

LECTURE XXXVIII

*Harmony of the Revelation.
or its Events in their Chronological Order;
in Sections*

1. As Jesus Christ is the *life* and *soul*, of the Apocalypse and of the Bible, it might be expected that one of the two divisions of this book would commence with the birth of his human nature. And we find that the second division does thus commence, including also the spiritual birth of his chosen seed. This we have in the "*Wonder*" in the visible heaven--a woman clothed with the sun (12:1).
2. The devil presents himself in terrific form and attitude to destroy Christ and his cause. This he attempted to do by Herod, by the infidel Jews, by pagan Rome, and others (12:3,4).
3. The Saviour was born and was safe. And his spiritual seed are born in unbroken succession and are protected of God, as though taken up to his throne where the Saviour reigns in glory (12:5).
4. The glorified Saviour, beholding the banishment of his apostle John in the isle of Patmos, visits him on the Lord's day and gives him his Revelation, related in chapter 1.
5. There he delivers seven epistles to him, one to each of the seven churches then in Asia Minor. These letters are not prophetic but simply admonitory (chapters 2 and 3).
6. Future scenes of providence were next to be unfolded for the benefit of the church on earth. In order to prepare the way, a view was given to John in figures of various characters and things that should appear in this book. The plot of this exhibition was laid in a world beyond an opening, seen in vision, in that vault of the sky which bounds our sight looking upward. A voice from this opening called John to ascend to it, and there he beheld what he relates in chapter 4.
7. He beheld a book of ancient form in the right hand of God the Father, and the book being sealed was thus unable to be read by any creature. Search was made for one able to open the book, but no creature in the universe was found. But one in God was found able, upon which a grand hallelujah was sung by the intelligent creation (chapter 5).
8. A series of judgments on the infidel Jews and pagan Romans was now to be predicted in six of the seven sealed leaves which composed the book in the right hand of God. The first six scenes extend from that time to the overturning of paganism in the empire in the fourth century. The Jews and Romans had put to death the Lord of glory, and these judgments of six of the seven seals should pursue them till the empire became Christian.

9. The first should be the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth with a notable propagation of the gospel. **Seal 1**, a white horse, etc. (6:1). Christ rides forth in majesty, conquering and to conquer.

10. The Jews who survived the destruction and were dispersed in the empire became numerous, and thereafter were enraged at the idolatry of the Romans in the reign of Trajan and Adrian, second century. They arose and slew nearly half a million of the people in the provinces. And they, in turn, had a larger number destroyed. **Seal 2**, a red horse, etc (6:3,4).

11. After a season, a tremendous famine swept over the empire in the time of the Antonines. **Seal 3**, a black horse, etc. (6:5,6).

12. After another respite, new civil wars arose, with pestilences and attacks of wild beasts (wolves, tigers, and lions making war upon man) in the reign of Caracalla. **Seal 4**, a pale horse, etc. (6:7,8).

13. Nine bloody persecutions of the Christians had taken place in the empire, and the tenth (and last under paganism) was pending, as well as the revolution from paganism. **Seal 5** denotes the souls of the martyrs under the altar crying for retribution, and God's answer to them (6:9-11).

14. A revolution took place in the Roman empire early in the fourth century--from paganism to Christianity--by the emperor Constantine. This is pictured, **Seal 6**, by an earthquake and others figures borrowed from the dissolution of the world. They are a type of that final dissolution as well as of the battle of the great day of God (6:12-17). Thus Jesus Christ, once their captive on the cross, conquered first the infidel Jews, then their masters, the Romans. Here was the deadly wound given to the imperial head of the beast (13:3).

15. A peace of fifteen years (and to some degree forty years) ensued in the empire, during which the Spirit of grace improved to seal multitudes for God. This is denoted by four angels holding the four winds, or causing the deferring of the northern invasions then pending, till this sealing was accomplished (chapter 7).

