

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHECY

The Apostle Peter, in comparing the prophetic Word with his inspired eyewitness account of Christ's transfiguration spake thus:

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2Pet 1:19-21).

Prophecy then, is not something provided as a kind of ‘optional extra’ for the academics to debate and argue about. It is a ‘light’, designed to illuminate an otherwise dark and benighted age until the dawning of the new day of righteousness. And it is a light which we disregard at our peril, for without the light of Yahweh’s providing, we will most surely remain in the shadows, in a state of unenlightened dimness and obscurity.

And this light is not merely a glimmer, barely discernible to those who approach it with anything but the most detailed scrutiny. It does not emit an uncertain glow, so that the travellers along the path of life might not be certain as to the objects it illuminates – rather it is “a more sure word”. Prophecy then, is not something to be *unsure* about, despite the claims of some. As Divinely provided illumination, it shines brilliantly upon the face of world events, enabling the affairs of men to be seen as how they really stand in the Father’s estimation, and enabling those who “watch” to discern their position relative to their Master’s coming.

But there is another point about prophecy, which is so often overlooked. According to the Apostle, it contains things which we would “do well” to “take heed”. Conversely, if we do not “take heed”, we do not “do well”! Therefore, as we endeavour to show in this booklet, the subject of prophecy is one which should be studied most earnestly by those who look for the great climax of human history when our Lord comes. We wish to be approved by him at that time, and we must therefore give our attention to doing the things which the Spirit informs us we would “do well” to do. But how can we ‘take heed’ to something we do not understand? We cannot. This then, is the real value of a correct understanding of the Prophetic Word – being a Divine light for the path which leads to the Kingdom, it gives encouragement to those who discern the hand of providence in human affairs and teaches principles for us to heed, that we might prepare for that great day.

And this “sure” word of prophecy is no mere tangled morass of confusing symbols of contradictory meaning. The prophetic word, as with all Scripture, has consistency, harmony and order. Whether we take the record of Creation, the Law given to Moses, or the Promises given to Abraham and David – all show the qualities of Divine intent and purpose. And Prophecy is no different, especially so when we consider the carefully ordered symbols of Revelation. In our understanding therefore, there should be no tangled inconsistencies, or dogmas which reflect the chaos and disorder of human theorising. Rather, there should be logic, consistency and illuminance. And only by allowing the Word of Truth to shine unhindered by the obscure clouds of Church philosophy can we truly have the ‘dark place’ of our wilderness journey so enlightened.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Lord Jesus himself has promised a blessing to those who “do well” in taking heed to the words of his prophecy, contained in the book of Revelation: “*Blessed* is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (*Rev 1:3*). These words then, raise this last message of Christ to his servants to an even higher level of importance – those who “*keep*” the principles contained therein will be “*blessed*,” the implication being that those who do not “*keep*” those things will not be blessed. But in order to “*keep*” these sayings, we firstly need to “*read*” and “*hear*,” for how can a man “*keep*” something concerning which he has no knowledge? We cannot obtain the blessing from Christ by neglecting his Book; only by searching it diligently, by reading it, by seeking to hear and heed it’s words of instruction and exhortation will we be viewed with such favour.

But it is also clear that in order to obtain the promised blessing, we need to have correct understanding of Revelation. A person may “*read*,” yet they if they cannot understand what is written, they cannot truly “*hear*” in the Scriptural sense, being in a no better position than those who could not receive Christ’s parables, of whom he spake: “*hearing they hear not, neither do they understand*” (*Mat 13:14*). To “*hear*” then, is not a matter of giving ear to the many theories of men which abound, and which only serve to confuse the mind to Divine things – it is to *listen intelligently with comprehension*. It is to hear, and understand the things of The Word. That is the kind of hearing needed for the faithful to “*keep*” the sayings of Christ in the Book of Revelation, a clear understanding of at least the basics of what is written for our learning.

