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“The” Abomination

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## EndTime Issues... Magazine

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# ABOMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH DESOLATION

*ONLY AT THE ES QES – TIME OF THE END!*

## ABOMINATION ASSOCIATED WITH DESOLATION

**Only at the *es qes* – time of the end!**

### Introduction

It may be one of the Bible's most frightening words! It describes how God *feels* about a behavior or a worship practice that He despises. When He calls something an "abomination," you know He has raised His voice. He uses such language against cross-dressers (Deuteronomy 22:5). Solomon lists seven things that the Lord hates: "Yea, seven are abomination[s] to him" (Proverbs 6:16-19). "Lying lips" are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 12:22). He also hates heathen idols – they are an abomination (Deuteronomy 12:29-32). That is an especially sensitive issue with our sovereign God!

There are many deep religious issues that God addresses with this word. Even "new moons," Sabbaths and church gatherings are abominations if the worship experience is filled with vain oblations or liturgical mysteries (Isaiah 1:13). Jeremiah noted that building edifices to worship Baal in "high places" and causing children to walk through fire to the god Molech (Jeremiah 32:35) was an abomination. Molech was a heathen deity of the Ammonites. Babies were placed into the red hot hands of Molech's statute and sacrificed. Baal had been adopted from the Phoenicians. It morphed into many forms in different cultures. But everywhere its place of honor was on a hill or an elevated eminence so the *heavens* could be seen and worshiped, *especially the sun*. Many ancient records even equate Baal worship with sun worship.

An abomination always represents something God *detests*. Frequently the issue relates to a *substitute* of Himself or something that tarnishes His character. The matters He abhors also include *changing what He has irrevocably instituted*. That is why homosexuality is an abomination to Him (Leviticus 20:13). It is a *substitute* for God's plan of sexuality. It changes the nature and meaning of procreation instituted in Eden.

### Jesus Points Out "the" Abomination

The pivotal time Jesus addressed a detestable matter was in His expose regarding the "end of time." The disciples had inquired what signs would tell them that the end of the world was about to arrive and what clue would reveal that His second advent was imminent. They also asked the "when" question. He unfolded crucial information in Matthew 24:15 (cf. Mark 13:14) that should rivet every Christian's attention. Those verses come right in the middle of other timing clues that tell "when" the end of time will occur. "*When ye therefore shall see the **abomination of desolation**, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)*" Matthew 24:15.

Jesus revealed in literal and typological language that there would be two ends of time.

1. When *physical* Jerusalem would fall
2. When *spiritual* Babylon would fall

Each of those, He said, would be preceded by an “abomination” (*bdelugma*); the latter *had already been detailed* by Daniel. That tie is found in chapters 8–12 of his book. Then Jesus personified this abomination by saying, “It stands where it shouldn’t be” (Mark 13:14 – paraphrased). Matthew also said that the abomination is a sign of the end when it “stands in the holy place” (Matthew 24:15). Something God hates comes into the very precincts of the church. It will be specific and definable, and becomes a warning to God’s true people – the remnant.

An additional clue to its meaning is: “Ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies” (Luke 21:20). That was a literal event in 68-70 A.D. A literal event often becomes a great spiritual metaphor for the very end of time! Often words or phrases illustrate deep truths which act like mini-prophecies. They become God’s coded way of conveying, to a serious Bible student, wonderful messages about the future. The word “Jerusalem” is also in that category. It was literal. But Jesus personified it in Matthew 23:37: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” There, Jerusalem is a symbol of *God’s people*. When enemies surround Jerusalem (God’s people), they will soon stand where they shouldn’t be and finally come right into the church.

The key introductory statement that begins Jesus’ “abomination” message is that timing word “when.” “When you see” – it will be apparent. It will be so obvious, it shouldn’t be missed. “When” you are aware that something detestable to God:

1. Takes its place among God’s people where it shouldn’t
2. Armies ready to impose their will or presence on them
  - You will know that a time of supreme danger has arrived.
  - It is time for you to act.

We can historically see that when Jerusalem, now seen as an apostate city, was surrounded by armies (beginning in 68 A.D.), it was about to fall (three-and-a-half-year period). To His faithful, that was the “when” sign that gave them a chance to escape, to “come out.” In Revelation there is a message to another apostate “city:” “Babylon is fallen, *come out* of her my people” – escape.

The “Holy Place” (Matthew 24:15), when apostasy comes in, refers to the sanctuary, temple or church – at the very center of religious activity. That “abomination” is what His people are to urgently distance themselves from – “come out of her.” What detestable *element* comes into God’s church that destroys its purity? In Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus doesn’t say. He only urges, “Go to Daniel.”

Originally, the Jewish phrase “abomination of desolation” was an expression of contempt towards the heathen deity Zeus or Baal. The pagans referred to Zeus as “Lord of Heaven.” The Jews referred to him as *siqqus somem* – the



“abomination which desolates.” The sky, celestial bodies, especially the sun were part of that worship.<sup>1</sup>

We will find that worship in a way God didn’t command, tied to sun worship, is the abomination He is referencing.

### **Daniel Picks Up the Story**

The word “desolation” (*somen* or *shamen*) is found in seven places in Daniel. It simply means ***nothing is left***. Except for one (9:27), all the references *relate to* the consequences of an *abomination* or *sin*. This word is a helpful key in our quest to understand this “abomination.” It all begins when Gabriel asks Jesus about the little horn vision that Daniel just saw (8:13) (that relates to the end-time antichrist). His key question relates to the little horn and its behavior. Daniel was told *in this vision setting*:

#### **The Little Horn of Daniel 8:**

1. Came from the north (vs 9)
2. Had power against the host of heaven (vs 10) – mighty power not of himself (vs 24) (it came from Satan) – “Host” is God’s people
3. Persecuted them (vs 10) – even destroyed the holy people (vs 24)
4. Magnified himself to the prince of that host (vs 11) – Shall magnify (arrogant over another) himself (vs 25)
5. Then he stood up against the Prince of princes (Jesus) (vs 25)
6. This all caused the “place” of the sanctuary to be cast down (vs 11) – The place God’s church held in the world was tarnished. Gabriel now describes how!
7. Because of a “transgression,” truth was cast to the ground (vs 12). Now comes the ***clue***: That “transgression” is what led to “desolation” (vs 13)!
8. All this occurs by a fierce-looking king (vs 23; cf. 11:40) (vicious in heart – another way to describe that “little horn”) at a time when “transgressors” (those promoting ***this*** abomination) are come in full (vs 23).

This description relates to the antichrist, who sets himself against God and sits “in the temple of God (the Christian church), showing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:4). There it is again. He “stands” or occupies a place where he shouldn’t be. He lords over the church in some remarkable way.

An antichrist, the “little horn,” not only tries to displace God, but Daniel alludes to how this is done! There is a “transgression” that casts truth to the ground. The church is filled with transgressors. More than that, in Gabriel’s follow-up timing question (8:13), he asked Jesus “when” this (the “transgression of ***desolation***”) would happen. Gabriel uses a very specific word to render its meaning more precise: transgression or *pesha* (H) results in desolation. As we will see, *pesha is* the abomination.

*Pesha* is one of several Hebrew words for sin. It has a special connotation, describing man committing a willful deed to spite God. It symbolizes rebellion, defiance by resisting God’s authority. It represents an act that goes “beyond the limits” of God’s law.<sup>2</sup> It also describes sin against His covenant. All this was

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Colin; *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI) vol. 1, pp. 74-75.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Meditations/Chata\\_ah/chata\\_ah.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Meditations/Chata_ah/chata_ah.html)



acknowledged as one of Israel's great failures in Daniel's prayer. In Daniel 9:24a it is the first "sin" that God's people must address.

We have the misdeeds of the little horn of Daniel 8 defying Jesus, His people and truth, taking over and destroying what the sanctuary or church really represents. Now Gabriel tells us how, in arrogance, that is done *through* his questions (8:13). The "sin" or "transgression" (*pasha*) challenges:

1. God's authority
2. God's covenant
3. God's law

Where is the center of those three things? Right in the center of the Decalogue. Study especially Deuteronomy 5:12-15. This foundational apocalyptic prophecy shows that the Sabbath will be a pivotal issue at the end. Gabriel notes that that is the transgression that leads to "desolation."

The next important use of "desolation" is in Daniel's prayer: "O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our *desolations*." Isn't that interesting? Daniel, in great humility, acknowledges their sin and now appeals to God to rescue his people from its desolating consequences. "Look God, how *desolate* our people and land are. Respond to this plea!"

How does God respond? Through Gabriel – while Daniel was yet praying. He outlined several steps that would bring *restoration*. Amazing, amazing, the very first issue that God's people must address is *pasha* or transgression against the Sabbath! We must discover even more what that refers to!

This is so vital! It ties directly to Jesus' counsel regarding the end of time! Let's look at more verses in this chapter where "*desolation*" is used.

#### **Daniel 9:26:**

Gabriel states that the end of resistance against Jesus and the "church" or "holiness" is *desolation*.

#### **Daniel 9:27:**

The covenant will be confirmed by the Prince and God's people. The last week of the seventy weeks is split into two. One half is set aside for God to complete His part of that covenant. The other is set aside for His people to finish the covenant obligation (a separate timing study). Then a distinct thought is introduced (really like a separate paragraph).

Paraphrased: "Because abominations have spread everywhere, God is going to make everything desolate (*shamen*) at the time Jesus comes again." (The Second Coming is distinctly alluded to.)

That information is astounding. The Hebrew word there for "abomination" (*shiqquwts*) is the Greek equivalent of *bdelugma*, which Jesus talked about in the gospels when He said, "Go to Daniel!" It represents something detestable or abhorrent in God's sight. Now that we have brought together many clues from the gospels to the words "transgression" and "desolation," we know that some abominable sin will become universal, associated with the antichrist and against God's authority, law and covenant. In Gabriel's question of 8:13, he noted that it "cast truth to the ground." We will discover that it relates to a worship issue that *substitutes* a false Sabbath, something in place of God's directive to keep the seventh day.

"Desolation" will be a focus later in 11:31 related again to the antichrist and in a stunning timing prophecy that describes the very end of all things (12:11).