16. Although such judgments had been executed on pagan Rome and the empire was now become nominally Christian, yet the seas of blood there shed should bring down heavier judgments--and from enemies *without*, as the judgments of the six seals had been from enemies *within*. The pending judgments were prefigured by the blowing of trumpets by angels under **Seal 7**. This opens with a silence in heaven of half an hour, indicating high expectation, and the greatness and length of the next events. Seven angels, each with a trumpet, present themselves. But they stand inactive until an exhibition is made of the *fact* and the *power* of the intercession of Christ in heaven, and of the power of the prayers

of the saints (thus rendered acceptable) in judgments on the foe, further avenging the blood of the martyrs (8:1-6).

17. In **Trumpet 1** countless swarms of wild nations from the north pour in upon the northern provinces of the empire, with horrid devastations and revolutions,, signified by hail and fire (8:6,7). The name *Christian* will not secure those who are in reality impenitent, nor save the erring Christian from chastisement.

18. After a season, an army of Vandals from the north (who had planted themselves in Africa) took and plundered the city of Rome, noted as "the seat of empire and of gods." In **Trumpet 2** a burning mountain is cast into the sea (8:8,9). The place where Paul was beheaded and so many martyrs had bled for Christ, should now welter under the full weight of a burning mountain of wrath and other judgments.

19. After another respite, the blessings and lives of the people of the provinces were rendered *bitter* by an invasion from Germany, headed by Odoacer, and putting down Momylus their last emperor; also by a revival of the Arian heresy, which violently persecuted the church of Christ. This is denoted in **Trumpet 3**, the star wormwood falling on the rivers (8:10,11). God will make men know that it is an evil and bitter thing to contend with him. He has ways enough to do it.

20. The empire still enjoyed some degree of comfort, being under rulers and magistrates of their own ancient order and the city of Rome yet having some preeminence. But before long these were swept away in the fall of the empire. Belisarius, general of the eastern emperor, seized upon Rome. The city had been taken and retaken five times in twenty years, when it was reduced to a level with the other cities and the exarchate of Ravenna was set up. **Trumpet 4** symbolizes this in the darkening of the heavenly luminaries (8:12,13). The empire, long defiled with blood, should fall. Christ's crucifiers fell beneath his sword, the Jewish traitors first and then their masters, without whose aid the deed could not be done, as the Jews had not the power of life and death.

21. The horrid delusion of Mohammed next arose to execute wrath on apostates and Jews in eastern nations. This was the first woe, **Trumpet 5**, a falling star unlocking the bottomless pit and letting out a darkening vapor with locusts, that is, armies of Saracens (9:1-11).

22. At the same time (seventh century) arose the man of sin and the papal delusion, two grand pillars of the kingdom of Satan on earth, which gave a tremendous horror to the first period of woe. Popery was denoted by [1] leaving unmeasured the outer court of the temple (11:1-6), unmeasurable due to its abominations and the depression of the two witnesses; [2] by the war in heaven (12:7); [3] by the second beast and his making an image to the first (13:11-18); and [4] by the infamous harlot reigning over the kings of the earth (chapter 17). See also 2 Thess. 2, the man of sin.

23. The rise of the Turkish empire in the 14th century is next given, the great and last supporter of the system of Mohammed. This is **Trumpet 6**, or the second woe, depicted by loosing four angels bound in the Euphrates, thus removing the restraints from the four Turkish sultanies which had prevented their formation into an empire (9:13-21).

24. The seven last vials of wrath were to occupy the space between this and the Millennium--the seventh trumpet and seventh vial being the same, each closing its septenary [series of seven] found in its own division of the book. Providence clearly prepared the way that the 16th century should open with scenes of terror to the papal see, which scenes of terror were denoted by seven angels presenting themselves each with a *vial* or *cup* of wrath to be poured on the enemies of God (chapter 15 and 16:1).

25. Early in the 16th century Martin Luther was raised up to commence the Reformation (**Vial 1** on the earth, exhibiting a *sore*, or showing the whole [papacy] to be a system of filthy hypocrisy (16:2). This Reformation hurled the dragon from his papal heaven (12:8-12), and it was the appearing of the Lamb on Mount Zion (14:1-5). God then took papal Babylon in hand, to plunge her in a course of judgments from her zenith to her final ruin.

26. In providential aid of this mighty work of removing the mask from the papal harlot, a furious war broke out between Charles V, emperor of Germany, and Francis I, king of France, of which Italy was the seat; and it raged for half a century. This shielded the reformers from the thunders of popery (**Vial 2**, the sea turning to blood, 16:3).