But in addition to promised *blessings* for those who hear the words of Christ, there are also promised *cursings* to those who would change his word: “*If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book*” (*Rev 22:18-19*). To add to, or detract from the message of the book of Revelation then, is a grave matter. Those who would remove vital elements of its warnings and instruction, by obscuring it’s teachings with the delusions of Catholicism, and those who would add their own notions by distorting it’s truths in erroneous exposition, are in very real danger of bringing the curses of the book upon themselves. As Bro Roberts wrote:

“the Spirit pronounces a blessing on those who understand it (*1:3*), from which it follows that a wrong apprehension of its import deprives the wrong apprehender of its blessing. Jesus pronounces a curse on those who take away from its words (*22:19*), and no one takes away from its words more effectually than the man who misrepresents its meaning” (*The Christadelphian, August 1872*).

So likewise, we must not detract from the Word by removing this book out of our arena of study. The great importance of the Book of Revelation is reflected in the gravity of what it promises to those who approach it, and whether we be partakers of blessings or cursings depends on ourselves, and the manner of our approach. We must then, read,

understand, and keep this last message of Christ that we might be given it's blessings.

THE BACKGROUND OF DANIEL

The standard Christadelphian (and Scriptural) understanding of the Book of Revelation is known as the *Continuous Historic* interpretation, because it is based on the principle that prophecy provides a *continuous* record of *history* in advance. The precedent for taking this approach is found in the prophecies of Daniel, from which much of the symbolism of the book of Revelation is derived. Nebuchadnezzar's Image is perhaps the simplest of all symbolic prophecies in Scripture, and it also provides a framework for understanding other, more complex prophecies. Here, the Spirit gives an outline of history in advance, speaking of the Babylonian king as the Head of Gold, followed by the Medo-Persian empire as represented by the breast and arms of silver, the "brassen-coated Greeks" being depicted as the "belly and thighs of brass", and the Western and Eastern parts of the Roman Empire being symbolised in the legs of Iron. Finally, the image depicts the fragmentation of the Roman Empire into the fragmented state that we have today in Europe, a fragile alliance of Iron and Clay feet, a situation which will prevail until the time of our Lord's coming.

So much is readily understood amongst us. But notice these features:

1. It is totally *continuous*. That is to say, there are no gaps in the Image; it gives a continual outline of world events from the time of Babylon to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.
2. It is mostly History!

We might say therefore, that Nebuchadnezzar's Image is a *Continuous-Historic* prophecy; detailing history in advance – with no gaps. There are those who criticise the usual Christadelphian understanding of Revelation on the grounds that it allegedly relies too much upon History to expound the fulfilment. But the Image sets a precedent for looking to the past - as most of the prophecy has been fulfilled we need to look to History to find empires which match the Belly and Thighs of Brass, and the Legs of Iron etc. Only by looking at History with the light of Bible Prophecy, do we become enlightened as to which predictions have been fulfilled, and how.

FOUR BEASTS

In the vision described in Daniel chapter 7, the metal-kingdoms of the Image are depicted in animal form; the Lion, Bear and Leopard corresponding to the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek empires respectively. But of particular interest to us in our reflections of the Book of Revelation, is the Fourth, *unnamed* beast. This corresponds to the fourth Iron section of the Image (notice it's teeth of *iron* – verse 7), and therefore speaks of the Roman system which, as the iron in the feet of Iron and clay indicates, continues until the time of Christ's return, and the establishment of his Kingdom. This is an important key point to notice; from the time of the rise of the Roman Empire, this Fourth beast exists – albeit going through many forms and phases – until the time of it's

destruction at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ: “I beheld, till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (*Dan 7:11*).

Moreover, as well as being a great political empire, this bestial system was the source of a great *persecuting power*. It’s development is depicted in terms of the Romanic Beast growing a new horn, amongst its 10 existing ones: “I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things” (*Dan 7:8*). Also, we further read that Daniel “beheld, and the same horn *made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgement was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom*” (*Dan 7:22*).

We find then, that out of the Roman political animal was to emerge a horn of power, which would successfully war with the Saints, or Holy Ones of Yahweh until the time of it’s destruction and their deliverance at the hands of the Ancient of Days. And the features of this power – an extension, or horn derived from the Roman Empire – leave us in no doubt that it symbolises the Roman Catholic system.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

Firstly, what made it remarkable by comparison with the other 10 horns, was that it had a *mouth*, and *eyes*. It had “a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows” (*7:20*). It’s *look* being more ‘stout’ (or *chief* as the word can be rendered), than it’s fellows, it was a *Chief Overseer*, or *bishop* (the word for ‘bishop’ meaning ‘overseer’). The “great things” which it spake, we are further told, it spake “against the Most High”, being expressive of it’s swelling doctrines and teachings which are exalted against the revealed Truths of the Most High God. And as memorialised in the “triple tiara” worn even today by the “Holy See” as the mouthpiece of the Roman Beast, this horn had plucked up 3 of the other horns, speaking of the subjugation of 3 of the barbarian tribes which invaded the Roman Empire.

