.1: 20-22) but He has also promised, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit . . . and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Cyrus came from the East from a far country (Isa. 46:11)

Jesus comes from the East from a far country. Matt. 24: 27

Rev. 18:1 says, "And after these things I saw another angel (or message) come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." (His character) That message which lightens earth with its glory is the Righteousness of Christ. Eze. 43: 2 tells us, "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: (peoples) and the earth shined with his glory." In Daniel 11, after describing apostate religion sweeping through the earth and even overthrowing many in God's true church, says "But tidings out of the East and out of the North (God's throne, Ps. 48:2) shall trouble him." The effectiveness of the loud cry by God's people by way of the "East" will trouble the antichrist. It's refreshing to be on the winning side. But I would be remiss if I didn't quote the rest of that verse. "Therefore, he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many." (See 3SM397 and Rev.20:4 on martyrs during the loud cry.)

Cyrus was to set the captives free (Isa. 45:13)

Jesus proclaimed that He had been anointed to "...preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:16). He was quoting from Isa. 61, the Jubilee chapter, when He made that proclamation.

The Jubilee was always proclaimed on the 10th day of the 7th month, the Day of Atonement. This was preceded by ten days of blowing of trumpets

to let the people know that their sins must go beforehand to judgment. The Day of Atonement was a day of *fasting*.

God has given us directions as to what is an acceptable *fast*. Isa. 58:6: "Is not this the *fast* that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" So we also have been commissioned to set the captives free in the great antitypical invitation during the loud cry.

Cyrus was instrumental in the rebuilding of Jerusalem

Jesus with Zerubbabel, His people, shall finish rebuilding spiritual Jerusalem. He also returned to heaven to prepare the New Jerusalem for His people (John 14:1-3).

He is calling us to build His spiritual temple. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:5.

Cyrus was called RIGHTEOUS in Isa. 45:13

Jesus is righteous. And "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" 1 John 2:1.

We are called to be righteous. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." 1 John 3:7. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as He is perfect." Matt. 5:46.

When Jesus closes His work in the heavenly sanctuary He makes the declaration, "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still:" Rev. 21:11.

Cyrus was: A shepherd God's anointed From the east He was to: Set the captives free Build Jerusalem and was designated: Righteous.

Jesus is: The Good Shepherd God's Anointed From the East He has: Set the Captives Free Built the New Jerusalem and designated Jesus Christ typifies the Righteous!

Cyrus – God's Remnant

Babylon is ripe for destruction. It's appointed time for destruction has come.

God now needs a Cyrus. The 144,000 are soon to be that Cyrus. God has promised to open "the

two leaved gates; ... I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight" (Isa. 45:1, 2).

Has He truly given us the responsibility and equipped us for such a task?

Until the charges in the great controversy have been met and God's name vindicated He has a problem. Jesus answered the charges:

He proved God is love not selfish and arbitrary. He proved that God's law can be kept by fallen humanity dependent upon God for righteousness. And that God would not ask His creatures to do something he was unwilling to do himself.

But Satan can further accuse by saying, "But He was God, He had an advantage. What about a community of people living after 6000 years of degeneracy? Can they keep the law of God? Can they be perfectly loving? Can they lighten the earth with His character?"

The universe stands poised and waiting to usher in the King of Kings and the long awaited Jubilee but He cannot come as King of Kings until He completes His priestly ministry. And He cannot complete His priestly ministry until He has a community of saints, a kingdom who has victory over sin. This community, the 144,000, will have the Father's name or character in their foreheads. They are without guile or sin. They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

In Hebrews 1: 9 speaking of Jesus it says, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." The order in this verse is not arbitrary. We must love righteousness and hate iniquity before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. We could put it another way. When Jesus came up out of Jordan and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in the form of a dove, it was because He had the characteristics of a lamb. If we are to share in His baptism with the Spirit and Power it can only happen if we share His lamblike characteristics.

All the time lines and chronology charts are of no value unless He has a people who by their likeness to Him bring judgment on Babylon so it can be overthrown. When will the end come? We speak of finishing the work. We quote, "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world

for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come." Let me ask you a question. If every human being on earth were a Seventh-day Adventist, ... would the work be finished?

Today we each have a case pending at the bar of God. The youthful prophet Zechariah had some important end time truth to share. "I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies: my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 1:16). The house He wants to build is us. In verse 2 of chapter 2 we see the judgment described, the judgment of the professed people of God, the judgment of Jerusalem. The man with a measuring line in his hand is asked, "Whither goest thou? and he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem," the church of God. This is the first angel's message. "The hour of His judgment is come. In verse 4 we have the glorious promise, "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." As God's people receive the benefits of the judgment, there will be a large influx of honest hearted into His church. Listen to the second angel's message in verses 6 and 7. "Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north. Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon."

