

Chapter V

THE OPENING OF A SEALED BOOK

(Rev. 5 to 12; II Cor. 3:13-14; I Pet. 1:12)

This section of the Revelation deals with the first and second woes or judgments and the events which transpire in Palestine from the birth of Jesus, the first prophecy of the Old Testament to be fulfilled in regard to the New Covenant, until Jesus' ascension and his coronation as King of kings is an accomplished fact. A great transition will take place between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals and the revelation of things under the seventh will deal with events of prophecy fulfilled under the third woe, the last, which period extends from the ascension to the complete fulfillment of the New Testament and the destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A. D. The opening of the seals does not deal with EXTINCTION of all things which terminates the Christian era but merely with TRANSITION and the end of the Jewish age.

Dr. Joseph A. Seiss, noted Jewish scholar, has this to say in regard to Rev. 21:1, which most singularly applies to the entire scope of the Revelation, "In those passages which speak of the "passing away" of the earth (land) and the heavens, the original word is never one which signifies termination of existence, but a verb of very wide and general meaning, such as to go or come to a person, place or point; to pass, as a man through a bath, or a ship through the sea; to pass from one place or condition to another, to arrive at, to go through; to go into, to come forward as if to speak or serve. As to time, it means *going into the past, as events or a state of things once present giving place to other events and another state of things*. That this implies great changes when applied to the earth (land of Canaan) and the heavens is very evident; but that it ever means ANNIHILATION, or the passing of things out of being, there is no clear instance either in the Scriptures or in classic Greek to prove. The main idea is TRANSITION; NOT EXTINCTION."¹

Here are some passages from the prophets which point the student of the Revelation to the great transition under consideration:

"Behold, Jehovah maketh the earth (land of Palestine) empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof . . . There-

¹ J. A. Seiss, *Higley's Sunday School Commentary* (The Higley Press, Butler, Ind., 1941), p. 238; Clarke, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 594.

fore hath the curse devoured the earth (land), and they that dwell therein *are found guilty*; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

"And it shall come to pass in that day, (Christian dispensation), that Jehovah will punish the host of the high ones on high, and the things of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered together in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison (Rev. 20:1-3); and after many days shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, the sun ashamed, for Jehovah of hosts *will reign (by the New Covenant) in Mount Zion*, and in Jerusalem; and before his elders shall be glory."² "Behold the days come saith Jehovah, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: NOT ACCORDING to the covenant that I made with their fathers in THE DAY I took them by the hand to bring them OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, etc."³

"And in this mountain (*Mt. Zion*) will Jehovah of hosts make unto *all peoples* a feast of fat things (in the Gospel), a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in THIS MOUNTAIN the face of covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations (of Jews). He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will WIPE AWAY TEARS from off all faces; and the REPROACH of his people will he take away from off all the earth (land): for Jehovah hath spoken it."⁴

The *reproach* referred to above, however, cannot be taken away from the Jews during the Christian dispensation so long as they cling to their Talmud or other religious traditions, their worship or the Law of Moses and its priesthood.⁵ They must turn to the *new order* of the Gospel, for there is not one single intimation in all the scriptures that the change or TRANSITION would be accomplished by some *sudden and national transformation* that God would effect in their behalf. The language addressed to them and all is, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;*" "*He that heareth, let him say Come, etc.*" or "*Repent and be converted EACH ONE OF YOU*

2. Psa. 106:13-27; Isa. 24:1-6, 21-23.

3. Jer. 31:31-36; I Cor. 15:1-4, 12-19, 54-55.

4. Isa. 25:6-8; II Cor. 3:12-16; II Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:13-15; Rev. 21:4; I Thess. 4:1

5. Gal. 5:1-12; Titus 1:13-14.

for the remission of sins, etc." . . . "for the promise is unto you (Jews) etc."⁶ Premillennialists and others do not take these *distributives* of the Gospel into account when they contend that God intends to save *all Israel* by some "eternal, national glorification." On the other hand, when the prophets speak of A REMNANT of the Jews being saved under the Gospel, no contradiction is implied.⁷ During the opening of the seventh seal, God will destroy Israel *nationally* between 33 and 70 A. D. but will during this time and until this era ends save them *individually* by the New Covenant and by no other agency or means.⁸ This is the meaning of the Revelation and any Minister of the Gospel who respects the heroic fight that Paul, the other apostles, evangelists and saints of the first century endured will encourage no Jew to persist in his stubbornness and rebellion against the New Covenant by letting his sympathy and imagination bring him into the same condemnation.

Let us attend now to the opening of the first four seals and the event displayed symbolically under each. The first WOE strikes Palestine with the birth of Jesus. A Rider on a white horse appears in the Vision when Jesus is born in Bethlehem and is heralded by angels in song and sermon. Herod and all Judea are alarmed. Jesus is announced prior to his birth by Gabriel as GREAT and that he would be called Son of the Most High; and that God would give unto Jesus the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.⁹ Herod who was mis-named the "Great" was terrified and sought to kill this rival by slaying the innocents. Enmity has already sprung up between the Dragon and Eve's Seed who also is to be the seed of Abraham by an oath of God when He raises His son from the grave.¹⁰ At the ascension God will set His son "upon His holy hill of Zion" when God remembers His decree at the resurrection, "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." He is to be a Savior of the world after the order of an endless life and no matter how the nations rage and the Jews imagine a vain thing or try to break the bonds between the Father and the son, he shall have the nations of the earth for his inheritance." Should this not be the first seal for the Christ to open and who will not contend that he is "the rider of the white horse"?