27. After this war was closed and great pains were taken by the fatigued and exhausted powers to establish a permanent peace, the fires of a train of most senseless wars broke out among the papal nations, and continued to rage for most of the 17th century under one idle pretence or another. This was a most bloody dashing of the nations against each other. **Vial 3** envisions this in the rivers and fountains of water turning to blood in retribution for their slaying the people of God (16:4-7).

28. A most interesting event had occurred early in this century--the flight of the flower of the church from the persecutions and oppressions of old lands to the wilds of America. This flight was for the enjoyment of the rights of conscience and religion, but providentially to form a cradle for religious and civil rights for the renovation of the world, represented by the second flight of the woman to a wilderness for preservation until the Millennium (12:14).

29. The protestant kings of Europe gave full protection to their people from papal rage. Some of the papal kings in a measure did the same. Most of the papal revenues then dried up, and the Jesuits were banished from their realms (**Vial 4**, the sun scorches the pope and heirarchy as with fire (16:8,9). All this wonderfully hurried the papal see on toward utter destruction. This led them to blaspheme God, and a system of blasphemy was soon matured in deep caverns under the secret of free masonry, which led to a most bloody eruption.

30. The infidel revolution in France of 1789--the Voltaire and Weishaupt system of infidelity and disorganization under the name of Illuminism--having been matured in dark caverns, now burst forth and astonished the world. It had been planted in not less than twelve nations in Christendom, with a view to produce revolutions like that in France throughout the world. It occasioned a war in Europe of 25 years, and has been calculated to have destroyed not less than ten million of the human family. This is pictured in **Vial 5** in the throne of the papal beast and filling his kingdom with darkness. The pope was violently put down, and put on a pension for his mere sustenance, which after some time was to some degree restored by Bonaparte on principles of his own policy (16:10,11). Here was the descent of Christ with his seven thunders (chapter 12); his descent also in chapter 18; the floods from the mouth of the serpent in 12:15, the healed head of the old pagan beast (13:3-6), and the rise of the beast from the bottomless pit (17:7-11), an event well remembered by all people of much age of this generation.¹

31. Soon after the opening of these horrors, the second Pentecost, so called, occurred in London in 1795, in a commencement of the missionary events of this day--the flight of the angel in the midst of heaven (the church) to preach to all nations (16:6). See parent texts of this event: Matt. 24:14; Isa. 11:11,12; 18:3; 27:12,13; Dan. 12:4; Joel 2:1 and 3:1.

32. The noted expedition of Bonaparte into Russia utterly failed. The tides turned against him and his dynasty was crushed. Wars ceased for a time, Zion smiled with joy, and the cause of French intrigues for the speedy infidel revolution of the world stood aghast! Some conceived the Millennium had come, but two vials of wrath were then still future (12:16, the earth opening her mouth and swallowing up the floods). God will confound every enemy and pour upon his friends salvation.

33. In mercy to Zion, God next took the Turks in hand. The oppressed Greeks commenced the scene and made the bloody giants to tremble. The autocrat of the north followed up the charge, next the pacha of Egypt, and fires, earthquakes, plagues, and a volley of judgments reduced that bloody power to feebleness (16:12, the river Euphrates dried up).

34. The devil, in a rage at the swallowing up of his floods, commences a new war with "the remnant of the seed of the woman, who keep the command of God and have the testimony of Christ." This brings him peculiarly to the region to which the woman fled, which is now to be the seat of his war, by his three unclean spirits like frogs (12:13-17 and 16:13,14).

35. The next event predicted is the flight of a second angel through the midst of heaven loudly proclaiming that Babylon is fallen. General attention is here called to the divine warnings that are given of the fall of papal Babylon and of the great events attending and following it. It is calling the attention of the people to the signs of the times and the

¹ Ethan Smith wrote this book in 1837.

fulfilments of prophecy, a duty long and criminally neglected. God will awaken Zion to it (14:8).

36. Another angel soon after flies, calling on people to be separate from the abominations of the day. If not, they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God (14:9-11). This warning voice follows the other of course, in the duties of Zion.