What does it mean to deliver ourselves from dwelling with the daughter of Babylon? In prophecy we have always said that Babylon is the apostate mother church, Rome, and her daughters are the churches of Protestantism which have accepted her doctrines such as:

1. Sunday sacredness
2. Natural immortality of the soul.
3. Eternal torment of the wicked

In a *corporate* sense we might consider severing our ties with organizations that hold these tenants. What does it mean *individually* for each of us to be delivered from dwelling with the daughter of Babylon? We talked earlier of the Babylon principles of *pride* and *self-seeking*. I think this is what we need to be delivered from.

How is Zion delivered from Babylon? Let's look in chapter 3 of Zechariah. "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord

rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

This vision applies with peculiar force to the closing up of the great Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement begins October 22, 1844. This year marked the 158th anniversary of that date. Are we living in the "closing up" of the great Day of Atonement? Then this message is for us, this experience is for us. Let's read on: "Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel."

What do filthy garments represent? We have a Bible definition in Isa. 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Here we see a need, a call to exchange our righteousness for Christ's righteousness. Filthy garments are defined as defective characters.¹ This is not open sin. This is defective characters.

Reading on: "And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee," Do you hear what our great High Priest is longing to do for us? "Cause our iniquity to pass from us." That's what we need today. We need our righteousness replaced with Christ's righteousness. We need the Babylon principle eradicated from our lives. Only a group of people who have victory over the Babylon principle in their own lives can bring judgment on Babylon so that Babylon can be overthrown.

There is another way of expressing this same truth. In Daniel 8:14 we read, "Unto two thousand three hundred days, then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed." In 1844 the disappointed believers learned that the Sanctuary to be cleansed was the sanctuary in heaven.

How can the heavenly sanctuary be dirty? Why does it need cleansing? Because every sin we have ever committed has faithfully been recorded by the angels. If we have confessed our sins they have been covered with the blood of Jesus. We have no condemnation if we are in, Christ Jesus. But our sins are not yet blotted out, they remain on record in the heavenly sanctuary until the final atonement.

So the heavenly sanctuary is in need of

cleansing. And until we cooperate with our High Priest in "causing our iniquity to pass from us" the work is not finished. When Christ has made an end of sin in His people, the controversy is all over. He can lay off His priestly garments and come as King of Kings. Are we holding onto sins this today that delay His return?

After the infilling of the Holy Spirit, Peter was preaching and said, "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled. Repent ye therefore,..." We are to repent on the basis that our sins have caused the suffering of the Son of God. Not just Friday the 14th of Abib in 31 A.D. For Calvary was but a dim view of the suffering which Christ has borne from the inception of sin. He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And I, if I be lifted up.... will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32) The Son of God must be lifted up. Christ is the Son of God. Zechariah (12:10) "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." We need to look to Him today, whom we have pierced. We need not just drops of the Holy Spirit while we are here together. We need to claim the promise, "I will pour...upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication.

In light of the suffering of Christ, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Peter says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, in order that the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And He shall send Jesus. Today, are you longing for Jesus to come? Then there is a work of repentance and conversion so that our sins may be blotted out. This is necessary to be modern day Cyrus.

We are living in the great Day of Atonement. Its object is to make us one with the Lamb of God and put an end to His suffering.

In 1844 Jesus is said to have gone in to the marriage. Didn't God give us the gift of marriage so we could at least in part understand what it means to be one? Christ is being married to His

kingdom. Name by name, in the investigative judgment, His bride is being made up. When we come into that spiritual union with Him, that uniting of divinity and humanity for eternity, in the judgment, we are told in Dan. 7:26, "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion." Whose dominion? The enemy, the usurper, that old serpent the devil. I want that dominion broken in my life so that when Satan comes to me I can say with Jesus "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). "Now is the judgment of this world: Now shall the prince of this world be cast out!" (John 12:31) Daniel goes on in chapter 7 to tell us the next sequence in the story, "And the kingdom and the 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, That's the Stone kingdom that shall grind the great image whose head is Babylon to powder and fills the whole earth.