6. Mk. 16:15-16; Rev. 22:17; Acts 2:38-39.

7. Rom. 1:16-17; 9:19-29.

8. Gal. 1:6-12; Jno. 6:66-69.

9. Rev. 6:1-2, Lu. 1:31-37; 2:1-20; Isa. 9:5-7.

10. Matt. 2:7-18; Gen. 3:14-15; 22:15-18; Heb. 7:28; Gal. 3:16.

11. Psa. 2:1-12; Acts 13:32-41.

Now what can we expect to see when the second seal is opened but an opposing rider on a red horse (vengeance) seeking to kill the babe of Bethlehem? Such a rider always follows the white horse of victory and triumph in war. It is such riders as this one that take peace from the Jews of Palestine and cause them to slay one another in bloody seditions until the Romans crush such seditions. In their blind madness the Jews will slay one another for the sword this rider uses "is great" and the destruction it will bring about will be world renowned. "Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine (Mary's) own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed."¹² Herod died within the same year Christ was born and Palestine was ruled by his three sons. His death caused great joy among all his subjects because he had taxed Israel to the limit in building the Temple in Jerusalem which was most ornate. Archelaus, who ruled Judea upon the death of his father, was none the less exacting in his burdens imposed upon the Jews and was removed by Augustus Caesar who became tired of the complaints against this governor. Judea now becomes formally a Roman Province and the tax money they imposed adds an extra burden to the Jews already reduced to widespread poverty. However, the Jews submitted reluctantly and frequently offered armed resistance to the publicans, or tax-gatherers. But when Pontius Pilate became governor of Judea (A. D. 20), the Jews were still more alarmed for their religion, as Pilate brought with him to Jerusalem the Roman standards, which, on account of the images borne upon them, were regarded by the Jews as idols.¹³

Little wonder then that John sees next a rider on the black horse, a symbol of scarcity, with balances by which to ration to the Jews the necessities of life. And a demand is made by the four living creatures that no wine or oil be used except by priests for the Temple services. This stringency is imposed primarily by the four living creatures who with the introduction of each event say, "COME," or ATTENTION!¹⁴ "Give heed to the sorrows that are coming upon Palestine!" is the advice given the Jews by the cherubim which means, "Look back to your prophets and see what happens to God's people when they as a nation lose their way and follow blind guides. The wicked shall not prosper."¹⁵

12. Rev. 6:3-4; See A. Clarke's Comment on Zech. 6:6; Lu. 2:34-35.

13. Israel S. Clare, *Library of Universal History*, (R. S. Peale, New York, 1898) p. 826.

14. Rev. 6:5-6; Psa. 1:1-6; Matt. 15:12-14.

15. Rev. 6:7-8; Frederic W. Farrar, *Op. Cit.*, Chapter, 42.

And, when John the immerser enters upon his ministry to the Jews, one may see the dread condition of all the Jews under the symbol of the rider on a pale (green) horse. It is the putrified condition into which God's people, the Jews, had fallen. Oppressive burdens of taxes and tithes had inflicted the land of Palestine with hunger, strife, whoredoms, thefts, weakness of faith and woefulness of heart. Demons, demoniacs, disease and death, lepers and lame, false prophets, sorcerers, hypocrites and false brethren filled the Jews everywhere with longing for the Messiah and night-marish anticipations of dread things to come. No wonder this rider is called Death; "and Hades followed with him." Many of the Jews were too poor to care for the infirm and dying or to give their dead a decent burial which would in some instances be an invitation to "wild beasts" to devour such victims.

In the midst of all this turmoil, famine, sin, and stress, John's disciples will need encouragement to persevere and when the FIFTH SEAL IS OPENED an aspect of blessing and not cursing for Israel is in view and no living creatures need say, "Come." The Immerser's ministry is the culmination of the "first woe," so-called because of the prominence with which his work stands out and the sorrows and woes now prevalent among the Jews. The whole land needs the repentance which only godly sorrow for sins can secure for a blessing and the safety of all. John came to the Jews preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. He also pronounced a "woe" upon the Jewish leaders and asked them who had warned them to flee the wrath to come by submitting to his baptism. All Jews at this time felt deeply the need of their Messiah and evidently were sadly disappointed when John told them that he was not that Ruler but that he and his kingdom would soon appear. So now the Revelator and all other disciples who may lose their heads because of the word of God and the testimony which they held could rest assured that their God is taking care of them and their prophets and they are told that they must be patient. For others would be killed before they fulfill their course by the time God's final event of His wrath had come.¹⁶ When John the immerser is beheaded the curtain falls on the FIRST WOE of the Revelation with amazement to our Lord who has submitted to John's baptism. He has been led into the wilderness to be tried by the Dragon (Satan) and will go away immediately into Galilee to begin his ministry.¹⁷