37. This pungent denunciation awakens the rage of the infidel world. Some warnings there follow relative to "the patience of the saints," and that "blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from that time." The speedy coming of Christ on his white cloud, and with his sharp weapon of indignation, gives acuteness to the warning, as do the following upon the same period--the bitterness of the little book when eaten (10:9-11) and the slaying of the witnesses (11:7-10). For such scenes let Zion be prepared.

38. After a short time the slain witnesses revive and ascend up to heaven in the full sight of their astonished beholders and persecutors (11:11,12).

39. A new scene of judgment is thundered upon the enemy, prostrating a tenth part of their system with immense slaughter. This is a small earnest of their fatal ruin then at the door. This arms their consciences with thunderbolts and forces from them some acknowledgment of the Almighty Power, whose wrath they dread, while the devouring pit of full perdition now yawns in anticipation (11:13).

40. Christ now gives his last warning voice before he strikes (16:15), reminding of his predicted coming as a thief (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 2 Thess. 2; see also Isa. 26:20,21; Zeph. 2:3).

41. The three unclean spirits like frogs--spirits of devils--having gathered the antichristian world to Armageddon, the battle of the great day of God opens, and finishes the scene at once (11:14-19; 14:14-20; 16:16-21; 19:11-21).

42. Satan is now bound and confined to hell, and Christ's salvation fills the world (20:1-6; 11:15; 19:1-9; also Lecture 36).

43. At the close of the glories of the Millennium, Satan is again let loose to go out and deceive the nations. An apostasy over the whole world takes place. Gog and Magog move on the face of the earth in the last effort of Satan before the final judgment (20:7-8).

44. The day of judgment now opens upon the world, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. The ineffable throne of Christ for judgment is presented in all its glory. The dead are raised, the living changed, the final separation is made, all stand before Christ to receive their eternal destinations (20:11-15).

45. A figurative description of heaven is next presented, and such warnings from the

mouth of Christ as become the closing of the sacred book (chapters 21 and 22).

Of such amazing interest to man is the Revelation. It reflects the essence of the Bible as a perfect mirror. It gives a most striking view of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; of his government of the world; of his care of the church; his view and treatment of her enemies; his faithfulness to his friends; their safety; and of the danger of contending with him. For the benefit of his people, God here kindly foretells the events of the Christian era most interesting to his church, in order that they might be prepared to meet them and might have their faith, hope, confidence, zeal, and devotion enriched and perfected.

The direction, "Seal not the saying of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand," should be heard and obeyed. It means, "Say not the book is sealed and cannot be understood." This is an insult upon the Spirit of prophecy. Treat not the subject thus. Blessed are they that read and understand and obey. Warnings of God, thus kindly given to man, are needed. They are rich and should be well improved. Signs of the times should catch the eye and heart, and stimulate to caution and obedience. Neglect is impious, base ingratitude. And it is no less cruelty to man.

It is time to prepare for the scenes that are coming upon the earth. This will prepare for the great and final judgment, for which we should immediately and ever be prepared. Rewards of glory are the gift of grace, secured by faith alone, and procured only by Christ's righteousness. But they will be graduated by our Christian fruits. Christ will "give to every one *according* to his works."

Judgment and eternity will show that to have sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness was indeed the one thing needful. And this fact will forever brighten [become apparent] in the soul, whether in bliss or in woe. But then the day of probation will be past. "He that is holy, shall be holy still; and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still." Saints will rise and sinners will sink in the results of their choice in time, ages without end--the one passing from glory to glory, the other from one degree of horror and torment to another.

Now is your time, O saint, to brighten your crown. And now is your time, O sinner, to obtain that crown instead of plunging yourself into endless woe. Look, O mortals, on the heaven described in the close of the Apocalypse. Read and consider its bright glories, how far they are beyond all that is earthly. I grant that it may not be a literal delineation, but it is the best man is able to conceive. The reality will be far from falling short of it. O lose not such a world for one that is at best but vanity and vexation of spirit!

Lecture 38 will be found on pages 383-391 of Ethan Smith's *Key to the Revelation*, 2nd edition. Boston: Whipple & Damrell, 1837.