## Background to the “Abomination”

The word *shiqquwts* is a very strong Hebrew word. It is meant to illustrate the *extreme* seriousness and wickedness of a particular sin. God is appealing to all to see it from His perspective and not man’s (Deuteronomy 7:26).<sup>3</sup>

There’s more in Daniel that we will visit, but we have come to a point where we must discover what God specifically means by transgression/abomination. What exactly makes it so detestable? The story begins with the Creation week. Those seven days represent a divine clock. It was set into man’s flow of life by decree. Unrelated to any celestial body, God said right from the beginning that “days” would ***be grouped into “sevens.”*** That may seem simplistic, and perhaps it is. But God associated that week with three important issues:

1. The sixth day was related to man.
2. The seventh day was related to God.
3. The days were declared to be an *evening and morning*. That signals not only its sequence but, in sacred *redemptive thought*, they were *set apart*.

The week motif became a metaphor for many sequential prophecies of “seven.” There was a week of days (Creation week), week of months (Feast “year”), week of years (the key to understand end-time prophecy), seven weeks of years (related to man’s final probation) and a week of seven millenniums (a timeframe in which to finish the great controversy issues).

Our focus here will be on the “week of years.” God used language and phrases in that special seven-year cycle, which are like keys to unlock similar language concepts elsewhere, including the *abomination* and *desolation*. Jesus already told us that we must know those issues as it relates to the end of time.

The Sabbath was made as a grand finale to the Creation week. It was a day called “holy.” Uniquely set as a block of time within a group of seven, God designed it for the Creator and the created to communicate and enjoy each other’s company. When sin arrived, its meaning grew:

1. The Sabbath remained holy; therefore, it became a “sign” that man could become holy once again (Exodus 31:13).
2. It also became a *forever* promise of the covenant agreement God made *with* man that he could become holy (Exodus 31: 16-17).
3. It embodied a promise that within the Sabbath rest there would eventually come “deliverance” from sin into an eternal rest (Deuteronomy 5:12-15).

In that context we visit the “week of years.”

*“And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto*

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<sup>3</sup> Harris, R. Laird; *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980, p. 955.

*the land. And the sabbath of the land shall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy servant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired servant, and for thy stranger that sojourneth with thee, And for thy cattle, and for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat” (Leviticus 25:1-7).*

Every seventh year, called a *shemita*, the land was to rest. It was far more than an agricultural order. That year was a Sabbath. It brought also *deliverance* to all Hebrews who had been bought as slaves (Exodus 21:2). The “week of years” established several principles:

1. The seventh represented deliverance.
2. The seventh symbolized restoration.
3. The seventh characterized man becoming holy, like God is holy.
4. The seventh became a great symbol of finishing the everlasting covenant.

What did God do to assure that there was adequate food for the year the land was at rest and for the following year when new crops were started? God said He would give double crop production on the *sixth*. The land would produce enough food that it would last through the seventh, into the eighth, when the new crop would be planted to harvest the ninth! God made *supernaturally clear* on the sixth that the Sabbath rest *could* be observed. He provided evidence that preparations on the sixth could be so complete that the Sabbath *could* be kept holy (Leviticus 25:20): “And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*.”

In this great illustration God revealed how all timing sequences of seven are to be viewed and applied. The *week of years* became typological and serves as a beautiful metaphor of redemption’s story over seven millenniums – the “week of millenniums.”

There is another amazing part to this story. Not only does the typology of the week of seven years define a success story related to the redeemed, it also includes elements which reveal the outcome of those who rebel and resist the “Sabbath” year provisions.

In Leviticus 26:14-39 God outlines what will happen to those who reject His decrees, abhor His commandments and, thus, violate the covenant. The:

1. Highways will become *desolate* (*shamen*) (vs 22)
2. Cities will lie in waste and churches will become *desolate* (vs 31)
3. The land will become *desolate* (vs 32)

Interesting! Resistance to God’s “seventh” would result in “nothing left” – desolation.

God then said: As long as it (the land) lieth desolate, it will *rest* and *keep the Sabbath* because *they* did not keep the Sabbath! The desolation curse is tied directly to the Sabbath – *the sacred seventh!* Over and over the Jewish dispersion and desolation warnings relate to the great Sabbath theme.

“The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes” (Leviticus 26:43).



When desolation (*shamen* – Hebrew; or *eremosis* – Greek) is used, it is the outcome of some sin or iniquity related to despising God’s laws and statutes, especially the Sabbath!

Break my sabbaths, statutes and laws (abomination)

Mock my messengers – despise their words

Scattered – bondage

Desolation

Land enjoys her Sabbaths

The *shemita* was so sacred it was the leading reason for the Babylonian captivity and desolation of Jerusalem! (II Chronicles 35:21). (When Jesus introduced us to the two ends of time, the Jews already had a lesson book from history regarding the pivotal abomination. But they weren’t very attentive students.)

*“But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.... And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay **desolate** she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years”* (II Chronicles 36:16-17, 20-21).

**Desolation is the final outcome of rebellion against the Sabbath!** The above sequence not only applied to the Jews, it became a symbol for how God will deal with apostasy against His Sabbath at the very end of time! This is a key prophetic concept.

### **Defining Look at Abomination**

God’s throne relates to the “north” in direction: *“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the **north**, the city of the great King”* (Psalm 48:2). Satan, once Lucifer, said in his heart (when he began to act on his passions) that he would ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars, to be like the Most High and sit on the “mount of the congregation” (representing Zion), which is on the sides of the **“north”** (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Apostasy leads to displacement of God from His rightful place. It *stands where it ought not be*. A false leader or standard is set up symbolically in the “north,” trying to either represent God or be God. This is referred to as an abomination [*towebah* (Ezekiel) – or *shiqquwts* (Daniel)].

Ezekiel was given additional insight into the meaning of abomination. It began by his going into vision, associated with a dramatic encounter with God (Ezekiel 8:1-4). He was about to **see** and **hear** examples of things that God despises. Actions of individuals that violated the fundamental principles of a covenant relationship: “You shall have no other gods before me” and “You shall not make any idolatrous images for yourselves to worship and serve” (Exodus 20:3-6; Deuteronomy 4:1-20, 5:7-12).

Ezekiel is brought in vision to Jerusalem, symbolic of the center of God’s people. He was initially brought to the north gate of the inner temple court. The glory of God was supposed to be in that area. But in that gate was a seated statue, “an image of jealousy.” That begins the story of things God detests. God’s glory is contrasted with this pathetic statue. Yet, the statue guarded the gate that led to the inner court and temple! The Hebrew message seems to describe the statue from God’s viewpoint: “The outra-

geous statue of jealousy.” Its appearance provoked His jealousy, thus, the “statue of jealousy.” Amazing! In the northern gate – trying to be like God is a detestable idol!

God takes Ezekiel on a temple tour, introducing him to what “drives Him out of the sanctuary.” These are things that *stand where they ought not be*. Verse 6 begins by God asking him to “look up.” This is an eschatological phrase. Whatever historic application it might provide, there is a greater end-time typological meaning. He was to look up to the north at the statue and *then contemplate the abomination* of the people in the temple he was about to see. God then said, “You’re going to see even greater abominations.”

The flow of thought at the onset of this vision creates an anticipation of reprehensible activity. It envisions a remarkable picture of what God is extremely emotional about! Maybe we should say, “things He hates!” Ezekiel is then shown seventy elders or leaders of God’s people, each with an incense censer, worshiping crawling creatures, beasts and idols. Scene one was an idol at the north entrance to the inner court and temple. Scene two is where church leaders are worshiping idols and creatures in the temple. They were doing it in the “dark” and claimed that “God won’t see us.” But He does. He calls this another abomination (*towebah*).

The number seventy recalls the number of leaders who assisted Moses in guiding the affairs of His people (Exodus 24:1, 4; Numbers 11; 16, 24-25). Symbolically, it represents all of the key leaders of God’s church here in apostasy. In the center of this group was another individual whose name was Jaazaniah, meaning “Yahweh listens.” He apparently was a civic leader, suggesting a bond in apostasy between church and state. That is fascinating and has thematic ties to Revelation 13 and 17. God said, once again, that worse abominations were to come.

In the next scene, number three, Ezekiel comes toward the entrance of the north gate. He apparently had been inside the temple and now moves outside. The inner court is in full view. There are women sitting facing the temple (God’s house), crying over the heathen god Tammuz. This god was raised to life annually. Their cry is for her virility and life to return once again.

The nature of the Hebrew expression, “*the Tammuz*,” suggests that it is a chant for Tammuz, who is now dead. This means that these women are lamenting or even praying for or to the dead.

God again told Ezekiel that he would see even greater abominations. Though all are hideous and detestable to God, the last is worse than the previous!

He now is ushered into the east temple court and observes a ritual, a religious drama between the porch and altar of sacrifice. There are twenty-five men (not characterized) with their backs towards the temple. These individuals were prostrating themselves towards the sun. This represented physical homage to a celestial object. The imagery is specific – rejecting Yahweh, they gave obeisance to the sun (god). Solar or astral cults were strictly forbidden in Deuteronomy 4:19 and 17:2-5. Yet, these are God’s people worshipping the sun.

Suddenly God says, “Does this all seem trivial to my people? This, along with violence occurring in the land, has now provoked me to anger. Mercy is ended, probation closed” (Ezekiel 8:17-18 – paraphrased).

What does this collectively state regarding God’s hatred of all this specific behavior – abominations?

1. Man-made forms of worship are detestable – though it may be a tradition or even cultural.
2. Worship of nature, relics, and idols causes God to flee.
3. Prayer for and to the dead is abhorrent.
4. Worshiping the sun or any sun symbol disconnects man from God.

Worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, is a tradition that is idolatrous. It is a rebellious break from the sacred seventh. It is like turning one's back to God's Sabbath commands. Instead of honoring the resurrection of Jesus – something Christ never commanded – it's like honoring the resurrection of Tammuz, which mythologically occurred annually. Sunday was also the day when the sun was honored by worship. Even in Christ's day the Romans honored Mythrianism, where the first day was seen as sacred.

### **Abomination in the Cup**

The harlot named "Mystery," "Babylon the Great" of Revelation 17 had a golden cup in her hand. Gold suggests purity, perfection or flawlessness. That was its veneer. It was in her hand so that it could be offered to others. The Word says that it was "full" (*geno* – unable to fit in anymore) of abominations. What abomination (*bdelygmation*)? Jesus used the same word to relate, once again, to significant end-time issues. He referred us to Daniel (which we will once more visit). But, it has led us now to the end-time harlot, the apostate church, with abominations she spreads around the earth.

This time another clue is added to the meaning of "abominations." It is described as the "***filthiness of her fornication.***" The Greek word for "filthiness" or "unclean thing" is *akatharta*. This is cultic and implies an illicit relationship and/or religious blasphemy. In Revelation 16:13 John saw three ***unclean*** spirits going out to deceive the nations. Some deceptive or illicit religious teaching enamors the world. The saints clearly reject it because the harlot is there depicted as drunk with the blood of the saints.