The second WOE immediately follows now for the Immerser

16. Rev. 6:9-11; Matt. 3:1-10; Acts 13:23-25; Jno. 1:19-28; Mal. 4:4-6.

17. Matt. 4:12-17; 14:13-23; Lu. 4:1-15.

has declared that within Jesus' "hand is his fan, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing-floor." A woe is defined as a heavy affliction or overwhelming sorrow and during Jesus' personal ministry we shall see even deeper sorrows and heavier afflictions, due to misunderstanding, darkness and doubt, increase in intensity as the conflict between Jewish leaders and Jesus progresses. Within the three and a half years of his ministry accrued bitterness will result in his death, as the first woe brought about that of the Immerser's death, and with the same apparent failure so far as the effects upon the minds and souls of the Jews were concerned. So, when the second woe begins with the opening of Sixth Seal, the question is raised, "Who is able to stand," It will be a winnowing fiery wind which will sweep over the threshing floor.¹⁸

In the beginning of Jesus' ministry we hear him say, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth (land of Palestine): I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."¹⁹ This will be due, of course, to the exact difference between Jesus' teachings and mighty works and the false doctrines of demons and accompanying signs of scorcers exhibited by the Jews and their leaders. The words of Jesus and his signs will cause Jerusalem and the land of Palestine to tremble as if struck by a mighty earthquake and their scribes, priests and teachers (stars) will begin to fall as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs when she is shaken of a great wind.²⁰ The sun (the light of the prophets upheld by Jesus) will appear dark to the Jews and the moon (Moses' law) will become as blood, only vain blood for them and their priests. The wicked kings, princes, chief captains, rich, bondman and freeman will invite the rocks and mountains to conceal their shame from God's throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, "for the great day of their wrath is come."²¹ They will take refuge in the pagan rulers of Rome and these wicked rulers of the Jews will seek to justify their opposition to Jesus by claiming they "have no King but Caesar."²² "Rocks and mountains" are symbols of civil governments and their rulers as well as those pertaining to the government and rulers of God.²³ And, there will now come the

18. Mal. 3:1-6; Heb. 12:26-29; Rev. 6:12-17; Joel 2:9-32.

19. Matt. 10:34-39.

20. Rev. 1:19; 22:16; Jude 13; Isa. 14:13.

21. Isa. 29:9-14; Matt. 15:1-9; Rom. 11:9-10; 3:9-18; 10:19-21. Rev. 6:15-17.

22. Jno. 19:11-16; Lu. 16:14-17.

23. Isa. 2:2; 14:13; Psa. 68:14-16; Ezek. 6:1-7.

time when the "daughters of Jerusalem" will begin to make appeal to the mountains, "Fall on us"; and to the hills, "Cover us." In the days of Jesus and the Immerser the axe lay under the Jewish tree but God will use it to hew down that tree and it shall become a dry tree, barren of all fruit.²⁴ Certainly God's ordinances under Moses departed from Him at the Cross and the seed of Israel was then cast off for all that they had done.²⁵ Mt. Zion, God's mountain, will then begin to appear as an eternal shelter for all the saved. For an explanation of Rev. 6:9-11 see page 80.

As the Seventh Chapter of the Revelation opens, a strong angel ascends from the sunrising with a Seal of the living God and demands that the "four living ones" *hurt not* the land (earth) or the people (sea) of Palestine or trees (those who are bearing fruit), "till WE shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." This refers to the work of Jesus, the twelve apostles, and the Seventy sent out to convert Jews to the law of Moses during the personal ministry of Jesus. All will carry out a similar mission of Restoration as the Immerser did only their work will be accompanied by miracles, signs, wonders, and power over demons, etc. Jesus sent as it were his apostles and disciples into the midst of (human) wolves at this time and told them to be not anxious: for it would be given them by the Spirit to speak God's will to the Jews. And they will not have gone through the cities of Israel or all Palestine, till the Son of man BE COME. "*Hurt not*" seems to signify the holding in abeyance the Roman armies until the rulers of the Jews and them that persecute Jesus and his disciples fill up the cup of God's wrath for the final stroke of desolation. The "strong Angel" is Jesus beginning his personal ministry and represented as shining forth from the east.²⁶ Those sealed are 144,000, a definite number put for an indefinite group of Jews converted during Jesus' personal ministry, from every tribe of that nation. The twelve tribes are apparently in tact at this time.²⁷ Jesus is *the pledge* of God's divine favor and those he sealed were the Jews who believed in him and followed Jesus and his apostles to Pentecost where all would be granted by obedience *full favor* under the Gospel. The Revelator not only sees Jews thus sealed but according to the prophets he sees also an innumerable host of Gentiles sealed out of "every nation and of all tribes and people and tongues" and standing before the throne and

24. Matt. 3:8-10; Lu. 23:27-31.

25. Jer. 31:31-37.

26. Rev. 7:1-17; Matt. 10:1-23; 24:29-31, 27; Mk. 8:27-9:1.

27. Matt. 4:12-17; Adam's Clarke's Comment on Matt. 19:30.

before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, etc. God's pledge (seal) is so indicated by the prophets of the Jews.²⁸ This was seen in prospect then for no one could "wash his robe and make it white in the blood of the Lamb" until that blood was shed on calvary. However, all Jews from Moses until this time who were faithful to Moses' law have *the pledge* that their transgressions will be covered by the blood of Christ.²⁹