This persecutory protrusion of the Roman political Beast then, can only be identified in History with the Papal system, whose terrible persecution of the saints is renowned, even within the world of darkness. The blood of the saints – our brethren and sisters – cries out from the pages of history, of the atrocities yet to be avenged when our Lord comes. Truly there will be rejoicing in that day (*Rev 18:20*), when the untameable, savage Roman beast shall be destroyed, and it’s body given to the burning flame (*Dan 7:11*).

THE SAME BEAST IN REVELATION

It is well recognised that the symbology of Daniel’s 10 horned Fourth Beast really forms the background to the Book of Revelation. Daniel was shown how that this power would undergo certain changes, throughout the duration of it’s existence, indicated by it’s horns, and most particularly the self-exalting “little horn” which we have just been considering. But the Book of Revelation elaborates on this, and using a similar beast-symbology, describes the developing phases of that political creature in more detail. We saw earlier that Daniel’s Fourth Beast is given no name; that is, no animal from Creation was used to de-

portray the Roman Power. And one reason for this, is that the changes the Roman power was to undergo were so great, that they just could not all be adequately depicted by a single animal. Accordingly, the Book of Revelation, in speaking of that same beast in greater detail, uses the attributes of several different beasts. It describes a great red *dragon*, or *crocodile* (12:3), a *beast of the sea* (13:3), a *beast of the earth* (13:15), and a *scarlet coloured beast*, being ridden by a prostitute (17:3). And despite the varying forms each beast takes, all have a single common feature which identifies them all as being but different aspects of Daniel's Fourth Beast. That is, they are all *persecuting powers* (cp 12:13, 13:7, 13:15, 17:6). And all except one bare the characteristic features of 10 horns (12:13, 13:3, 17:3, that one exception, the *Beast of the Earth*, instead possessing 2 horns to reflect the dual Secular and Ecclesiastical aspect of the Holy Roman Empire). They all therefore, are but elaborations of the Roman Beast as beheld by Daniel, one power being depicted by various creatures to reflect the great changes and developments that power was to undergo.

This identification of the Beasts of the Book of Revelation with the Roman system is Scripturally indisputable against the background of Daniel's prophecy, and also in the characteristics revealed of those beasts themselves (for more details of how this is so, we recommend any of the works listed at the back of this booklet). But returning to Daniel's vision, note the duration of time that the Papal system would prevail against the Saints – right up to the time of its destruction: “the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them *until* the Ancient of days came . . .”. In our day, before the coming of Christ, we would do well to ask how that Papal system – the Roman beast – is prevailing against the body of Christ. Not by open persecution, for those days are past. Rather, by more peaceable means; having failed to destroy the Holy Ones of Yahweh through persecution, the great system of False worship and blasphemy against the Most High has employed other, more effective means – through peaceful subversive teachings.

THE CATHOLIC ANSWER TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The English priest, E B Elliott, wrote, “The Futurist scheme was first, or nearly first, propounded about 1590 by the Jesuit Ribera, as *the fittest one whereby to turn aside the Protestant application of the Apocalyptic prophecy from the Church of Rome.*” Again, Professor TR Birks wrote of the consequence of Futurism: “The strongest bulwark against the revived zeal against the Romish Church will have been taken away when it is most needed; and the danger of a renewed apostasy will have been fearfully increased . . . the light which the Word of God has thrown on half the whole period of the Church's history, will have been quenched in darkness.” (*First Elements of Sacred Prophecy*”, 1843).