The abomination refers to a religious "rite" she idolizes. *Akatharta*, with fornication (*porneras*), reveals that she is intimately relating with others over this "rite," belief or action.

What deceptive religious teaching or philosophy does the harlot bring to the world? The clues we have reviewed regarding the abomination, desolation and uncleanness all point to a false worship related to the "sun!" God's sacred seventh is rebelled against. As ancient Israel broke that "sacred seven," the *shemita*, and brought desolation, so at the end, apostate Christianity breaks a Sabbath, which will lead to desolation.

The beast is a political power. The woman/harlot represents a blasphemous religious system. Slandering the name of God permeates Revelation 17. The Sabbath commandment was designed for people to "remember" God as Creator; it was designed to be a sign of His sovereign power, to be a reminder of the covenant promises and, finally, to be a symbol of deliverance from this world and restoration to God's original purpose. We are reminded that the harlot is the mother of the *abominations* on the earth resisting this truth. It is the *pasha* found in Daniel 8.

The collective evidence suggests that the harlot, epitomizing the antichrist, is a church that leads all other churches (her daughters) into rebellion against the Sabbath. This is end-time imagery. It becomes a mark of her power and authority since the world submits to her seductive influence. The world eventually seeks to kill the saints who resist this mark. This, then, fulfills a subsequent description of what is also in the cup – the blood of God's people.

## The King of the North Connection

We were introduced to the antichrist – the papal little horn power (its second rise), back in Daniel 8. There is a sequel to that story. God uses varied symbols to describe prophetic powers and events. In chapter 11 the little horn is first referred to as a “vile person.” Then in another section, it is “king of the north.” The latter represents the *rest of the story* in Jesus’ command to look at Daniel.

This king hates God’s covenant (11:30). His practices pollute God’s sanctuary (because he *stands where it ought not be*). **Then it says that he places** or decrees the abomination that leads to desolation (11:31). This is amazing! The King of the North not only seductively pollutes the church, but is associated with a decree or law that enforces it!

The “mother church” is the Roman Catholic Church. She admits it, and the Bible supports it. But – in the latter, only in a setting of apostasy! The question is raised: Is the Roman Catholic Church interested in civil decrees to enforce Sunday keeping? If it is, the issues of that church related to the abomination would raise an alarm of fearful magnitude. It would be a fulfillment of end-time prophecy that threads its way from the very words of Jesus back to Daniel and forward to Revelation!

On July 5, 1998, the late Pope John Paul II wrote an *apostolic letter*, *Dies Domini*, of 50 plus pages. These are a few quotations:

66. “In this matter, my predecessor Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* spoke of Sunday rest as a worker’s right which the State must guarantee.” (110)

67. “Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, **Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.**”

47. “Even if in the earliest times it was not judged necessary to be prescriptive, the Church has not ceased to confirm this obligation of conscience, which rises from the inner need felt so strongly by the Christians of the first centuries. It was only later, faced with the half-heartedness of negligence of some, that **the Church had to make explicit the duty to attend Sunday Mass: more often than not, this was done in the form of exhortation, but at times the Church had to resort to specific canonical precepts.**”

“The present Code reiterates this, saying that ‘on Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to attend Mass.’ (82) **This legislation has normally been understood as entailing a grave obligation: this is the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, (83) and it is easy to understand why if we keep in mind how vital Sunday is for the Christian life.**”

48. Bishops must ensure that Christians appreciate Sunday. [Hmmm, how does that happen? By using the power of civil law – decrees!]

This document was a communiqué to Catholic Church leaders around the world and directly reflects the ties that Daniel predicted would come at the end of time! Rebellion against the Sabbath is a detestable issue with God. He ties it to the words *pesha* and *shiqquwts*, which prophetically leads to utter *desolation*.

This all happens when the “daily” or true Sabbath is taken away. Daniel’s message is nearly finished. There is one more factoid that is vital to the understanding of the abomination. God tells us how long that decree to observe a false sabbath will last.

From the onset of the decree or command to take away the “daily” and set up the abomination which makes the desolation of the earth will be 1290 days (12:11). That represents the last segment of time before Jesus returns (another study).

What an amazing amount of information tucked into the crevasses of so many prophecies. They all have a *consistent* message. They all define how God addresses the Sabbath. It is clear – its holiness never changes. Equally important, it is the pivotal issue at the end of time.

Coming now full circle, we return to Matthew 24. In verse 20 Jesus invited His people to “pray that your flight (escape) be not ... on the Sabbath day.” Why? It would make observing that sacred day difficult. Jesus is consistent. This end-time issue is not Sabbaths (plural). The grand finale of history relates to a single holy day that began at Creation week a little over 6000 years ago.

Franklin S. Fowler Jr., M.D.

# CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MIND CONTROL

God's Ultimate Promise:

"I will put my laws into their *minds*, and write them in their *hearts*." (Hebrews 8:10, 10:16).

This simply means that God's final plan for man is to have a mind and heart just like His. (His laws reflect who He is and what He is like.)

God gave man a part to play in this: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your *mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

That's where our story about "mind control" begins.

- Something is wrong with our *minds* (they need to be renewed or transformed).
- That mind can be changed into something so "good," it is perfectly acceptable to God.
- What has been the barrier?
- "Conforming" to this world (being at variance with God's ways).
- He wants man to submit to things that He has approved.

What then are our tools to make this happen? (This is really exciting!)

**TOOL ONE** – THE HOLY SPIRIT (One of heaven's divine Beings)  
(His chief role is to personally work with man's mind.)

- He will guide us (John 16:13).
- He comforts us (John 14:16, 18).
- He stays near us.
- Eventually, He **changes** our hearts to be like His (Ezekiel 36:26-27):  
"A *new heart* also will I give you, and a *new spirit* will I put within you: ... I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do [them]."
- All of these promises are amazing. The "mind" can be changed in a way that God approves of.

**TOOL TWO** – THE BIBLE (GOD'S HEART-CHANGING MANUAL)

- This is not a trite tool! It is for real, powerful and one of the best ways to get the Holy Spirit working with us!



- “All scripture is given by inspiration of God [that’s why it is called the ‘Word of God’], and is profitable for ... correction [and] for instruction” (II Timothy 3:16) (Sounds like an excellent guide book, doesn’t it?!)
- This tool is so effective when combined with God’s Spirit that it is called a “weapon!”
- “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (II Corinthians 10:3-5 – NIV). Incredible!

### **THERAPEUTIC CHALLENGE:**

By now you can see that *man’s techniques* to “discover self” or “manipulate the inner being” can only deal with an already problematic or sinful heart.

- God, who created us, said that we need a power *outside* of man – plain, simple, period.
- Any program that tries to change man’s heart *outside* of God’s way will be incomplete.

By now you can also see that the Bible talks about “spirit” beings – an invisible world!

- “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17 – NIV).
- The Bible says that those invisible beings are in “heavenly realms.”  
“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*” (Ephesians 6:12).

That is another reason the “ways” of man will be incomplete.

- The mind and heart problem is related to invisible “powers of darkness.”
- The spirit beings of wickedness.
- The spirit world of Satan or the devil is so real that the Bible said that in the last days of this world’s history, many will follow “seducing spirits.”
  - “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1).
  - Did you note who gave that Bible message? The Spirit – God’s Spirit – a divine Being – the One who really changes the heart and mind!

Any treatment or program that has lasting effects brings God into the equation.

- There is no need for an “altered state of consciousness.”

- The mind must be clear and open to the “influence” of God’s Spirit the Bible calls the “Holy Spirit.”
- There is no need for hypnotic induction with verbal or non-verbal manipulation.
- There is no need to move into an altered state of suggestibility.

God’s plan is to help one know the ***difference*** between right and wrong, truth and error, and then He provides power to follow His way!

- Can the devil’s spirit world control a person?
- Read Acts 16:16-18.
- That’s another reason why ***any*** therapy or help be only in a program that associates with Jesus Christ. His Spirit is what really transforms – permanently – for good.

Peter, one of Jesus disciples, said: “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed” (I Peter 1:13 – NIV).

### **GOD’S WAY THE RIGHT WAY**

There are many man-made ways to “discover the god in us.” That god is not God’s Spirit.

- The Bible (remember that second tool) says exactly how to get help.
- “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life’” (John 14:6).

### **THERE IS NO HOPE THROUGH:**

- Ouija boards
- Crystal balls
- Psychic power exercises
- Complex liturgy in churches
- Journeys “within”
- Breathing techniques
- Zen
- Yoga
- Neurolinguistic programming (NLP)
- Hypnosis
- Transcendent meditation (TM)
- Etc.

God simply wants us to give our “will” (power of choice) to Him! To fall in love with Him.

- Joshua, that ancient leader of the Jewish people who followed Moses, said: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that [were] on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

- It's really that simple. Choosing God's way or man's (which invariably is against God's plan).

Some may argue, "I want a power I can touch and see. I don't relate to this 'faith' stuff!"

- Most everyone feels that way.
- Here's God's plan:
  1. "Rely on the men who wrote the Bible. They had special contact with Me or My representatives (angels)." What they said is precise and helpful.
  2. Follow My instruction and I'll make a promise to you:
    - a. You'll eventually be without any problems or heartaches (I Corinthians 15:53-55)
    - b. You'll eventually live forever with me (I Thessalonians 4:17).

That's a mighty good deal.

- There's a story in the Bible of a king named Jeroboam.
- He led ten of the twelve ancient Jewish tribes.
- But – he had a problem:
  - He was an innovator of worship and helping his people.
  - But they weren't God's way.
- The result? (I Kings 14). He was killed and his people were taken into captivity – never to be saved.

That's exactly what one is faced with **if** the mind is tinkered with through "innovative" plans that are not God's way.

- Is it easy to "activate" God's plan?
- Not if you go it alone.
- If you have counselors who know Jesus Christ, they can guide you into His way.

The program(s) that follow God's techniques will make one have peace, and you'll really breathe a lot easier.

*Editor*

# THE CATHOLIC COURT APPEAL

## *Why So Many Catholic Justices on the Supreme Court? Why Now?*

by Robert F. Cochran, Jr.

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[This “legal” analysis of anticipated rulings on Supreme Court cases by Roman Catholic jurists is skillfully reviewed by Robert Cochran. His view is insightful and bears study by Protestant Christians. – Ed.]