At the opening of the Seventh and last seal (Rev. 8:1-11:14) another great Transition takes place, characterized by silence in Heaven, and seven angels prepare themselves to sound.³⁰ These sounds will roll like thunder over Palestine until the Revelator is bidden to seal up the things which they utter and "write them not." He, like the other apostles, will not be ready to write or speak such things until they "are endued with power from on high."³¹ In this we cannot help but see the events associated with Christ's personal ministry. Heaven and earth stand aghast at the wickedness of the Jews and their rulers who put the Immerser to death, scoffed at and persecuted Jesus' disciples, and finally murdered our Lord. It is a time for heaven and prudent men to keep silent.³² The rulers, the priests, and the scribes, of whom the Sanhedrin of Seventy men was composed, have so thoroughly darkened the counsel of God that they are responsible for a wide-spread famine of both hearing and doing the things Christ and his disciples taught the people. And to help all the disciples bear their rebuffs and persecutions bravely, earnestly and well, another angel (The Holy Spirit), having a golden censer, was given much incense, that he should qualify and guide the prayers of these saints and lay them acceptably upon the altar in heaven before God. In other words, Christ by the Spirit taught his disciples, as did the Immerser, HOW to pray.³³ It is pointed out by Jesus that the prayers of the Jews and their leaders were not acceptable. Notice how the acceptable prayers were followed by "thunders, and voices, and lightnings, and an earthquake."³⁴

Moreover, the prayers of the Immerser and his disciples, of Jesus and those who followed him caused a War to strike Palestine "Under Pilate's administration the state of society in Judea became

28. Jno. 6:27; Jer. 32:6-15; 36-44; Eph. 1:12-14.

29. Heb. 9:15; 10:1-18.

30. Rev. 8:6.

31. Rev. 10:4-7; Matt. 16:20; 17:9; Lu. 24:48-49; Jno. 16:7-16.

32. Rev. 8:1; Amos 5:13; Isa. 53:7; Matt. 26:62-63; 27:11-14.

33. Amos 8:11-14; Lu. 11:1; Matt. 6:5-15.

34. Matt. 6:5-7; Rev. 8:5.

very corrupt, no class being free from the demoralizing effects of profligate government and popular discontent." Herod Antipas ruled Galilee (B. C. 4—A. D. 39), while Philip held the government of Trachonitis (B. C. 4 to A. D. 37). Herod Antipas was married to the daughter of an Arabian; while Philip was married to his own niece, Herodias. Herod Antipas sent his own wife back to Syria, beheaded the Immerser, and provoked a war between his armies and those of Petronius. Accordingly, Petronius marched out of Antioch with three Roman legions and many Syrian auxiliaries. The Jews could scarcely believe the stories that spoke of war and attributed their misfortunes to Herod's misconduct and murder of John the baptist which came about as the result of John's forbidding Herod to marry Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Later when the Jews had come together for the feast of unleavened bread, due to some obscene display by a Roman soldier, they violently protested to Cumanus, who supposing an assault would be made upon him, called for armed men, who, when they came in great numbers into the cloisters, the Jews displayed great consternation and attempting to escape from the Temple into the city trod upon one another till ten thousand of them were killed. These and other events, such as Pilate's mingling the blood of certain Galilaean Jews with their sacrifices, were "the begining of sorrows" and explain the events falling upon Palestine from the birth of our Lord until the close of John's ministry (A. D. 29).³⁵

Such events are symbolized by the sounding of trumpets by the first four angels during the period referred to above. "Hail and fire, mingled with blood" indicate devastation and famine caused by war, oppression and turmoil.³⁶ Rome, like Babylon of old, is the "Destroying Mountain" which struck Palestine and confiscated their live-stock and destroyed a third part of their commerce.³⁷ "A great star, burning as a torch, called Wormwood which fell upon the waters of Palestine very appropriately refer to Pilate's action of bringing the Roman Army standards, regarded by the Jews as false gods, into their Temple and other places of worship which occasioned vehement oposition and bitterness and resulted in the death of many Jewish men. When the fourth angel sounds the scene portrays the effects of this conflict upon the sect of the Jews called Essenes or Essens.³⁸ They prayed facing the sunrising and

35. F. Josephus, *Op. Cit.*, Chs. III to XII; Lu. 13:1-5.

36. Rev. 8:7.

37. Jer. 51:25-26.

38. Rev. 8:10-11; Josephus, *Op. Cit.*, p. 241; pp. 244-245; *Library of Universal History*, Vol. III, pp. 826-827.

apparently worshipped spirits and the heavenly bodies which regulated their festivities. The Roman eagles signified, "Woe, woe, woe, for them (the Jews) by reason of the voices of the trumpet of three angels, who are yet to sound." These voices refer to three ministries having one purpose and the same theme carried out by Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy under the limited commission.