Let's go back to Zechariah 3 and verse 4. "And unto him he said, 'I have caused Thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment' The beautiful white robe of the Righteousness of Christ, the robe woven in the loom of heaven without a thread of human devising. "I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I will set a fair mitre upon his head. What is this fair mitre? On the priests turban was a gold plate called the Nazar, or branch. Inscribed upon it was Holiness to the Lord. This is our new name. The name whereby the bride will be called, "The Lord our Righteousness." Ellen White² says, "A fair mitre is set upon their heads. They are Kings and Priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them

the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

If we are going to be numbered with the 144,000 this is the experience the Lord has in store for us. Our iniquity must pass from us, our sins blotted out by the outpouring of the Spirit in Latter Rain power. The Babylon principle overthrown, the dominion of the evil one broken and the dominion and the kingdom delivered to the saints of the Most High..

"In that day (when the Lord shall change the raiment of His people), shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth excellent and comely.." Isa. 4:2. "for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch." Zech. 3:6. "In those days and in that time saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." Isa. 50: 20 There will be a Cyrus outside the gate. The overthrow of the Babylon kingdom will be a reality. There will be a shepherding work to do. They will be kings and priests. They will have a part in the building of Jerusalem as they go out to call in the great multitude. Tidings from the East will trouble the man of sin, as the earth is lightened with the glory of the character of God. And he shall come to his end and none shall help him. And Michael will stand up to deliver His people. Will you be part of that Cyrus anointed by God?

References (emphases added unless otherwise noted)

¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 473.

² *Testimonies*, vol. 5, page 475.



LIBERTY

IN THE

BALANCE

Judge Roy Moore to Appeal Order to Remove Ten Commandments Statue. (Baptists Press) Chief Justice Roy Moore has filed notice that he will appeal a federal court order declaring his monument to the Ten Commandments in the state judicial building rotunda unconstitutional, according to The Birmingham News. "Federal district courts have no jurisdiction or authority to prohibit the acknowledgement of God that is specifically recognized in the Constitution of Alabama," Moore said in a written statement released Dec. 10. "Our constitution provides that to establish justice, we must invoke 'the favor and guidance of Almighty God.'" The 5,300-pound monument features the King James Bible version of the Ten Commandments sitting on top of a granite block. Around the monument are quotes from historical figures and documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, but critics contend the commandments dominate. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson ruled Nov. 18 that the monument violates the First Amendment's ban on state establishment of religion and requested that Moore remove the monument within 30 days. The monument remains in the judicial building, and Thompson has scheduled a Dec. 19 hearing on whether to issue an injunction to require Moore to have it removed in 15 days. *Religious News* 121602.

Indonesia Plans to Close Refugee Camps for Christians. (Mission Insider) Thousands of Indonesia's Christians—displaced from their homes by Islamic terrorists the last three

years—face a bleak future in view of the Indonesia government's plan to shut down existing displaced persons camps. The Indonesian government is in the process of closing a number of the refugee camps, placing thousands of refugees in crisis again. Their plan is to send most of them back to their home islands. That is a worthy goal but many of the islands are still dangerous. Over the last three years there have been two previous attempts by the Indonesian officials to close the refugee camps and send the Christian refugees back to their home islands. In January of 2002, many families who went back to their homes found that their homes and lands had been possessed by some of the Muslim attackers who ran them off their islands the previous year. They told of others who were attacked as they went back to their homes and tried to begin their lives again. Still others were told they could come back to their homes only if they would convert to Islam. *Religious News* 121702.

Disney World Cancels Christian Services, Flap Ensues Michael L. Betsch The late Walt Disney once cited church and prayer as inspirations for his professional success. Today, Disney World in Florida has eliminated its 28-year tradition of offering on-site religious services to Christian guests. *Religious News* 122002.

Bleak Christmas in Dak Lak, Vietnam. (Compass) When December 25 rolled around this year, Christmas for some 150,000 ethnic Ede Christians was a bleak affair. The Vietnamese

government has come down hard on Christians in the last three months. Authorities have disbanded most of the 441 churches. The latest crackdown began in September, as public officials and the dreaded public security police informed church leaders that their congregations were illegal. The only religious activity tolerated is within the family, inside the house and quietly. Prayer meetings, Bible teaching and worship are forbidden, as are weddings, funerals and baptisms. Pastors are even ordered to turn away Christians who might come to them for help. The crackdown on minority Christians in Vietnam's Central Highlands came because some dared to demonstrate last year against the illegal loss of their lands to ethnic Vietnamese settlers. The persecution of the Ede church comes at a time when Vietnam is touting its adherence to international human rights standards, including complete freedom of religion. *Religious News* 122402.