Historically, back in the ages when people were beginning to read the Bible for themselves, the Protestant movement that rejected much Papal dogma in favour of a smattering of Bible Truth, quickly identified the Papal system with the great system of blasphemy being depicted in the beasts of the Book of Revelation. This being the case, and being no longer able to suppress the availability of Scripture, there was a pressing need for the Church to produce an *alternative* explanation of those symbols of Scripture, to divert attention away from themselves. Accordingly, two interpretations emerged – both

from the Catholic Church - the *Futurist*, and the *Preterist* positions. Futurism attempts to portray the prophecy as being all, or mostly in the future, whereas Preterism seeks to present it as being in the past, relating to the events of AD 70 and soon after. So it is, that by seeking to move the prophecy either backward, or forward in time, the Papists sought to remove any identification of themselves being spoken of there. However there is something they evidently did not recognise. By attempting to shift the time-period to which the prophecy relates, rather than to give an alternative contemporary interpretation, the Catholic System itself gave testimony to the fact that it could find *no* contemporary system which could be identified with the beasts of Revelation – except itself.

THE ORIGINATORS OF FUTURISM AND PRETERISM

Francisco Ribera, a Jesuit and Doctor of Theology penned his Futurist interpretation in 1585, in which he postulated that the majority of the Book of Revelation was to do with a period of 3 ½ literal years immediately before the Return of Christ. He was closely followed by Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, who also published a work between 1581 and 1593 following similar lines entitled *Polemic Lectures Concerning the Disputed Points of the Christian Belief Against the Heretics of This Time*. A little later, writing under the pen-name of Juan Josafa (Rabbi) Ben-Ezra to hide his Catholic identity (!), another Jesuit, Manuel De Lacunza published a book in London, Spain, Mexico and Paris between 1811 and 1826, again advancing the cause of Futurism. When we consider the various interpretations around us therefore, we must bear in mind this fact - that the whole concept of the Book of Revelation speaking of a 3 ½ year period in the future originates not from the Scripture studies of Christ's brethren, but from within the very system of harlotry which the prophecy itself warns us about – and with the specific aim of removing that warning from it's pages.

The alternative interpretation, the *Preterist* teaching also originated within the Catholic System. This was first advanced by a Spanish Jesuit by the name of Luis De Alcazar (1554-1613) in his 900 page long *Investigation of the Hidden Sense of the Apocalypse*, which claimed that the whole prophecy spoke of Pagan Rome, and the first 600 years of 'Christianity', falsely so-called. This lay the precedent for future *Preterist* expositors to present other alternatives based on events long before the development of the Papal system.

The outcome of this, was that in their endeavour to remove any possibility of the Catholic System being identified with the great and terrible prophecies of Scripture, that system was advocating 2 contradictory, and mutually exclusive interpretations! The immense differences in each mattered little – what was important was to answer the Reformist identification of the Papacy in Revelation, by providing seemingly plausible alternatives.

Over 100 years ago, the Protestant writer Joseph Tanner spoke of this situation:

“towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of her most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men's minds from perceiving the fulfilment

of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the Papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bring into prominence the *Preterist* method of interpretation, which we have already briefly noticed, and thus endeavouring to show that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Popes ever ruled in Rome, and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand, the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the Papal Power by bringing out the *Futurist* system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about AD 1580, may be regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times' (*J Tanner, Daniel and the Revelation, 1898*).

And the Church of Rome has had considerable success in that regard. Far from identifying the Papacy with the Scripture prophecies which speak of it, modern Protestants of our day, such as Hal Lindsey and John Hagee, fully embrace these Futurist ideas, and are themselves promoting them. This dramatic U-Turn on the part of that system which was once so antagonistic towards the Papal system is truly stunning, and is witness to the effectiveness of the Jesuits' attempt to silence its critics. As Joseph Tanner wrote in the same work "It is a matter for deep regret that those who hold and advocate the Futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are thus really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the Papacy from detection as the Antichrist. *It has been well said that 'Futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon Popery.'*"

But over the last forty years or so, we find that even some Christadelphians have been deceived by the Jesuit lie, by accepting and promulgating these same beliefs – which were originally designed to divert attention from the truth that the Church of Rome is condemned in the book of Revelation! And in teaching this Catholic doctrine – for that is what it is, both historically and literally – they are leading others astray. It is important for us to realise that the new ideas of prophecy currently being introduced to the brotherhood are not new at all; they have been around for many years, and originate from the Catholic Church. Remember, it does matter that we have a correct understanding of the prophecy – it is Christ's last message to us. In it, the Lord himself tells us that in order to obtain eternal life, the believer must "overcome" (*Rev 2:17, 21:7*). But overcome what?