The key which explains now the transition from John's ministry to those previously mentioned is the introduction of Satan into the scene actively revealed when he comes to tempt our Lord and with his appearance and results following, the Revelator announces, "The first WOE is past: behold, there come yet TWO WOES hereafter."³⁹ This is a very important key to our study of the Revelation. The two woes to follow imply both the personal ministry of Jesus and the events which will transpire between 33 A. D. and 70 A. D. at which time Christ's kingdom will be set up and a subsequent conflict will ensue between his apostles and the Jews. Satan (Apollyon or Abaddon) is given by Jehovah "the key to the abyss," which he opens and out of it ascend smoke (religious confusion) which darkens the sun and out of the smoke come locusts or demons who hurt only the Jews not sealed under Christ's personal ministry. These demoniacs will seek death and in no wise shall find it. Locusts shaped like horses is a mixed figure or symbol and as well may be the "crowns of gold," "the faces like men's," "lion's teeth," and "the hair of women." They are irresistible having breastplates like iron which only the power of the Son of man can pierce, their stings are like that of the scorpion, and their number is Legion and the sound of their wings as they rush to do war for "their king of the abyss" is like the sound of chariots in battle. What a portrayal of sorrow for the Jews who reject their Redeemer! And their land will not be rid of them until the Gospel comes in its completeness and Jerusalem is destroyed and all Palestine is desolated in 70 A. D. Study carefully now Zech. 12:10-13:2; Rev. 20:3.⁴⁰

During his personal ministry and in view of his driving demons and unclean spirits (false prophets) completely out of the land of Palestine, Jesus said, "But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come unto you."⁴¹ When he will have entered in death the "strong man's house and spoiled his goods" and has come forth therefrom with the "keys of Death and of Hades," our Lord in his ascension will "lead captivity captive"

39. Lu. 4:1-13; Rev. 9:1, 12.

40. Rev. 9:2-11; Matt. 8:28-29; 12:22-27; Lu. 4:41; 9:1; 10:17-19.

41. Matt. 12:28-29.

give "gifts unto men" and therewith slay the "Man of Sin" with "the breath of his mouth, and bring him to nought by the MANIFESTATION of his coming . . ."⁴² When the Sixth angel sounds, the Revelator hears a VOICE from the horns of the golden altar which is before God and this marks the beginning of Jesus personal ministry, for the golden altar having the horns signifies God's presence and that is the meaning of Jesus' name, Immanuel.⁴³ And the war with demons is still in view and the Voice and Christ's presence gives the signal, "Loose the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates." And the four angels were loosed, that had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they should kill the third part of men which is the highest and spiritual part of men. When people are possessed of demons they are about as low as sin can make them. Most all of the traits of demons and evil spirits possessed by the Jews came from Babylon and the employment of such cunning arts of deception will bring on the plagues of fire, smoke, and brimstone ever present in the war with the Romans. Horses' tails were used by the Romans in setting fires to crops and cities of the Jews; their riders from the upper tributaries of the Euphrates had long hair like women; and with the breastplates on the fronts of their horses they pushed over many objects and enemies devoted to fire.⁴⁴ And those Jews not killed "with these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not WORSHIP DEMONS, etc." In giving his disciples power over demons, Jesus tells them, "I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions" which are seen in Rev. 9:10, 19.⁴⁵

42. Matt. 12:29; Rev. 1:17-18; Eph. 4:8-16; II Thess. 2:6-12.

43. Matt. 1:23; Ex. 37:1; Heb. 9:3-5; Jer. 3:16-17; I Sam. 4:4; Ex. 30:6.

44. Rev. 9:13-19; (See Dictionary, Am. Stan. Version Bible, 1901, "Babylonia," p. 10;

F. Josephus, "Against Apion," Op. Cit., p. 517.

45. Rev. 9:20; Lu. 10:19.

Chapter VI

FROM THE CROSS TO THE CROWN

(Rev. 10 and 11)

This chapter will deal with the conclusion of the opening of the sealed book and the events transpiring at the Cross and immediately preceding our Lord's ascension and coronation as King of kings and Lord of lords.¹ When the seventh and last seal was opened we saw seven angels with trumpets preparing to sound; four had sounded and three were issuing their "military" challenges to the Jews when the previous chapter of our book was closed. The things the Revelator now sees as the tenth chapter opens are too wonderful for any single Trumpeter to announce as a challenge. At the crucifixion of Christ all voices of prophecy will find their chief anti-climax here and the events from Jesus' birth until he says on the Cross, "It is finished," quiver with lightning flashes over Palestine until seven thunders from all trumpet blasts at once roll with tremendous appeal forever throughout all the earth. All nature is breathless now while Satan and all his realm await the outcome. From the Cross will shine however a gilded glory in the New Covenant which Christ will reveal to his apostles, a glory no less brilliant than the Crown he wears while the voices of seven thunders echo and re-echo in heaven with the glad songs of that realm.²

The student should not consider the opening of the seals as merely prophetic utterances which God will accomplish after the ascension and His giving of the Holy Spirit to Christ's apostles, for when the seventh angel sounds all things necessary to the establishment of the New Covenant and the kingdom of Christ will have been granted. These are the things which "are past," the New Covenant and the churches established thereon are the things "that are," and the things that "shall be" are the events immediately following John's writing the Revelation in 67 A. D.³ In this connection Adam Clarke states, "That the opening of the seals is not merely a declaration of what God will do (in the immediate or remote future to the time John is writing the Revelation), but is the exhibition of a purpose then accomplished; for whenever the Seal is opened the sentence appears to be executed. It is supposed, that from Chapter 6 to Chapter 11 inclusive the calamities which should befall the enemies of Christianity (those before the cross), and