Ministry Teams Sing Carols, Encourage Police, Firefighters. (Baptist Press) More than 40 fire halls and 20 police precincts have been filled with the sounds of Southern Baptist college students singing Christmas carols and spreading good cheer in New York. About 100 students and staff from the Baptist Collegiate Ministries of Louisiana State University ministry trip, according to BCM director Steve Masters. Masters said the firefighters and police officers have been receptive of the message being spread by the Christian collegians. "We were at one police precinct and they didn't want to let us in," he said. "Well, we left a gift box with them and one of the detectives asked us to sing one song. After that, about 10 police officers came out and asked us to sing more. Then, a detective who was having a terrible day heard the kids singing 'Silent Night.' He said it brought peace to him." Many in Baton Rouge, Shreveport and Bossier City are participating in the Dec. 14-21 of the fire halls and precinct houses lost personnel during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. After a similar trip in 2001, firefighters

extended an invitation for the Louisiana Baptist students to return for another round of caroling. *Religious News* 122402.

Lord's Prayer School Suit Dismissed. (Charisma News) A lawsuit against a school board member who led Nebraska students in the Lord's Prayer at a graduation ceremony has been dismissed. Filed by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the suit accused the Norfolk Public School District in Lincoln and school board member Jim Scheer of violating the constitutional separation of church and state, the Associated Press (AP) reported. However, U.S. District Judge Laurie Smith Camp rejected those claims and dismissed the case last month. Jeff Downing, who represented Scheer and the school, hailed the ruling. "I'm glad to see the court recognize that the Constitution doesn't require the public square to be swept clean of religion and that people at public ceremonies should feel tremendous freedom to make religious comments...or comments that are in keeping with their faith," he said. Camp ruled that Scheer was acting in his personal capacity as a parent when he recited the prayer at the May 14, 2000, ceremony. Scheer's prayer came not long after the school board decided to end the tradition of student-led prayer at graduation because a complaint had been filed with the school district. Scheer was allowed to speak, however, and led the students in prayer, the AP reported. *Religious News* 122402.

California Judges Urged to Terminate Ties to Boy Scouts Michael L. Betsch. (CNSNews.com) Two of California's largest bar associations are petitioning the state Supreme Court to prohibit judges from associating with the Boy Scouts of America. The legal groups claim that by affiliating with the Boy Scouts, the judges are giving the perception that they have an anti-homosexual bias in the courtroom. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has a policy of excluding homosexuals as scout leaders. Despite the fact that the U.S. Su-

preme Court ruled in 2000 that the policy was legal, the BSA has been the target of unrelenting criticism from liberals since then. The Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA) and the Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF) claim an anti-homosexual loophole exists in the code that must be corrected. "We believe that it would be not only inappropriate, but unconstitutional for the Supreme Court of California to forbid its members from participating in the Boy Scouts," said Gregg Shields, spokesman for the Boy Scouts of America. "The proposed policy would be equally inappropriate as a policy forbidding judges from being members of the Roman Catholic Church or the Baptists or Orthodox Jews or any of the number of faiths that share the Boy Scouts' opinions," Shields said. *Religious News* 122602.

Chinese Evangelist Arrested Again and House Searched. (VOM - USA) According to ASSIST News Service, Chinese house church leader and evangelist Guoxing (Philip) Xu was arrested by the government along with several worshippers at his home in Shanghai. The others who were arrested with Xu have been released, but he was detained. The authorities searched his house and all written materials, tapes, a computer, and thirty stools (used for seating in worship) were confiscated. Xu has only been free since July 2000. He has previously spent over six years in labor camps for his Christian activities. Xu studied in the US in the early 80's and could have stayed in safety and comfort here, but he felt God wanted him to bring the Gospel to his fellow Chinese. He was first arrested in 1989 and sentenced to three years of hard labor. During that time scores of inmates turned to Christ through his witnessing. Pray God will use Xu again to bring more prisoners to Christ. *Religious News* 123102.

Three Executions in Vietnam Alleged as Part of Government Crackdown. (Baptist Press) Vietnamese authorities have executed three ethnic minority Christians as part of a recent crackdown on "illegal" Christian churches,

according to the Montagnard Foundation, a human rights watch group based in South Carolina. The three Montagnard believers from Buon Gram village in Vietnam's Central Highlands were reportedly injected with an unknown drug and died in convulsions after being convicted of participation in anti-government activities in February 2001. Those "anti-government" activities included a peaceful protest by hundreds of Montagnards in favor of religious liberty and against government corruption in key Central Highlands cities. Following the protests, Vietnamese authorities began a systematic campaign to force Christians out of unregistered churches, which they believed had been infected by American Protestant thought that, as one source put it, "opposes the programs of the country." A report released last April by Human Rights Watch, a New York-based human rights lobby, cited multiple instances of torture, mutilation and intimidation on the part of Vietnamese authorities. *Religious News* 010102.