The Supreme Court has been dominated since the founding of our country by mainline Protestants, but with Samuel Alito joining Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and John Roberts, five of the nine justices are now Catholics. All five have been appointed in the last 20 years. In the previous 200 years, only seven Catholics have served on the Court.

There may be political explanations for the attractiveness of Catholic justices, but I think three Catholic doctrines—natural law, subsidiarity, and religious freedom—help to explain why a majority of the justices are now Catholic. My argument is not that citizens who support, presidents who appoint, and senators who confirm these justices consciously do so because they want Catholic religious beliefs on the Court, but that these doctrines yield habits of thinking that make Catholics attractive candidates to the broad range of the American people.

I write as an Evangelical, but one who has come to share a commitment to the Catholic doctrines that I will mention.

### **WRITTEN ON OUR HEARTS**

Natural law teaches that humans were created with a nature and that through reason we can discern moral values as well as laws that conform to that nature and enable us to live the fullest lives.

As the Catholic moral philosopher Robert P. George has defined it, natural-law theory holds that the world offers us ends or purposes that, as basic aspects of human well-being and fulfillment, are intrinsically valuable. These goods can, in principle, be grasped by any rational per-

son whose judgment is not deflected by ideology or prejudice, or compromised by carelessness, inattentiveness, or any of the other intellectual failings that can defeat sound understanding in any field of inquiry.

With the virtue of practical reason, legislators and judges can serve the common good by devising systems of law that promote these basic aspects of human flourishing.

Paul referred to the natural law in Romans 2:15, when he wrote that the Gentiles “show that what the law requires is written in their hearts.” Natural law’s most dominant proponent through the ages has been Thomas Aquinas. Pre-Christian proponents included Aristotle and Cicero. Influential proponents today include the Catholic philosophers John Finnis, Robert George, and Russell Hittinger.

In contrast to many Protestant views of law, which see law merely as a necessary evil required by our fallen nature, natural law sees the law as a positive good, enabling us to achieve good things we could not achieve otherwise. Natural-law proponents draw insights from Scripture, but reason enables all to see the requirements of the natural law. Natural law, therefore, can create a common legal agenda for people of all faiths and of no faith.

### **A SHARED LANGUAGE**

Why are judicial candidates who believe in natural law attractive to the American people? Let me suggest two reasons: the compatibility of such thinking with the two other major approaches to legal thought, and its consistency with our national traditions.

First, natural-law thinking is acceptable to many of those who speak the other two primary legal languages in the United States: secularism and scripturalism. Whereas serious Catholics are generally united in acceptance of natural law, both Protestants and Jews in America are split; members of these faiths tend to gravitate toward either a secularist or a scripturalist view of law.

The group that legal scholar Noah Feldman calls “legal secularists” favors a government that is untouched by religion or religiously based values. The more extreme legal secularists seek to use government to advance secularism in the culture. They reject any recognition of the religious foundations of American law—even the tiniest cross on a city seal—and believe that citizens ought to swear allegiance to a nation that is not “under God.” They insist that (as once proposed by secularist Justice John Paul Stevens) religiously grounded morality in a law makes it unconstitutional.

Those favoring a secularist state make up an unusual coalition. Some are pure secularists—not many in absolute numbers, though they dominate law faculties and the legal profession. But many are religious. Reform and Conservative Jews, mainline Protestants, and moderate Baptists tend to be legal secularists.

Many are what theologian H. Richard Niebuhr called “dualists”: those who are religious in their private lives, but support a secularized state. Some argue, for example, that a secularized state will generate less political conflict, that religious faith has nothing to say to government problems, that a secularized state is the best protection of religious freedom, and that involvement with state affairs is likely to corrupt religious institutions.

Legal scripturalists advocate that we base law on Scripture. Historically, they were Calvinists, but as many Calvinists have moved in a secularist direction, other Evangelicals have picked up the legal scripturalist flag. A very small number believe that biblical law should be implemented.

Most scripturalists, however, believe merely that the broad teaching of Scripture conveys principles that should serve as the moral foundation of law. They differ from some proponents

of natural law in their skepticism about reason. Though reason might shed some light—it is one of God’s gifts, a part of what Calvin referred to as “common grace”—it, like every other aspect of creation, is fallen and an unreliable guide in itself.

Scripturalists share the view of William Blackstone, the nineteenth-century natural-law commentator, who said: “Undoubtedly the revealed law is (humanly speaking) of infinitely more authority than what we generally call the natural law. Because one is the law of nature, expressly declared so to be by God himself; the other is only what, by the assistance of human reason, we imagine to be that law.” (As Blackstone’s comment indicates, many natural lawyers are willing to draw insight from Scripture.)

Today, natural-law proponents are in a strong position politically because natural law is more acceptable to each of the other groups than the alternative. Natural lawyers are more acceptable to scripturalists than secularists are, because natural lawyers generally come to the same positions as scripturalists and the Scriptures themselves recognize the existence of natural law. (If we had God’s insight, natural lawyers and scripturalists would always reach the same conclusions, but we do not.) Natural lawyers are more acceptable to secularists than scripturalists are, because natural lawyers justify law by reason, a language they both share.

## TRADITIONAL LAW

A second reason why those who think in natural-law terms are attractive as Supreme Court justices is that such thinking is consistent with our national traditions. The United States was founded on natural law. The tensions between secularist and scripturalist thinking were present at the founding, at that time manifested in conflicts between Enlightenment deists and New England Calvinists, but at that time both groups thought within the framework of natural law.

To borrow Catholic moral philosopher Michael Novak’s helpful image (which he borrowed from John Paul II), America was carried on two wings, reason and faith. These, of course, are the bases of natural law. The docu-

ments the founders drafted leave no doubt about the foundation of their thinking: They acted based on “the laws of nature and of nature’s God” and on the “self-evident” truth that humans “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

Not only were the country’s founding documents rooted in natural law, but the everyday work of everyday lawyers was also rooted in natural law. The “bible” for early American lawyers (when it wasn’t *the Bible*) was Blackstone’s *Commentaries*, volumes explicitly based on Scripture and natural law. During the nineteenth century, natural law was the primary mode of thinking of American lawyers. Abraham Lincoln, trained as a lawyer in the back of a law office by reading Blackstone, led the nation to abolish slavery with speeches full of natural law.

Of course, there were very few Catholics present at the founding of the United States. It is therefore ironic that in the twentieth century, Catholics became the guardians of the theory of law on which the United States was created, while it grew into disfavor among Protestants and the increasingly secular legal intellectuals.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, a Supreme Court justice and the most influential legal thinker of the twentieth century, called natural law “that brooding omnipresence in the sky.” His views—that moral preferences are arbitrary, law is merely power, and “truth” is the position of the nation that can lick any other—became increasingly influential during the twentieth century.

The leading legal theories of the last third of the twentieth century had no place for natural law. Critical legal studies, feminism, and critical race theory taught that law is merely the power play of judges and their economic classes. However, they offered no basis for reconstructing law on a firm and just footing, for if law is only power, there is no basis on which the weak can challenge the powerful. These theories provided only a counsel of despair, a means of deconstruction with no basis for reconstruction.

The leading conservative theory, called law and economics, also looked to Holmes. It taught that the best ground for law is efficiency and thus provided no conception of justice. In a sys-

tem based solely on efficiency, the inefficient have no standing.

By the end of the twentieth century, modern legal theories had run their course. Words like “justice” and “rights,” which are rooted in natural-law jurisprudence, mean little in a legal world that understands law as only power or efficiency.

## LEGAL HABITS OF THE HEART

Nevertheless, natural law never really disappeared from the American legal scene. It is too much a part of our human nature, even if we do not recognize it. Despite the rejection by most twentieth-century legal intellectuals of natural-law theory, the great civil rights advocates based their arguments—arguments against the Holocaust, against racial discrimination, against prisoner abuse—on natural law. Though natural law has been used over the centuries to justify the status quo, including great evils that are a part of the status quo, it provides the most powerful basis for challenging that status quo.

I suspect that a Catholic sense of natural law was at the root of Catholic Justice Pierce Butler’s dissenting vote—the sole dissenting vote—against the infamous Supreme Court decision in *Buck v. Bell*, approving Virginia’s decision to forcibly sterilize Carrie Buck, who allegedly suffered from a genetically transferred mental disability. Justice Holmes, writing for the eight-man majority, declared that “three generations of imbeciles are enough.”

Butler’s successor in the “Catholic” seat on the Court, Frank Murphy, was one of only three dissenters—against the great “civil libertarians” Hugo Black, Felix Frankfurter, and William O. Douglas—in the equally notorious case of *Korematsu v. United States*. In his dissenting opinion, Murphy warned that in upholding the forced relocation of Japanese-Americans, the Court was letting the country fall into “the ugly abyss of racism.”

But Catholics, I should note, should not be too smug about their brothers’ contribution. Chief Justice Taney, one of the few nineteenth-century Catholic justices, wrote the *Dred Scott* decision—tied with *Roe* as the worst Supreme Court decision—which did for slavery what *Roe*



did for abortion: gave it the benefit of constitutional protection.

Not all twentieth-century use of natural law was Catholic. The opening and closing arguments of Episcopalian Justice Robert Jackson, who took a leave from the Court to be the chief American prosecutor at Nuremberg, were natural-law arguments: The Nazis had committed crimes against humanity, crimes against a law that is higher than positive law. Martin Luther King, Jr., a Baptist, in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, quoted both Scripture and Thomas Aquinas to support his argument that an unjust law is no law.

Natural law received little respect within legal intellectual circles during most of the twentieth century until the publication of Oxford legal philosopher John Finnis's *Natural Law and Natural Rights* in 1980. Since then, to the surprise of proponents of the dominant legal theories, natural law has re-emerged as a leading legal theory, and Catholics, who had never given up on natural-law theory, have taken the lead in that movement.

Thus the effect of the doctrine of natural law. The two other Catholic doctrines that make Catholics attractive candidates for the Supreme Court, subsidiarity and religious freedom, are not independent from natural law. They are developments of natural-law thinking that provide opportunity for the expression and development of our social and religious natures.

### IMPORTANT INTERMEDIARIES

A second doctrine that makes Catholics attractive candidates for the Supreme Court is subsidiarity. It recognizes that humans are social beings who need a broad range of intermediate associations. Though Pope Leo XIII did not use the term “subsidiarity,” the concept is clearly articulated in his critique of individualism and collectivism in his 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (“Of New Things”).

Subsidiarity recognizes the importance of the individual, but holds that *because* the individual is important, the intermediate associations that are essential to human functioning—family, religious congregations, labor unions,

businesses, private benevolent foundations, and local communities—must be protected.