1. Rev. 10:2; 11:14; See A. Clarke, *Op. Cit.*, comment on Rev. 10 (Notes).

2. Jno. 19:30; Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 2:14-15; Eph. 3:4-7; I Pet. 1:3.

3. Rev. 1:19.

particularly the Jews, are pointed out under various images; as well as the preservation of the disciples under these calamities.”⁴

We shall quote in more detail Clarke’s comment on Isaiah 7:1-16 later in Chapter XII of this study but here reference is made to this because the Cross marks one of the mightiest transitions of our Bible and this is signified in the Tenth Chapter of the Revelation. Jesus is seen here as a MIGHTY ANGEL coming down out of heaven at the Cross to finish and complete the drama of the ages. He is clothed with divine majesty (a cloud) and with the rainbow which is a token of God’s faithfulness to all His promises given before the Cross. In his trials and sufferings his face will be “so intensely glorious” that it cannot be gazed upon by earthly men. No intimation of God’s divine justice or even God’s bringing a Messiah into the world out of that tragic event would penetrate the heart or mind of any man, even the most astute of all his disciples. Jesus’ feet in his crucifixion would be as pillars of fire symbolizing his determination to die for the sins of the world and the “rapidity and energy” with which he would bring to a swift conclusion his Father’s dealings with the Jews and all mankind. The “little book” which he holds in his right hand is the summation of all things spiritual accomplished by the one event of his Cross. He has his feet upon sea and land which means he has command of both feet under which all things shall be placed both in heaven and on earth by Jehovah who will raise His son from the dead and will give him all authority in heaven and in earth. With a great voice as of seven thunders Jesus will arise from the dead to claim this age-lasting and world-wide authority and charge his apostles with his own authoritative commission for the redemption of all the world.⁵

God and the son’s patience with the Jews is now at an end and by his cross which will lift him up and sustain Christ’s right arm he will declare “There shall be delay no longer.” According to the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of his Father Jesus by his cross will accomplish the work his Father gave him to do and he will now finish and cut short all things prophesied concerning him and this event.⁶ The things which the angel showed John and the other apostles concerning the meaning of the death, burial, and resurrection must be “sealed up and written not” until Pentecost (Acts 2:1-39) at which time the Spirit of Christ would come to guide them as competent witnesses into all truth. At that time he

4. Clarke, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 592, comment on Rev. 6:1.

5. Rev. 10:1-6; Matt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lu. 24:44-51; Eph. 1:18-23.

6. Isa. 63:3-6; 10:23; Acts 2:22-24; Jno. 17:4.

as well as they “must prophecy again (teach as they did before the Cross),” and as Jews such preaching would be “sweet in their mouth but bitter in their belly (their fleshly kinship).”⁷ But as a reflection of all Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross might imply, a “strong angel (two angels) came down from heaven to roll away the stone from his sepulchre and declared while the earth trembled, “Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay.”⁸

Luke tells us that Jesus after his resurrection showed himself alive unto his apostles by many proofs and spoke to them “the things concerning the kingdom of God” which he was about to establish in Jerusalem. So, when the Eleventh chapter of the Revelation opens the apostles have been given a definite “reed” in contrast by which they as well as John can, “Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” Any of the apostles may be used to personify the others inasmuch as all shall speak the same things and be thoroughly bonded together in the same mind and same judgments under the guidance of the one Spirit. This is seen in Peter’s standing up *with the eleven* on the day of Pentecost to be spokesman but the multitude of hearers heard the twelve apostles speak as one man. Paul also uses himself when he was Saul of Tarsus to personify the dual religious natures of all the Jews striving to keep the formalisms under the law of Moses.⁹ There is no need to measure by spiritual standards the Court of the Gentiles as it has already been devoted to idolatry by the Roman standards of Pilate’s army. It will remain for Peter to go to the Gentiles later.¹⁰ But the Court of the Gentiles as well as the holy city has been reserved for the forty and two months immediately preceding the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A. D.) when the Romans under Titus will trod it under foot. At that time, God’s two witnesses will be as humble as they can be, clothed in sack cloth and mourning for Israel and Jerusalem who rejected the Gospel. At that time the beast will have driven the apostles and all christians out of Jerusalem, for they will have “finished their testimony,” and symbolically the prophets and the apostles (God’s two witnesses) will lie dead in the street of Jerusalem (Sodom and Egypt) where also their Lord was crucified.”

7. Rev. 10:4, 11; Jno. 16:7-13.

8. Rev. 10:1-2; Matt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:3-8; Lu. 24:4-9; Jno. 20:11-14.

9. Rev. 11:1-2; Acts 1:1-5; 2:11-14; Rom. 7:7-25; 8:1-5.

10. Acts 10:1 to 11:11.

11. Rev. 11:7-8.

In chapter 5:2 a "strong angel" (the Holy Spirit) has asked, "Who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof?" In chapter 10:1 we have noticed that Jesus is the "other strong angel" who has opened the sealed book. Now we notice that when "the seventh angel" is ABOUT to sound, Jesus finishes by his death and resurrection "the mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets." Specifically there who are the "two witnesses" that were bidden to "Come hither." And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them." We affirm that any event which affects the Christ will likewise change the Spirit's course of action. In the death of Christ the Spirit's work will not be altered except for the single purpose for which God employs him to raise His son from the dead. Now both are seen to ascend into heaven in a cloud. But when the Spirit returns to Christ's apostles on the day of Pentecost, by transposition the apostles become the Christ and our Lord remains in heaven. Previous to Christ birth, the prophets occupied the position which the apostles now fill and there is no contradiction in what the angel showed Zechariah, "Then answered I, and said unto him, 'What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?' Then said he, 'These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.'"¹² Who besides the Holy Spirit and the prophets or the Holy Spirit and the apostles could STAND BY the Lord of the whole earth?