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory **over the beast**, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God" (*Rev 15:2*). We cannot gain "the victory over the beast", if we do not know who or what "the beast" actually is!

Scripture warns us that the beast-horn power will prevail against the saints until the coming of the Ancient of days – it will prevail against us, unless we prevail against it. And this is what we find, as Catholic dogmas become more and more readily accepted amongst our community, blinding many to the real identity of the Catholic Harlot, and how the Papal system really stands in relation to the Most High. John described the vision of the Age to come which was revealed to him: "I saw thrones, and they sat on them ... *which had not worshipped the beast* ... and they lived and reigned with Christ

THE FICTITIOUS ANTI-CHRIST OF FUTURISM	THE TRUE ANTICHRIST (CHRISTADELPHIAN/BIBLE TEACHING)	EVIDENCE
Will be in the “Last Days” - 3 1/2 years only	Will be/is throughout history since Apostolic times	2Thess 2; Rev 1:3
Will probably be a Jew, or even a Christadelphian	Is Roman Catholicism	Rev 13:18; Rev 17:19
Reigns in Jerusalem	Son of God reigns in Jerusalem	Is 2; Luke 1:32-35
Uses Satanic power and deceives all by ‘wonders’	Divine Power manifested through Jesus Anointed	Is 11:4; Ps 2:2
Claims to be Messiah	The Lord Jesus Christ is the Messiah	Rom 11:26
Makes a Covenant with Israel	Jesus makes a New Covenant with Israel	Hos 2:35; 3:5; Rom 11:27
Majority worship The Beast	Jesus destroys false worship	Zech 13:1&2
Builds a literal temple in Jerusalem	Greater Son of David builds Temple	Ezek 40-48; Zech 6:12 & 13
Wants to conquer the nations	Jerusalem – World Capital of Christ’s Kingdom	Is 2:3; Mic 4:2
Is destroyed by Christ	Jesus destroys Rome’s False Prophet and Political power	Rev 19:11-15

a thousand years” (*Rev 20:4*). The Redeemed comprise those who are *Separate* from that system accused by God, who do not worship, or give homage to it. How deeply disturbing it is then, to find brethren taking hold of the words and doctrines which emanate from the little horn’s mouth, and using them to lead members of Christ’s body away from a true understanding of what He has revealed.

Within Christadelphian circles, the Futurist doctrine varies slightly from author to author, but certain common points are usually found, and these are compared on the chart opposite, with the traditional Christadelphian/Biblical approach.. The main common points are that the Book of Revelation will not be fulfilled until “The Last Days” (a phrase not actually found in the book itself), and that is a literal period of 3 ½ years. That there will arise a man whom they call “the anti-Christ” who will become leader of the Jewish people, build a temple at Jerusalem, and set about obtaining world dominion. The exact identity of this person varies, some claiming him to be a Jew, others postulating he might even be a Christadelphian! Other frequent ideas found in these interpretations, is the identification of “the great city” of Revelation 17:18 with Jerusalem, and that there will be a final battle, during which this man “anti-Christ” will be destroyed, and replaced as Ruler in Jerusalem by the Lord Jesus Christ.

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK

Each of these notions however, contradict what the Bible itself teaches, although some, such as the last, also contain an element of truth. We have already shown how the prophecy of Daniel lays a strong foundation for a correct understanding of the Book of Revelation. And this is a consistent weakness which runs throughout all of the Futurist books which Catholic-influenced brethren have produced – they all fail to adequately explain, or even accommodate the obvious connection between Daniel and Revelation. To allow the Bible to truly speak for itself, is to recognise this Old Testament background, recognise that it is the same Beast being spoken of in Revelation, as in Daniel 7, and heed the warnings that Scripture gives us about it.

For many, the debates about which interpretation – if any – they should follow, appear confusing and perplexing. They may feel the book itself to be too hard for them to understand. That the symbols and signs used take too much hard study to unravel them – and if those for whom we have much respect argue amongst themselves about it – how can we hope to understand?