In the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), Pius XI wrote that just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a group what private initiative and effort can accomplish, so too it is an injustice . . . for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower associations. This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy.

Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus*, an encyclical commemorating *Rerum Novarum*'s 100th anniversary, says:

*The principle of subsidiarity* must be respected: a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good. Needs are best understood and satisfied by people who are closest to them, and who act as neighbors to those in need.

Note that this doctrine sees an important role for central authority, but it seeks to keep individuals and intermediate communities strong and independent, not to make them dependent on the state. If an intermediate institution is at risk, a larger institution should step in and aid it, but only with the objective of making it independent again. As the Lutheran scholar Jean Bethke Elshtain has written, “Communities must enable and encourage individuals to exercise their self-responsibility and larger communities must do the same for smaller ones.”

### SUBSIDIARITY'S USE

Subsidiarity makes those with Catholic habits of thought attractive as potential Supreme Court justices for three reasons.

First, subsidiarity is based on a fuller understanding of the nature of humanity than either individualism or collectivism. It recognizes the need for a balance between personal freedom and social responsibility if individuals and communities are to flourish.

Individualism posits that choice, self-determination, and self-fulfillment are the high-

est goals of human life, but this has left many people feeling isolated and alone. Many have found that, in the words of Kris Kristofferson, “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.” The breakdown of the family and of voluntary associations has left many Americans longing for community.

Yet, the breakdown of collectivist regimes around the world in the last 25 years demonstrates that the broader social community, by itself, is not an adequate source of human fulfillment either. The broader social community is important, but collectivist regimes that sought to do away with intermediate communities undercut the very institutions that train citizens to relate to and care for one another in the broader community.

Second, subsidiarity, like natural law, provides a middle course between two extremes. It “triangulates” its alternatives, individualism and collectivism. It is more attractive to proponents of each alternative than the other option. Individualists prefer subsidiarity over collectivism, and collectivists prefer subsidiarity over individualism.

Third, subsidiarity is, like natural law, consistent with our national traditions. Whereas our first great national document, the Declaration of Independence, was explicitly grounded on natural law, our second great national document, the United States Constitution, can be seen as a political manifestation of the doctrine of subsidiarity. It established independent institutions of various sizes, each with separate responsibilities to the individual and each other.

Justices raised in a tradition that values subsidiarity are likely to have a good sense of the balance of powers within our federal system. It is probably not a coincidence that Catholic justices have been among the Court’s leaders in the rebirth of federalism as an important constitutional doctrine in the last decade.

## A NEW FREEDOM

Whereas the first two Catholic doctrines have been Catholic doctrines for a long time—natural law since the thirteenth century (at least in its Thomist form) and subsidiarity since the late nineteenth century—the third, religious

freedom, is relatively new. Vatican II endorsed religious freedom in its *Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae* in 1965.

In *Dignitatis Humanae*, to a large extent based on the arguments of the American Catholic theologian John Courtney Murray, the council adopted as strong a statement of religious freedom as has ever been crafted. It found the source of religious freedom in the natural law and Scripture. The council declared the desire for religious freedom “to be greatly in accord with truth and justice.”

[T]he right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person, as this dignity is known through the revealed Word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.

The council recognized that freedom is important because it enables the individual to appropriate the truth. In the words of Robert George, citing the council,

[F]reedom—freedom to inquire, freedom to assent or withhold assent as one’s best judgment dictates—is a condition of the personal appropriation of the truth by the human subject—the human person—for the sake of whom—for the flourishing of whom, for the liberation of whom—knowledge of truth is intrinsically valuable.

The council’s words were not mere platitudes. Both Spain and Italy quickly granted religious freedom. Pope John Paul II embraced religious freedom as well, proclaiming that “the Church imposes nothing, she only proposes.”

Whereas the first two doctrines make Catholics attractive Supreme Court justices because they are appealing alternatives to other positions, the Catholic embrace of religious freedom cleared a roadblock that might otherwise have limited that number of Catholics appointed to the Court.

I was raised in a Virginia Southern Baptist church in the 1950s and early 1960s. A common component of the missionary reports that we received regularly from the field was that Catholic governments in Italy and Spain were

jailing our missionaries. We were reminded that prior to the adoption of religious freedom in this country, Anglicans similarly jailed Baptist pastors for preaching the gospel only a few miles away from us.

Many feared that if Catholics got into power in the United States, they would limit religious freedom. Official Catholic doctrine at that time was not comforting. Numerous Vatican documents stated that “error has no rights.” When presidential candidate John F. Kennedy claimed, before a group of Texas Baptist ministers, that his Catholic faith would have nothing to do with how he would run the country, we had our doubts. We would have strongly opposed any move to appoint a substantial number of Catholics to the Court.

Other Protestants shared our suspicion. That suspicion may explain why senators to this day have asked Catholic appointees—and only Catholic appointees—to the Court whether their religious faith would affect the way they vote on the Court. (All have said no.)

The embrace of religious freedom by Catholics removed the fear of many Protestants that Catholics on the Court would cut back on religious freedom.

### UNPREDICTABLE CATHOLICS

These three Catholic doctrines help explain why the Supreme Court has the first Catholic majority in its history. But what do these doctrines tell us about the way these Catholic justices will vote?

People want to know how Catholic justices will rule on abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, homosexuality, the nature of marriage, and a host of other issues on which Catholic teaching differs from the views held by a significant number of Americans—but the interplay of the doctrines discussed herein does not give us clear answers.

For example, the doctrine of natural law suggests that a Catholic would oppose abortion as the taking of innocent life, but the doctrine of subsidiarity might suggest that the question of whether to regulate abortion should be left to the states. Of course, the current *Roe v. Wade* regime, which prohibits states from protecting the

unborn, runs counter to both natural law’s affirmation of life and subsidiarity’s rule of deference to smaller communities.

Catholic legal scholar Russell Hittinger notes, citing Thomas Aquinas, that the natural law requires that a judge have proper legal authority before imposing judgment. Thus, the Catholic justice must look to the positive law to determine whether he has authority to act in a particular case. The natural law itself limits the ability of Catholic justices to use the natural law to resolve cases.

A Catholic-led court is therefore unlikely to seize power and impose its will on the country, as the 1973 Supreme Court did when, without constitutional authority, it struck down abortion laws, basing its ruling on a right to privacy found by an earlier case in “penumbras, formed by emanations” from various constitutional amendments.

Justice Scalia, the Catholic justice who has provided the most extensive discussion of the role of religious faith in judging, argues that justices should decide cases according to the language of statute and constitution, even when the results conflict with Catholic teaching. He argues that the place for natural law is in the voting booth and the legislative and constitutional hall. Citizens and legislators should vote in light of natural law, but the judge’s job is to apply the laws that they produce. Scalia argues that his views of matters have nothing to do with his legal decisions, that he resolves everything based on statutory and constitutional language and, if necessary, American traditions.

Under Scalia’s vision of judicial restraint, judges should defer to the results of the democratic process unless there is a persuasive constitutional justification for doing otherwise. He would interpret the Constitution on the basis of the original understanding held by the framers, though he has conceded that he is a “faint-hearted” originalist, in the sense that as a justice he must follow entrenched precedent even if it is inconsistent with the original meaning.

I have a two-fold reaction. The first is to applaud the concept of judicial restraint. Judicial restraint, like subsidiarity, is based on the view that powerful institutions should limit their

power and empower others; courts that exercise judicial restraint defer to other branches of government and to state and local governments. Power should be shared across many institutions within society, both because power corrupts and because a division of responsibility enables different institutions to do what they do best.

But my second reaction is to note that judicial restraint does not answer every question a justice must answer. There is a limit to the restraint that justices can exercise. Many cases require them to look at more than language and tradition. Many constitutional provisions are stated in broad, general terms, including those pertaining to freedoms of religion, speech, and the press and the rights to due process and security in one's home.

### **PRUDENCE & WISDOM**

The implications of these freedoms and rights must be worked out in individual cases, many arising from technologies and circumstances that the founders could not have envisioned. For example, is a wiretap an "unreasonable search"? The framers of the Fourth Amendment could not have imagined electronic surveillance. For another example, the Constitution prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Would the framers have thought that the electric chair was cruel or unusual? Obviously, it was unusual in 1789. The best judges can do is to identify the basic value or principle underlying the terms of the Constitution and extrapolate that principle to apply it to the current problem.

Many, if not most, of the cases that come before the Court come that far because the correct outcome is *not* clear. That does not entitle justices to do whatever they want, but it requires them to exercise judgment, prudence, and practical wisdom. And their exercise of these is likely to be informed by their religious convictions. In fact, it may be that those justices who are raised in a natural-law tradition will be the best equipped to interpret the meaning of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, documents that were grounded in natural law.

Of course, there is the possibility that a justice's religious tradition will have no effect on his jurisprudence, that a justice's votes will re-

flect some other set of foundational beliefs, probably the reigning secular individualist ideology of the legal profession in America. For example, though the current *Roe v. Wade* regime runs counter to both natural law and subsidiarity, and is founded on no legal authority, Catholic Justice Anthony Kennedy voted to affirm it in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, stating, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of the meaning of the universe, and of the mystery of human life." That standard would require the Court to strike down not just anti-abortion laws but almost any law.

Nevertheless, I am convinced that the decisions of Catholic justices will be influenced by their religious traditions. Though I am not a Catholic, I think it is good that convictions informed by Catholic ways of thinking will affect the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States for a long time to come.

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*Touchtone – A Journal of Mere Christianity*



# Prophecy

## The Seven Trumpets of Revelation

### CHAPTER 18

## Power for Witnessing

***“These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth” (Revelation 11:4).***

The two witnesses God said, are “my witnesses” (vs 3). Wouldn’t you want God to say exactly the same thing about you? “You are mine.” “You have been selected to be a witness for the President of the universe!” Who they are and what they represent are now portrayed, even descriptively embellished. The two, now represented by olive trees and lampstands, are “standing before the Lord of the earth” (vs 4). This continues courtroom imagery. The Lord is the earth’s omniscient judge from other parallel judicial images: “His eyes ... run to and fro throughout the earth (Zechariah 4:10, 14; Revelation 5:7). What are the key judicial words used? “Witness,” “standing before,” “measuring” and “eyes run to and fro.” These suggest the evidence is reviewed carefully.

“Standing before the Lord” is an exciting metaphor from Jewish writing! It denotes an eternally secure relationship of the faithful with God (1QH4[12].21; 18.24-29 [21.9-14]. They are forever ready to follow His wishes as “My witnesses.”