Now these witnesses are portrayed as being dead and lying latent in Jerusalem between the Cross and the Crown. No Judgments are uttered by any messengers in these fifty days which are signified by the "three days and a half" Christ's body lay in the tomb. The merry-making by the Jews took place during this time for they believed they had put their tormentors at rest when they crucified the Lord. By transposition, too, the Dragon (Satan) or Abaddon now has become "the beast that cometh up out of the abyss to make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them." Who could this beast represent but the rulers of the Jews and Pilate.¹³ Such are the enemies who beheld the witnesses ascend in the cloud by which also they shall return from heaven to judge the world. However, during the days of silence, a great earthquake will cause Jerusalem to tremble and this can be seen in Matthew's statement, "And behold, the veil of the temple (it is being mea-

12. Rom. 8:11; Acts 1:9-11; Jno. 14:28; 16:10; I Pet. 1:11.
13. Rev. 11:3-12; Matt. 27:57-58.

sured) was rent in two from the top to the bottom: and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints (Jews) that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs AFTER his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many."¹⁴ If this would not cause great fear to fall upon the enemies of the witnesses who had now actually revived no miracle occurring within the knowledge of man could pierce the consciences of men and women depraved by sin. The earthquake killed seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. The SECOND WOE is past: behold, the third WOE cometh quickly.¹⁵ The finished MYSTERY of God will now be explained in full detail by the apostles. When the Seventh Angel sounds his trumpet-challenge to the Jews, the Holy Spirit descends upon the waiting apostles in the city of Jerusalem. This event marks the beginning of the Third Woe which will end in the destruction of Jerusalem and the desolation of all Palestine by the Roman Army, 70 A. D. It is one of the great events of our Bible and is heralded by "GREAT VOICES" in heaven, which say, "THE KINGDOM OF THE WORLD IS BECOME THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD, AND OF HIS CHRIST: AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER." The student should mark closely the transition as each step is described in Acts 1 and 2.¹⁶

Jerusalem and its Sanctuary of this world and its worshippers have now been measured by a "reed" which will become the canon of our New Covenant. All will be found grossly wanting. Our Lord has now ascended and has become our High Priest and King after the order of Melchizedek or the order of an endless life. According to Acts 2, he will erect his Temple, the church, with a new Sanctuary not made by hands and within it will be seen "the ark of his covenant" containing God's presence and that of his Spirit and his own endless life. And, since the priesthood hath now been changed, there is made also of necessity a change of law. Notice the changes referred in Daniel 9:24-27 outlined in this book, pp. 11 to 13. Now is fulfilled also the vision of the "stone cut out without hands, which smote the image (of Nebuchadnezzar's dream) upon its feet" and broke the image in pieces together which became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, carried away by the wind.¹⁶ The Portrait of the crucified One hangs in broad display in

14. Acts 1:9-11; 17:31; Rev. 1:7; Matt. 27:51-53; Rev. 11:13-14.

15. Rev. 11:14-19; Acts 2:1-4; 29-36.

16. Acts 13:32-41; Heb. 6:20; 7:4-28; Zech. 6:12-13; Jer. 3:14-18; Dan. 2:34-35.

the entrance of Christ's Temple and the four and twenty elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fall upon their faces and worship God, saying.

"We give thee thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who art and who wast: because thou hast taken thy great power, and didst reign. And the nations were wroth, and thy wrath came, and the time of the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to them that fear thy name, the small and the great; and to destroy them that destroy the earth."

"To be judged" simply means that under this third Woe God would *avenge* upon the Jews the blood of all his prophets" from the blood of Abel the righteous unto the blood of Zachariah son of Barachiah."¹⁷ "Of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the (New) covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace (the Gospel)?"¹⁸

The lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail which accompanied the opening of the temple of God on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection signify the removing of a former religious order out of spiritual existence and the bringing in of a new order under Christ. We are now prepared mentally for the introduction of the church or the kingdom of Christ into the world. So the curtain rises on "a great sign in heaven." It is a "woman arrayed with the sun, and the moon (a reflected lesser light) under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she crieth out, travailing in birth, and in pain to be delivered."¹⁹ See pages 23 and 24 of this book. The time of this event is A. D. 33. A man child is being born or in other words the inspired apostles (Acts 2) are now ready to proclaim the New Covenant and by so doing preach to the world for the first time, Christ crucified, Christ buried, Christ raised from the dead, being its first-born, Christ ascended and Crowned king and High Priest. They are the stars in this woman's crown for they are the first in preeminence under Christ to be set in the church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The "moon" which is Moses' law

17. Rev. 11:16-19; 10:1-3; 1:10-20; I Cor. 1:23; Matt. 23:23-28.

18. Heb. 10:29-31.

19. Rev. 12:1-5; Acts 2.

with its prophets will support with their testimony the preaching of the apostles of Christ and all their evangelists, elders, deacons, and saints who pray, work and teach in the name of their Leader and Commander.