A “REVELATION”, NOT AN OBSCURATION

But let us not forget that to his servants, the book is intended as a *Revelation* from our Lord, not an obscuration. The word “revelation” itself is translated from the Greek *apokalupsis*, which signifies *an uncovering*. This in itself is truly revealing about the character of the book; rather than to obscure, or hide things from us, the purpose of it’s Symbols is quite the opposite – it is to *reveal* to the seeker certain things the Master would have them know. But why use symbols? Surely it would be easier to use plain speech? This, however, would remove an important function of the symbols. The book was not given to reveal all things to all men. Rather, it is “the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew *unto his servants* things which must shortly come to pass” (*Rev 1:1*). The book is written for the benefit of Christ’s servants alone, not for

the benighted clerics who speak against the Truth. That being so, the symbols have a dual function – to hide the meaning from those to whom the things are not given, yet to *reveal* certain happenings in world events to those with ears to hear. Similarly, the Master explained why he spake in parables: “because *it is given unto you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them it is not given* ... therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (*Mat 13:11-13*).

This in itself is further evidence that the clerics of Rome just can’t understand the book. They are not the servants of Jesus Christ, for they reject his word, and despise his true servants, having persecuted them down the ages. Therefore, they cannot perceive the things pertaining to the Revelation of Jesus Christ; they are instead blinded to them. Why then, should brethren heed their unenlightened postulations? Why give ear to the interpretations of that system which slaughtered the Saints of the Most High, and would yet still, if they had the power so to do? Yet this is what we find happening around us, as the infiltration of Jesuitical ideas into the brotherhood blinds the senses of those who should know better, luring them to adopt and teach a position on Prophecy that removes from the Spirit’s words the very warnings they were designed to give.

THE PROPHETIC TIME-PERIOD

The Apostle John was informed that the prophecy contained “things which must *shortly* come to pass” (*Rev 1:1*). This suggests that we need to begin with the time “shortly” after the prophecy was given in looking for the fulfilment. Again, this is reinforced by some of the details which were revealed, relating to the beasts which we have already briefly considered. Speaking of the “scarlet coloured beast” with 7 heads, ridden by “the mother of harlots”, the Spirit identifies the system represented by that beast, and what is represented by it’s heads: “here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are *seven mountains*, on which the woman sitteth. And there are *seven kings*: five are fallen, and one is; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (*Rev 17:9,10*). The heads then, speak of 2 things; they are representative upon 7 mountains upon which the Harlot’s seat is to be found; and also seven “kings”, or types of Kingship, (taking a “king” to be representative of a system rather than one man – like, for example, the “man of sin” (*2 Thes 2:3*) and “The False Prophet” (*Rev 16:13*), and even the woman in this chapter. None of these are single people, but *systems*).

From the background of Daniel, we have already established that the Beast is a Roman political animal. So how does the prophecy fit the circumstances of the Roman system? Rome itself is well-known to be founded upon 7 hills, or mountains. And of the 7 kingly heads? 5 of those heads had “fallen”, one was presently extant, and one was to come. John therefore, must have lived under the 6th head – the one which “is”. And history records how that there were 7 forms of Roman Government - and John lived under the 6th, the Imperial Head. So it is that the “fit” proves the validity of the interpretation, and also provides further confirmation that the Book of Revelation pertains to the period from John’s own day onward.

By contrast, one popular Futurist teaching is that the 7 mountains, or hills referred to, speak of 7 mountains upon which Jerusalem is allegedly built; and that therefore she is

the city being referred to (even though in scriptural terms Jerusalem is *surrounded* by mountains (*Ps 125:2*) not built upon them). But as we said earlier, this position does not explain the clear allusions between the Book of Revelation and Daniel's 4th beast – Jerusalem just does not fit those links. Further, Bro Roberts easily dismissed that notion, by pointing out that Revelation 18:20 speaks of the Apostles having been killed in that City. Not within Jerusalem – but certainly within the precincts of Rome, whose boundaries equalled those of the Empire.