We must conclude therefore that this is *the time* when some of God’s people are sealed, to forever be part of His family. In the court’s concluding testimony, two of His witnesses are called. They not only testify of the sealed portion of Daniel but represent the highest authority of heaven to His church and those yet to be called out of the “outer court.”

God’s two “case” witnesses contextually assume the “prophesying” roll assigned earlier to John (10:11, 11:3). We see that responsibility even extends beyond His “temple” to people, nations, tongues and kings (10:11). But that simply is not enough information. Though He said it would all occur over a three and a half year period, God wants you to know far more. The witnesses are also:

1. Two olive trees
2. Two candlesticks standing “before the Lord”

Did your imagination just turn into high gear? The lampstands in the tabernacle were in the presence of God (Numbers 8:1-4, Exodus 25:30-31). Jesus said in Revelation 1:20 that the candlesticks were God’s churches. But, you protest, there are seven churches. Where did the

other five go? They all joined the ranks of Babylon. Only two remain – Philadelphia (representing those who will be translated) and Smyrna (representing those who will be martyred while working as God’s witnesses).

Let’s look more closely at Zechariah for additional clues related to this. Zechariah was shown (ch 4) in vision a “solid gold candlestick” with a bowl at the top, feeding oil through seven “pipes” to the lights. On either side of that candlestick or lampstand were olive trees, “one on the right of the bowl and the other on the left” (4:2-3).

In that vision the oil flowing to the candlestick symbolized the Holy Spirit being poured into the church *and* to “human instrumentalities” who are concentrated to His service.<sup>1</sup> The two olive trees represent the two holy and anointed ones who stand in God’s presence. Their mission is to communicate to God’s people the heavenly grace from His Spirit.<sup>2</sup> The church and individuals, in turn, burn with fire, giving light to those about. Those two angels took the place of Satan, once a covering cherub.<sup>3</sup> They become heaven’s chosen medium, along with the beings surrounding God’s throne, to communicate His Spirit to the church!

We are presented with two witnesses, two candlesticks and now two olive trees. Zechariah’s vision gives us the first clue. They can all represent the anointed ones on either side of the throne. But there is more, far more to this awesome picture!

Through Isaiah God told us, “ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God” (Isaiah 43:12). Is it possible that God will use

the church and even individuals as “anointed beings” to be the final conduit of His grace to the earth? Can you imagine what the implications are of this question if that is the case?! Note with excitement that they are “standing before God!”

Another application comes from lessons drawn from two great leaders in Zechariah – Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the civil governor – as last-day spiritual witnesses.

“Intimately associated with Joshua, the high priest, was Zerubbabel, governor of Judea. It was under the leadership of these two men that the remnant of Israel returned [to their homeland] at the close of the seventy years’ captivity. They also led out in the re-establishment of the ancient worship at Jerusalem. In the second year of Cyrus, Zerubbabel laid the corner-stone of the temple. It was Zerubbabel and Joshua who, in response to the messages of the Lord through Haggai and Zechariah, ‘rose up,’ with courage renewed, and once more ‘began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem.’ These men were true leaders, and ‘the spirit of all the remnant of the people’ was largely influenced by the cheerful willingness with which they carried out the Lord’s commands.”<sup>4</sup>

“Nearly fifty thousand, under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Joshua, took advantage of this providential opportunity to return. These were, however, comparatively speaking, only a few, a mere ‘remnant,’ of all the Israelites scattered throughout the provinces of Medo-Persia. Many chose to remain in the land of their captivity, rather than to accompany their brethren, and to assist in restoring the temple services.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 509-510).

<sup>2</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Review and Herald*, January 16, 1908.

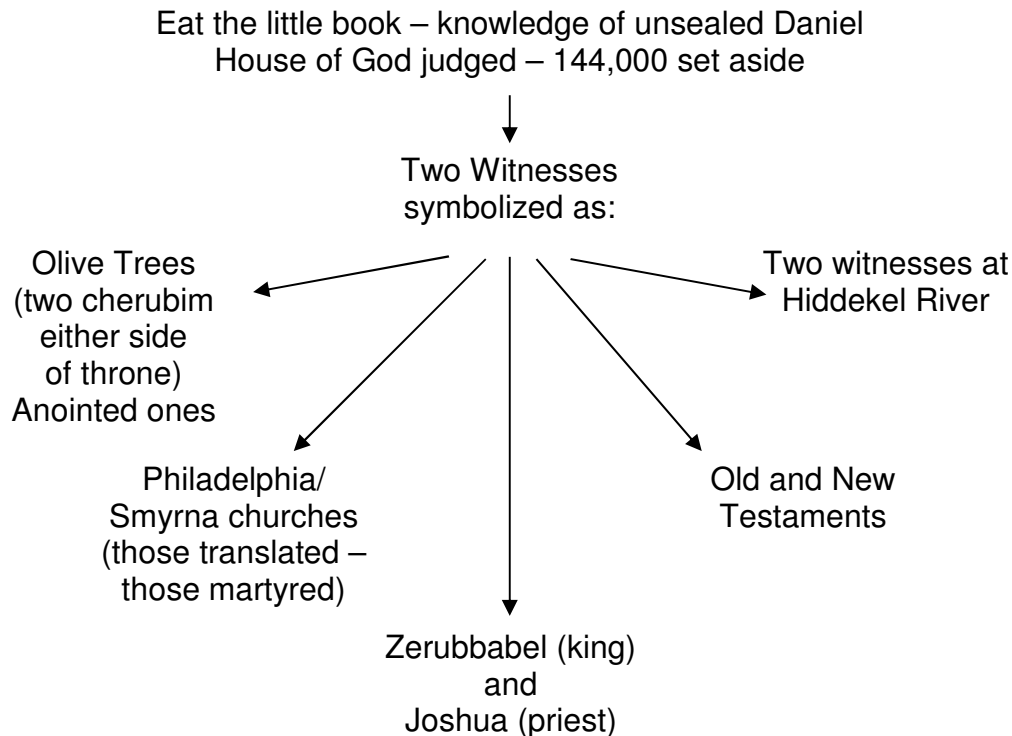
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, July 20, 1897.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, January 23, 1908.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*





The apocalyptic imagery is here dynamic, end-time, and draws on the committed spiritual and administrative leaders who are “standing before the throne” ready to finish the work. It is the time when God’s church (the candlesticks) are baptized with the Holy Spirit’s fire<sup>6</sup> at the time of the Latter Rain.

“The only remedy for our institutions, our churches, our families, and for individuals is entire conformity to the will and character of God. Unless God shall work through the two olive trees, His witnesses, causing them to empty from themselves the golden oil through the golden tubes into the golden bowls, His churches, and hence to the burning lamps, representing His churches, no one is safe for one moment from the machinations of Satan. He will, if possible, deprave human nature, and assimilate it to his own corrupt principles. But this golden oil will revive the Spirit of God in the heart of man. A Christ-like principle will be introduced like leaven. Through the inspiration of the Spirit of God satanic agencies will be overcome.—Ms 57, 1896.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 297.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 18, pp. 366-367.

Is a passion stirring your heart to become part of that great witnessing pool? You will be sealed and anointed by His Spirit. God gives to you the distinction of “standing before His throne” as “My witnesses,” functioning just like those anointed cherubs! – representing Him to all the world. Are you now beginning to see what it is to experience the sweetness of that “little book?” Is a fire being kindled within you to “prophesy again” so the world can be on fire for Him?

If that doesn’t drive you to Jesus, to His Word, to these prophetic books, here is a “blockbuster” thought: When Daniel was given a vision of the final time periods of earth’s history, he made an astounding observation! Stunning as it may seem, this is what he said: “Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river” (Daniel 12:5).

Those were two witnesses to the timing prophecies of Daniel 12. They are on either side of the river, sharing legal responsibilities to see that the Tigris or Hiddekel River would “understand” everything that the man in linen (Jesus) was about to say. Awesome! That river represents God’s people (in contradistinction to the Euphrates, which symbolizes the apostate peo-

ple supporting Babylon). Those are the same two witnesses here in Revelation 11 who are making sure God's people understood those timing prophecies of Daniel 12. Do the Old and New Testaments fit together, talk to each other and rivet with amazing language the same truth?

The "two olive trees" picture the great spiritual leadership of its priestly Joshuas and king-ly Zerubbabels in their final Loud Cry work under the mighty agency of the Spirit. Going deeper, the olive trees symbolize the great anointing or commission of the 144,000 as priests and kings, witnessing to the great river multitude in earth's last evangelistic campaign.

The story doesn't end there. The 144,000 not only represent the two anointed ones on either side of the throne who took Lucifer's place, the great multitude will take the place of all the fallen angels!

"Heaven will triumph, for the vacancies made in heaven by the fall of Satan and his angels will be filled by the redeemed of the Lord (RH May 29, 1900)."<sup>8</sup>

"God created man for His own glory, that after test and trial the human family might become one with the heavenly family. It was God's purpose to re-populate heaven with the human family, if they would show themselves obedient to His every word."<sup>9</sup>

Remember Babylon, that end-time apostate church, was made up of three divisions – the beast (Catholicism), the false prophet (apostate Protestantism) and the dragon (spiritualism). God's remnant church is made up of two parts. Yes – they represent the Old and New Testaments and many other couplets, but it distinctly says that they are "candlesticks." And Jesus already told us (1:20) that they meant "churches." Revelation 11:4 is a symbolic picture of the church ready to fulfill the commission of Acts 1:8.

This is amazing information. It depicts the dynamics of God's people, working in concert with heaven, drawing to a close God's redemp-

tive work! What language! What an awesome privilege to be on God's team in earth's final hours.

The phrase "standing before the God of the earth" has special significance. The imagery of *standing before God* means that these witnesses are in His immediate presence, attending to His will. It also alludes to a priestly role where they are ministering before the Lord (Exodus 18:19; Deuteronomy 10:18, 18:7; I Kings 17:1).

Why does it say the "God of the earth?" At a time of great trial, the closeness His people have with Him is pictured! The church is undergoing a sifting process. Persecution of His witnesses is active. Yet, this God they represent is still in charge. He is the "God of the earth." Nothing can happen without His permission. This is imagery of hope, which is a beautiful byproduct of trusting God!

***"And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed" (Revelation 11:5).***

The prophetic ministry commissioned to John (10:11) is discharged through these two Spirit-filled witnesses. This verse adds inspiration and even motivation to that evangelistic task. Their work will not be curtailed until the task is complete.