The apostles have been prohibited before Pentecost to teach or preach in his name that he was the Christ but now that "sealing of their lips" has been removed (Matt. 16:20; Rev. 10:11). The student should read and study carefully Gal. 4:21-31; Rom. 9:6-12. Now, as the Angel required Hagar and her son Ishmael to return to Sarah and Abraham, even so must the Jews under the New Covenant bring themselves into its subserviency, for "In Isaac (the miraculous son) must Abraham's true seed be called."²⁰ In their proclamation of the Gospel the apostles will clothe Christ's bride with the splendor and effulgence of heavenly light and regal glory. However, from Pentecost until Jerusalem is destroyed (70 A. D.), the apostles and saints of this period will be persecuted by Abraham's fleshly seed as Ishmael, the seed of the bondservant, persecuted Isaac when he was weaned. The enormity and intensity of this persecution will be seen in the events and symbols of the succeeding chapters of the Revelation. It is faintly seen in Genesis when God tells the Dragon (Satan) that He would put ENMITY between Eve's seed and his, but God assures us that Eve and Abraham's seed would "possess the gate of His enemies."²¹ Hence, we see in Revelation 12 the Dragon poised once more in readiness to devour the woman's child as soon as it is born. It is a spiritual picture of Herod trying to kill Jesus when he was born physically by Mary. The Herods are the beasts that serve the Dragon. Their attempt to destroy the New Covenant and the church will be foiled and the woman arrayed with the sun and her seed will triumph.²²

With the ascension of Christ a terrific battle took place in heaven between the Dragon and his angels and Michael and his angels. The results were that Satan was defeated and there was found no place any more in heaven for him and his host. He and his angels were cast down to the earth and now they go about as a "roaring lion, seeking whom they may devour". This "casting down of Satan" and his host was predicted by Jesus in connection with his death on the Cross but it is further amplified in Paul's statement that when Jesus ascended he "led captivity captive, and gave

20. Rev. 12:5; Acts 2; I Cor. 15:1-4; Acts 3:19-26.

21. Gal. 3:15-16; Gen. 3:15; Lu. 3:38; Gen. 21:8-10; 16:1-9; 22:12-17; Gal. 4:21-31.

22. Rev. 12:3-4; Matt. 2:13-15.

gifts unto men.”²³ We know that our interpretation of Revelation 12:1-10 is the correct one now for after Satan is “cast down” we hear a GREAT VOICE in heaven saying,

“Now is come THE SALVATION, AND THE POWER (THE GOSPEL), AND THE KINGDOM OF OUR GOD, AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS CHRIST, etc.”

It will be recalled that after Jesus arose from the dead he claimed “all authority in heaven and on earth.” This authority would be exerted by his inspired apostles in making disciples of all nations of the earth and is found only in the Gospel and in the behavior-patterns of the first-century apostles, saints and churches.²⁴ Since then it is not a question of “what church shall I join,” but it is the serious issue of whose law am I following or whose behavior for worship am I abiding by. Satan’s power to deceive and to accuse under the law of Moses was little restricted, for then God’s people lived under an imperfect law and a veiled system of worship having carnal priests and ordinances, animal sacrifices and a sanctuary of this world; but now under the apostles all is made plain and all must worship God in spirit and in truth. All are now without excuse.²⁵ The church is clothed with the fullness of the light of God and to walk in darkness, lie, and DO NOT THE TRUTH is to most unquestionably disfellowship one’s self and deny himself all cleansing by Christ’s blood.²⁶

Soon after Pentecost, the “moon-gazers” of Jerusalem will drive the seed of the woman out of that city and we shall see the bearers of her sunlight going into Samaria and to the Gentiles (considered a wilderness by the Jews) to preach and teach Jesus there. “The rest of her seed” (Rev. 12:17) refers to the apostles who remain in Jerusalem upon the scattering of the church by Jewish persecutions. It is said of them, “They keep the commandments of God, and HOLD the testimony of Jesus.” Then Herod, who now rules over a dominion of Palestine as expansive as that of Herod the great, his grandfather, stretched forth his hand to slay the apostles, which pleased the Jews, and he beheaded James and imprisoned Peter with the intention of putting him to death, but Jehovah intervened and an angel of the Lord smote him.²⁷ The Dragon takes his stand “upon

23. Rev. 12:6-17; Jno. 12:29-34; I Pet. 5:8-9.

24. Matt. 28-19; Rev. 12:10-11.

25. II Cor. 3:4-18; 4:3-4; Jno. 4:20-24; Acts 2:41-47; 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2.

26. I Jno. 1:1-7; 4:1-6; II Jno. 9.

27. Acts 8:1-8; Acts 10; 13:44-48; Rev. 12-17; Acts 12:1-24; Notice verse 11.

the sand of the sea,” a very insecure footing for him. Rome, the Imperial City, is now ruled by the weakest emperors she has ever known and is torn by internal strife and confusion. This is reflected in their government of Palestine as well as in all their dominion. We now pass to a consideration of the events in Palestine and its desolation.