FURTHER LINKS WITH ROME

The links with Rome are clear and unmistakable. The woman of chapter 17 has her description written in her forehead: “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (*Rev 17:6*). So, she is a harlot, or prostitute. Such an abominable woman in Scripture speaks of a virgin who has defiled herself; a corrupt religious system, not having kept herself pure and chaste to her husband to be, but having prostituted herself in his absence (*cp 2Cor 11:2, Rev 2:20*).

This false religious system is the *mother* of other such systems, and is found seated upon 7 mountains, according to the terms of the prophecy. What system other than Rome meets this description? The Council of Trent, meeting in 1563 proclaimed “The Roman Church is the *mother and mistress* of all churches” - which claim was only recently confirmed by the Vatican in it's *Declaration Dominus Iesus* issued on 5th September 2000, stating the Catholic Church to be “the mother” of all Christian denominations, and not a “sister”. Truly by her own admission, the Romish Church is not a “chaste virgin”, but a “mother and *mistress*”, the mother of harlots, whose seat of authority is located upon the 7 hills of Rome – the ancient home of the persecutory power of Daniel, drunk with the blood of our brethren and sisters. It's identification with the *Babylon* of old is certain (note the mouth of a *lion* (*13:2, Dan 7:4*). See also *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop), and the warnings of Scripture regarding it, are equally plain.

Scripture indicates that this latter-day Roman power, whilst being “drunk” with the blood of past persecutions, will also prevail against the saints until it's destruction at the hands of the Ancient of Days. And that is just what we find, as the mouth of the little horn power is today prevailing against the Brotherhood, with it's Futurist and Preterist teachings become more and more accepted amongst us, even being openly taught without hindrance by prominent brethren.

And we saw in the words of history, that the very purpose of those teachings, was specifically to remove the warning of Scripture against the Catholic system. And having no warning, many are caught unawares! In this regard also, the voice of the Papal horn prevails amongst some, as the enmity which once existed between the faithful virgin, and the harlot mother is rapidly disappearing. There are those who openly claim that Christadelphians should be part of the Papal led Ecumenical movement. Others promote the attendance of multi-denominational gatherings - a contemporary pseudo-Christadelphian magazine recently reported and approved such a visit. And the

Churches generally, rather than to be viewed as the harlot-daughters which the Book of Revelation shows them to be, are seen as other Christians who have chosen a “different spiritual pathway”. The inroads of Romish philosophy therefore appears to be shaking the faith of not a few, by inducing them to believe that the Papacy is not really as bad as the Lord Jesus makes out!

AN EXAMPLE OF SEPARATION

Having seen the Old Testament background of Daniel, we turn finally to the example of *separation* given there. Chapter 3 recounts how Nebuchadnezzar, king of the original “Babylon the Great” sought to bring all the peoples and nations of his realm together in a united form of worship – of his own devising. He gave the command for all to bow down and worship the image which he had set up, with the punishment of being burned alive (a method adopted later by the Papacy), for any who refused to obey. Here then, we see the prototype of the modern Ecumenical movement; all nations and peoples united in the worship of a single god. Notice however, Nebuchadnezzar did not call upon the people to forsake their own beliefs and idols - he did not directly challenge their religion in this way; rather he sought to make them worship at his Image *as well*. And how much like today that is! Mutual toleration for one another’s beliefs is one of the fundamental principles of Ecumenicalism; yet with the underlying aim of bringing all in subjection to the Pope as head.

3 men only refused to worship on that day; Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego. “These men have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (*Dan 3:12*), so the king was told. We know the story; those three men were miraculously delivered from the fiery furnace by Yahweh, the God of Israel. They rejected the call for unity in worship, because it involved compromising their worship of the Most High. But what of ourselves? Do we worship at the Papal Image? (*Rev 13:15*). The issues are not as clear cut in our day, because the sight of many has been obscured by the thick clouds of Futurism to the Bible’s warnings – yet they are just as real, even if the threat of being burned alive has passed. Those who join with all the other “kindreds, tongues, and nations”, in accepting Papal superstitions into their worship, are those “whose names are *not* written in the book of life” (*Rev 13:8*). But for the faithful minority, who “read”, “hear”, and “keep” the sayings of this book, a glorious blessing is promised. Blessings and cursings are placed before us, but which we shall we finally be given? The choice is ours, for the result is based on how we approach this last message of our Master.