It was noted of Jesus: "Then they sought to take him: but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come" (John 7:30; cf. 8:20). If anyone ("man" in the KJV) "desires" to hurt them [literal translation], the outcome will be death (they will be devoured – killed). The way the verb "desire" (*thelei*) is expressed means there will be individuals who will wish for their destruction.

The expression "fire proceedeth out of their mouth" is not literal. It is an expression suggesting that resistance to this final gospel work will not succeed, even if it means death to the detractors.

The expressions alluding to a destructive fire were often used in the Old Testament to depict total annihilation or unstoppable power. Because of Judah's apostasy, God said: "Because

<sup>8</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 949.

<sup>9</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1082.

ye speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them” (Jeremiah 5:14). Yet He went on to say, “Nevertheless in those days, saith the LORD, I will not make a full end with you” (Jeremiah 5:18). The picture is one of a stern response from God. Yet, it is purpose driven. There, it was to lead to repentance. Here, it is to create an impenetrable barrier to any opposition. Words of fire can also break rebellion [Jeremiah 23:29 (cf. II Samuel 22:9; Psalms 18:18, 97:3)].

Fire is a metaphor for proclaiming God’s word in rebuke and condemnation (Jeremiah 5:14; cf. Psalm 39:3). The mouth is an apocalyptic symbol for judgment (Revelation 2:12, 16; 9:17-19; 12:15-16; 16:13; 19:15, 21). This in a prophetic sense looks forward to the final fiery judgments on the wicked (Revelation 20:11-14).

Whether this verse reflects simply an indictment of judgment to come or actual death isn’t important. Its implications tell us that the work of these two witnesses will be completed. The imagery portrays that the effects of God’s forward-moving work will silence His opponents. For three and a half years, in spite of persecution, the task will be finished.

***“These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.” (Revelation 11:6).***

Did you notice the timing statement in this verse? “In the days of their prophecy.” What time period is this alluding to? It refers us right back to verse 3 where it said that “they shall prophesy” 1260 days. Over and over this three and a half year appointed segment of time is presented as *the* last parcel of time when the gospel goes to the world.

Twice it says that they have power (*echousin*). This means here that they are given special authority to control water. What does that mean? The implication again suggests that nothing will impede their prophetic mission. But why the water? Life, human survival, is immediately dependent upon water. Food crops re-

quire rain. In verse 2 it said that God’s people would be persecuted for 42 months – the same period of time the gospel was to spread throughout the earth.

This declaration is exciting. In spite of persecution and the heavy hand of Satan on God’s church, this is a promise that the mission will move forward even if the saints had to stop the rain and turn water into blood. That would be life-threatening. That’s fascinating, because it is so dramatic. God’s voice, the gospel message, will be heard by the whole world.

Elijah had power to stop rain (I Kings 17:1, 7, 18:1; James 5:17). Amazingly, it was for three and a half years (Luke 4:25, James 5:17). In his day it came as a punishment for sin and to lead apostate Israel to repent. We can assume that a similar sequence will occur at the end.

The authority to turn water to blood and smite the earth with plagues is just like the time of Moses in dealing with Pharaoh (Exodus 7:17-21, 9:14, 11:10; I Samuel 4:8). There, the purpose was to bring deliverance to God’s people. We can infer a similar purpose at the end.

There is an additional prerogative given to the 144,000 that Elijah and Moses did not have. These saints can call on these powers “as often as they will.” It doesn’t say display human might. These “weapons” are specific to the completion of the gospel commission.

Though the power is ascribed to these saints, it is God who acts to aid the proclamation of His prophetic Word (Amos 4:6-10; cf. Jeremiah 3:3, Zechariah 14:17-19). Are these plagues literal? The allusions to Elijah and Moses reflect actual Old Testament retributive events. The imagery here shows that God will provide such means if necessary to bring redemption’s plans to a close. Part of the Trumpet and Vial plagues parallel those past scourges, which represent literal events. This ties to a fascinating part of the final message: “Come out of her (Babylon) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

In spite of opposition, the witnesses warn the world. Every person will be led to make a decision.

“During the proclamation of the third angel’s message, ‘another angel’ is to ‘come down

from heaven, having great power,' and the earth is to be 'lighted with his glory.' The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with his unsurpassed glory, as the waters cover the sea.

"Those who have held the beginning of their confidence firm unto the end will be wide-awake during the time that the third angel's message is proclaimed with great power. During

the loud cry, the church, aided by the providential interpositions of her exalted Lord, will diffuse the knowledge of salvation so abundantly that light will be communicated to every city and town. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of salvation. So abundantly will the renewing Spirit of God have crowned with success the intensely active agencies, that the light of present truth will be seen flashing everywhere."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Review and Herald*, October 13, 1904.

## Silencing the Witnesses

***“And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them” (Revelation 11:7).***

Truth will triumph! The work of the witnesses will be completed – “when they shall have *finished* their testimony.”

“Everyone is to hear the last call to the marriage supper of the Lamb. From town to town, from city to city, from country to country, the message of present truth is to be proclaimed, not with outward display, but in the power of the Spirit. As the divine principles that our Saviour came to this world to set forth in word and life, are presented in the simplicity of the gospel, the power of the message will make itself felt.”<sup>1</sup>

“The truth is soon to triumph gloriously, and all who now choose to be laborers together with God will triumph with it.”<sup>2</sup>

The time allotted to finish their testimony was three and a half years. That is so interesting. God, in His foreknowledge, looked ahead and knew that circumstances surrounding the last call to the world would be completed in that time. This, then, is an appointed or decreed time. The details surrounding this period began to unfold in the book of Daniel over 2500 years ago! God actually said that when all these things would come to pass, everlasting righteousness would be ushered in (Daniel 9:24).

The words “finished their testimony” mean that whatever now follows occurs at the end of earth’s history. The church will have completed its role of bearing witness for Jesus Christ. This may not be apparent to God’s church or His remnant people. This is preceded by a time when Satan is given a brief period to reveal what he does when given a free hand. This coincides with Trumpet five and then six!

“The whole earth is to be lightened with the glory of God’s truth. The Lord will not close up the period of probation until the warning message shall be more distinctly proclaimed. The trumpet must give a certain sound. The law of God is to be magnified, its claims must be presented in their true, sacred character; that the people may be brought to decide for or against the truth. Yet the work will be cut short in righteousness. The message of Christ’s righteousness is to sound from one end of the world to the other. This is the glory of God which closes the work of the third angel.”<sup>3</sup>

This is the first time in this book the word “beast” (*therion*) is used. It refers to a beast of prey. One that is cunning and acts in a violent and cruel way. This is the same word that is used for the beast that arises out of the sea and is worshiped by the world in Revelation 13. It is the same word used in Revelation 17 on which the harlot rides. Additionally, it is the beast that is part of the false trinity called Babylon as described in Revelation 16. Networking the descriptions of these images together, it is clear that this terrifying power represents itself as Christ. It is the antichrist.

This beast ascends out of the bottomless pit or abyss. In Luke 8:31 we note that this is the haunt of demons. Satan unlocked (after being given the key) the abyss in Trumpet five. It was then that his minions, represented by locust, were freed. They could not kill or harm God’s people – those who were sealed. “The living righteous will receive the seal of God prior to the close of probation.”<sup>4</sup> But these demons were permitted to bring mental anguish and harm into the wicked world.

<sup>1</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Gospel Workers*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> White, Ellen G.; *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, January 28, 1893.

<sup>4</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Selected Messages*, bk 1, p. 66.

Our text says that the witnesses' work was finished. We are told: "This distinctive banner ... [Revelation 14:12 quoted] is to be borne through the world to the close of probation."<sup>5</sup> This means God's work has been moving forward and Satan's last work on the minds of the wicked has been going through its last phases. Now probation closes. This begins what many call the time of Jacob's Trouble, the great tribulation of Daniel 12:1-2.

Satan's deceptive miracle-working portrayed "angel of light" will continue wielding his power right up until probation closes.<sup>6</sup> That becomes a transition point in redemptive history. Not only does the intercessory work in the heavenly sanctuary cease, the final work of Satan to silence the message or witness of God's people now comes.

It doesn't say *when* the beast came out of the abyss. It only references *where* it originated from (evidence suggests it is during the fifth Trumpet). Now it makes war against God's witnesses, "overcomes them" and "kills them."

"I saw that the four angels would hold the four winds until Jesus' work was done in the sanctuary, and then will come the seven last plagues. These plagues enraged the wicked against the righteous; they thought that we had brought the judgments of God upon them, and that if they could rid the earth of us, the plagues would then be stayed. A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob's trouble."<sup>7</sup>

"The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble. 'Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.... All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.' Jeremiah 30:5-7."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 307.

<sup>6</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 911.

<sup>7</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Early Writings*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>8</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 616.

This war language was used for the little horn (Daniel 7:21), the dragon against the saints (Revelation 12:7) and the beast that arose from the sea (Revelation 13:7). Satan and the anti-christ beast have their moment of power. It is at this time that Satan gathers the world's armies together to fight Armageddon Revelation 16:14 and 19:19).

What does it mean by "they are killed?" If the witnesses represent the saints, they would all be martyrs. That is not the message of Revelation 7:13-17. There, a multitude that is too numerous to count go through this period and are privileged to stand before God's throne.

If they, as we've alluded to earlier, are God's church, truth and His Word, the imagery is one of being *silenced*. The *witnessing factor* is dead. We know by this time that the gospel work is completed. This ties to the typology of Jesus. When His mission was complete, He was crucified (John 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). His voice was silenced.

The description of the beast "arising from the abyss" to do harm occurs as a final onslaught against the saints preceding its own demise. This is depicted in Revelation 17:8, "... is about to ascend from the abyss and he goes to destruction."

"God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble.... The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress described by the prophet as the time of Jacob's trouble."<sup>9</sup>

"I saw the time of trouble, such as never was ... it was the time of Jacob's trouble, and ... we [will] be delivered out of it by the voice of God. Just before we entered it, we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four Angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose

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<sup>9</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 339.

against nation, and the whole world was in confusion.”<sup>10</sup>

***“And their dead bodies [shall lie] in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our [their] Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves” (Revelation 11:8-9).***

In the original Greek text, their dead bodies actually represent a single entity. The two witnesses are one. They are “dead” symbolically. The voice of truth (wherever it came from – people, the writer’s words or the church) is silent. That was graphically conveyed in the last verse. The work is completed.