Nigerian Pastor killed in Escalation of Islamic Violence. (VOM - Canada) A prominent Nigerian church leader has become the latest victim of Islamic violence against Christians in Plateau State. 69-year old Bitrus Manjang, vice president of the Church of Christ, Nigeria, was murdered in his home town of Riyom, about 30-miles from the city of Jos. Pastor Manjang was gunned down by a rioting Muslim mob as he stepped from his car after parking in his garage. Also killed in the attack were his daughter-in-law and six-year-old grandson. Manjang had just returned from several church meetings in the city of Jos when a mob of Islamic militants entered his village at 5:00 P.M. Five other people were killed and at least a dozen were hospitalized with injuries. Pastor Manjang's death is the latest act of violence against Christian leaders in Nigeria's Plateau State. Earlier this year, Muslims attacked Christian residents of Riyom and one week ago Christians were attacked in the remote village of Bacit. *Religious News* 010102.

CALAMITY BULLETIN

(December 2002 Calamities – with damage)

CALAMITY WATCH TOTALS – DECEMBER 2002

| | December | Yr to Date | Avg./Mo. |
|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Deaths | 997 | 12,363 | 1,030 |
| Homes destroyed | 12,994 | 684,714 | 57,059 |
| Resume' December: | <u>Deaths</u> | <u>Homes Destroyed</u> | |
| Cyclone | 700 | 500 | |
| Travel (mass casualties) | 48 | | |
| Tornadoes | 47 | 1,500 | |
| Lightning | 10 | 5,200 | |
| Storms (general) | 22 | | |
| Floods | 74 | | |
| Earthquakes | | 5,725 | |
| Fire | 26 | 69 | |
| | 997 | 12,994 | |

December Extremes:

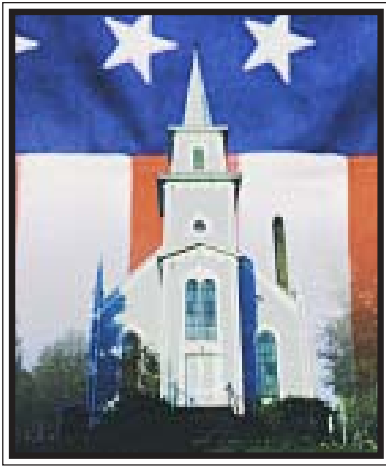
- Brazil: Worst rain in 20 years
- China: longest continuous snowfall in history
- Australia: Poorest crops in 20 years
- Morocco: Worst floods in 30 years

Four-year World Disaster Averages:

| | 1999/mo. | 2000/mo. | 2001/mo. | 2002/mo. |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Deaths | 5,546 | 705 | 4,121 | 1,030 |
| Homes destroyed | 260,868 | 95,691 | 17,354 | 57,059 |

Natural disasters are increasing in an exponential curve. Note the sad figures reported above over the past four years:

Each month 2,850 people died
Each month 107,743 homes were destroyed



Focus on the *Sabbath*

[This section is devoted to news, articles, laws, sermons and political events that draw attention to the Sabbath. We are especially interested in how the Christian world views a weekly "rest day." This is to help our readers have insight into what others think regarding the fourth commandment – a pivotal prophetic end-time issue.]

Sunday as Sabbath?

Official Designation Sparks Debate

Italian religious and political leaders have been caught up in a heated debate about the observance of the Sabbath.

The European Union has set up the policy that every member-state must have one day of rest during the week. But the policy explicitly states that the designated day needs to be Sunday, since for reasons of "religious pluralism" a nation's government might choose another day.

In Italy, the designation of Sunday as a "day of rest" was first set in 1993. That policy was changed in 2000, however, when – in order to grant more flexibility for employers – the nation required only that every employer provide workers with a 24-hour rest period each week. But by August 2003, under the new European policy, Italy will again be required to fix a certain "day of rest."

In an interview with the daily *Corriere della Sera*, Bishop **Giancarlo Bregantini** – who heads a committee dealing with social issues for the Italian bishops' conference – remarked that attitudes on the observance of the Sabbath are "already bad enough" without a change in national policy. He said that any move away from the Sunday rest would be "a perverse act." And Cardinal **Pio Laghi**, the former prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, asked *La Repubblica*: "How can you overlook the fact that Sunday is a special day for millions of Europeans?"

The Catholic World Report, February 2003