But why the words “bodies ... in the street” exposed for everyone to see? For a brief time it will appear that the hostility and violence against God’s people and final work will have succeeded. This was birthed by the terrible misconception that the witnesses were the cause of the accelerating devastation on earth, which dramatically expanded with the Trumpets.

“And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter” (Isaiah 59:14 – KJV).

Their voices are no longer heard. By the imagery portrayed here, the world gloats over its success. But unknowingly, their probation has ceased. It was a ghastly insult in the Jewish culture to leave a body unburied (Genesis 40:19; I Samuel 17:43-47; II Kings 9:10; Psalm 79:1-5; Isaiah 14:19-20; Jeremiah 8:1-2, 9:22). Using the *unburied bodies* as a hyperbole, John portrays how jubilant and sadistic the apostate world has become.

What is the “great city?” It is puzzling to see so many viewpoints regarding what this city represents. John was given a vision in which he heard a warning angel cry out against Babylon as a fallen “great city” (Revelation 14:8). The Bible interprets itself.

Contextually, it is related to Sodom (the licentious city) and Egypt (the pagan anti-God kingdom). They symbolize all those in sinful rebellion and the wicked world in general. In Jeremiah 50 and 51 and Revelation 14–19 the end-time apostate city is Babylon. It is comprised of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet – a false trinity, Satan and all who claim to be Christian. Within the realm of Christendom, claims of successful suppression of the work of God’s people will be heralded. It is interesting that this “great city” is contrasted with the “holy city” in verse 2.

- The “holy city” is persecuted (God’s people – His chosen)
- The “great city” persecutes (apostate people – Satan’s church)

This isn’t the first time that apostasy among those who assert loyalty to God. He uses an association to Sodom (Isaiah 1:9-10, Jeremiah 23:14, Ezekiel 16:46-49) or Egypt (Hosea 8:13, 9:3; Joel 3:19). It reveals how low the churches have finally fallen.

Why is there the little phrase “where also their Lord was crucified?” This is not a hint at Jerusalem’s geography. It continues the revelator’s metaphoric expressions. It was apostate Jerusalem (the Jewish people) who crucified Jesus. It will be the apostate Babylon (the Christian world) that kills Christ in God’s witnesses at the end. The word “spiritually” reveals the typological freedom that John is inspired to use. Those geographic expressions are to be seen as moral lenses.

Note that it says where “our” Lord was crucified. This possessive word unequivocally ties this end-time force with those who are within the Christian world! This end-time prophecy relates to the apostate Christian world. Babylon is where Jesus is crucified afresh. This is more clearly addressed in Revelation 13 where the false prophet, the earth beast, representing apostate Protestantism in the United States, will lead the world in forming an image or copying the great rebellious work of the beast, sea beast, typified by the Roman Catholic Church! (This identity is made pointedly clear in Revelation 16

<sup>10</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Day Star*, March 14, 1846.



and 17)! Fascinating is the information given in verse 7 – the “beast” out of Satan’s realm is leading in this final anti-Christ move. Who gives power to the beast? The dragon (Revelation 13:4), who is “that old serpent called the devil, and Satan” (Revelation 12:9).

The persecution and martyrdom of God’s people and the silencing of their work is noticed by the whole world (people, kindreds, tongues and nations). This is amazing. For that to occur, the whole world’s attention has to have already been focused on those witnesses!! This is a powerful declaration as to how effective that last gospel call will be. It is an indictment of the non-Christian world in their hard inattention to a lost opportunity. They too “shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.” They permit the mocking and insults against truth to continue.

The three and a half days provoked much opinion from Bible students. Many conclude that this is prophetic time (i.e., three and a half years) to coincide with the 1260 days and 42 months already referred to earlier in the chapter. Since the gospel work is already finished and Daniel 12 shows clearly that this last period of earth will be very brief, it must have a different meaning.

There is a “Messianic model” that is helpful to apply here. Jesus was not crucified until his work on earth was completed (John 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). The witnesses are “killed” only after their prophetic work is done. There is little to be gained now in a prolonged delay. Indeed, we soon will see God’s people ascend to heaven (vss 11-12).

Thus the three and a half days must represent either a partial week, completing a “whole” from another such period or simply an emphatic statement that this mockery will continue only a short time. Since this prophecy is full of hyperbole and since there were specific timing prophecies of three and a half years earlier, one of persecution and martyrdom of God’s people, the weight of evidence suggests it to mean a brief period. It is as if God is saying, “Okay, they had three and a half years to hurt my people. Their work is now done. You’ve silenced their cries. Just watch. That won’t last long. They are heav-

en bound.” That really is exciting! The three and a half days are a beautiful “overstatement:” “Your glee will be short lived.”

***“And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth” (Revelation 11:10).***

This is a stunning verse. Twice – at its beginning and at its end – John refers to earth-dwellers. He used this language before. Notice the psychodynamic story of guilt it tells.

1. Hour (period of time) of temptation (suffering and guilt) will come to them – because *they disobeyed* (3:10).
2. The earth-dwellers are *warned by God’s people* of terrible judgments about to come – the three woes (8:13).
3. They persecute and even kill God’s people – *retaliation* (6:10).
4. *Warning voices are silenced* – they are happy (11:10).

Isn’t that amazing! It really portrays the world’s reaction to the Loud Cry warning of the 144,000. Why is this rejoicing, making merry and even exchanging gifts such an *intense celebration*? Fascinating are the words “because these two prophets tormented them.”

How has the populace of the earth been tormented (*ebasanisan*)? They have already experienced terrible devastation from the first four Trumpets. The horrifying anguish from this is depicted in Revelation 18:8-19. By the “earth-dwellers’” imagery noted above, the message that worse devastation is coming, the gospel call with its repentance and life changing invitation, will stir *retaliatory guilt*. The witnesses will have been silenced. This type of reaction is described in I Kings 18:17, 21:20, with Ahab’s spirit towards Elijah.

How earnest will the 144,000 cry be? “This message [third angel of Revelation 14:9-12] contains the last warning that men on probation will ever receive, as it is followed by the coming

of the son of man to reap the harvest of the earth,—to ‘gather the wheat into his garner,’ and to cast the clusters of the vine of the earth into the winepress of the wrath of God. See verses 14-20. *It is for this reason that it is given in such strong, such terrible language of threatening.* The wrath which it denounces upon the worshipers of the beast and his image is contained in ‘the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.’ Rev. 15:1. Compare chap. 16:1, 2. That wrath ‘is poured out without mixture;’ for then judgment falls upon the incorrigible without mercy, because our saviour will then have finished his priestly work, and he will come, not to offer salvation, but to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel. 2 Thess. 1:6-9.”<sup>11</sup>

Their merry hearts will be short lived. Little do they realize that the task of the prophets is complete. The end is in sight, and what the remnant warned them would happen is now imminent. A similar situation existed in Egypt after the Israelites had begun their journey to the promised land (Psalm 105:38). But that “retaliatory joy” was short lived.

Is this event before, at or after the close of probation? That is not entirely clear to many expositors. Arguing for a period just after Christ’s completion of His priestly ministry is the myriad of things that occur at the brief time of Jacob’s Trouble. As soon as probation closes, the terrible battle of Armageddon and the Seven Last Plagues fall. Here are a few reasons why it appears as though nothing more can be compacted into that time:

1. Daniel 12 makes it clear that the time of Jacob’s Trouble lasts only 45 days.

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death. Probation is ended a *short time* before the appearing of the Lord in the clouds of heaven.”<sup>12</sup>

2. The fifth Trumpet lasts for five months (Revelation 8:5, 10). Thus it antedates that period of trouble which begins when the general probation closes (see earlier discussion on this fifth Trumpet).

3. The fifth Trumpet reveals that the saints are already sealed – i.e., the work has been completed. This is before probation closes (Revelation 8:4).

“The living righteous will receive the seal of God *prior* to the close of probation.”<sup>13</sup>

4. Elsewhere E. G. White separates the work and the close of probation.

“God has not revealed to us the time when this *message will close, or when probation will have an end....* It is our duty to watch and work and wait, to labor every moment for the souls of men that are ready to perish. We are to keep walking continually in the footsteps of Jesus, working in His lines, dispensing His gifts as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”<sup>14</sup>

5. The whole world is in confusion right after probation closes when the four winds of strife are let loose.

“Just before we entered it [the time of trouble], we all received the seal of the living God. Then I saw the four angels cease to hold the four winds. And I saw famine, pestilence and sword, nation rose against nation, and the whole world was in confusion.—7BC 968 (1846).”<sup>15</sup>

Suggesting it is primarily during that brief tribulation are these thoughts: “As the decree issued by the various rulers of Christendom against commandment keepers shall withdraw the protection of government and abandon them to those who desire their destruction, the people of God will flee from the cities and villages and associate together in companies, dwelling in the

<sup>11</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Spirit of Prophecy*, p. 500 (1884).

<sup>12</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

<sup>13</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Maranatha*, p. 211.

<sup>14</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Amazing Grace*, p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> White, Ellen G.; *Last Day Events*, p. 228.

most desolate and solitary places. Many will find refuge in the strongholds of the mountains. Like the Christians of the Piedmont valleys, they will make the high places of the earth their sanctuaries and will thank God for ‘the munitions of rocks.’ Isaiah 33:16. But many of all nations and of all classes, high and low, rich and poor, black and white, will be cast into the most unjust and cruel bondage. The beloved of God pass weary days, bound in chains, shut in by prison bars, sentenced to be slain, some apparently left to die of starvation in dark and loathsome dungeons. No human ear is open to hear their moans; no human hand is ready to lend them help.”<sup>16</sup>

“Yet to human sight it will appear that the people of God must soon seal their testimony with their blood as did the martyrs before them. They themselves begin to fear that the Lord has left them to fall by the hand of their enemies. It is a time of fearful agony. Day and night they cry unto God for deliverance. The wicked exult, and the jeering cry is heard: ‘Where now is your faith? Why does not God deliver you out of our

hands if you are indeed His people?’ But the waiting ones remember Jesus dying upon Calvary’s cross and the chief priests and rulers shouting in mockery: ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.’ Matthew 27:42. Like Jacob, all are wrestling with God. Their countenances express their internal struggle. Paleness sits upon every face. Yet they cease not their earnest intercession.”<sup>17</sup>

The work appears to have been completed. God’s people are sealed. Their voice is silenced.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy” (John 16:20).

It is of interest to note that John here calls God’s two witnesses “prophets” for the first time. Jesus had said that John was to “prophesy” again (10:11) before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings – the earth-dwellers. When this verse occurs, that task has been completed.

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<sup>16</sup> White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 626.

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 630.



