

Notes on the Revelation

by John Nelson Darby

The Book of Revelation is a prophetic and apocalyptic book that describes the end times, the final judgment, and the establishment of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Scripture: Revelation 1:8, Revelation 4:2, Revelation 5:6, Revelation 6:11, Revelation 7:14, Revelation 11:15, Revelation 12:10, Revelation 17:5, Revelation 19:1-2, Revelation 20:10

Topics: "The Structure of Revelation", "Christ's Authority and Judgment"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses the structure of the Book of Revelation, dividing it into three main parts: the personal glory of Christ, His judgment of the seven churches, and events following the church's removal. He emphasizes the continuity of responsibility from the early church to the present, highlighting the significance of the throne in heaven and the roles of cherubim and seraphim in God's governance. Darby also explores the implications of the judgments and the nature of the everlasting gospel, asserting that the church's current state reflects a departure from its original calling. He concludes with a focus on the ultimate triumph of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom.

Transcript

If we look at the Book of the Revelation generally, we shall see its division into three parts:-

In the first part, we find not so much the divinity or the humanity of Christ, as His personal or official glory (chap. 1).

In the second part, we see Christ judging the seven churches (chaps. 2 and 3).

In the third part, we have that which takes place after the church has been removed (chaps. 4-22).

In the addresses to the seven churches, it is interesting to note that what is taken up by the Spirit of God is so presented that there should be nothing to check the expectation of the Lord's return at the time these letters were written, and still less so now.

And so elsewhere. When the Spirit of God speaks of the Bridegroom not tarrying, He takes the things then present, and uses them as existing on to the end. It is so in Matthew 25, where the same virgins go to sleep and awake; and in the parable of the talents, the lord, at his return, requires at the hands of the same servants that with which they had been entrusted at the first.

And thus it is in the seven churches. The evils seen therein at the end were there at the first.

Ques. Does that shew a cumulative responsibility?

I do not doubt it does. All the blood shed from Abel to Zecharias was to be required of that generation; Luke 11:51. And in Babylon was found the blood of all that had been slain upon the earth; Rev. 18:24.

After the seven churches, we find that which characterises the Book of the Revelation generally is the throne. In chapter 4:2, "A throne was set in heaven," and in chapter 1:4, it is grace from before His throne.

Ques. What is meant by "to come," in that verse?

It does not refer to futurity of time, but to the coming One. "Which is," i.e., exists; "which was," i.e., has been revealed in time; and "is to come," i.e., the coming One.

Ques. Why is the "garment down to the foot"?

That is, as not in service. You have here a transitional aspect of Christ; there is no crown upon His head.

127 In chapter 4, the throne is that of Daniel 7, but with 8 larger development. It is not simply for judgment or government, for we find seraphim as well as cherubim.

Ques. What is the special difference between the two?

A cherub is the instrument of God's judicial power upon earth; like the cherubim which stopped the way to the tree of life; Gen. 3. But in Isaiah 6, we find the seraphim, and there it is, not merely a throne governing in respect of responsibility but, God revealed in His own character; and so the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy, holy"; this was to bring man as man into God's presence, whether clean or unclean, and it goes right beyond Israelitish government. It was government, but as having respect to God's own nature in its holiness, and not merely to the particular revealed ways in which God dealt with Israel.

You do not find God saying to Israel, "I will punish you with the Assyrian"; but it was according to the terms in which He had made a covenant with them.

And it is so with us now. As life and incorruptibility are brought to light by the glad tidings, so God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

In the seraph, then, we have, not exactly the executioner of governmental power, but the nature of God coming out. All this is seen in the living creatures; they are cherubim, but with the attributes of God; the heads of creation are also seen in them (which is cherubic), man, lion, bullock, eagle, and they are here used as symbols of the throne of judgment.

Observe that, in this connection, we have nothing to do with the name of "Father"; the names used being those of the Old Testament; neither in Isaiah 6 is there anything to do with grace.

Cherubim are thus indicative of the government of God upon earth; seraphim, of His nature.

We find them both in Revelation 4, where the living creatures are of cherubic character, but crying, "Holy, holy, holy." Seraphim, means, "burners."

Ques. What is the character of the seven Spirits of God?

They indicate wisdom, power, etc., i.e., all that is necessary for this government.

Next, we find the heavenly saints sitting on thrones ("seats" should be "thrones"), round the throne; they are seen here as kings, and, in the next chapter, as priests.

128 Ques. Why are the cherubim said to be in the midst of the throne?

They are the pillars of the throne; in the Psalms we read, "He sitteth between the cherubim." These same creatures are found in Ezekiel, and God is sitting on the top of them.

It is very noticeable that the sculptures which have been brought to this country from Assyria largely represent these attributes of God, which have been worshipped there, but there is no God upon them.

Ques. Are the cherubim, the church?

They may, or they may not be.

In chapter 5, the beasts are identified with the church - saints, and the angels are viewed as a distinct, outside company.

The Lamb's taking the book marks the beginning of the coming age, though it is not actual as yet. Unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the habitable earth to come.

Up to this time it is in subjection to the angels, but here no longer so; and we pass from angelic authority into saint authority. There are no angels in chapter 4, but in chapter 5, beasts and elders, and angels, worship together.

Ques. Are, then, the beasts symbols?

Yes, they are true symbols; for if they were persons, there would then be but four.

People try to make pictures of such things; but suppose you have seven heads and ten horns, as in Daniel, how can you put them together? How can they fit?

Another thing that strikes me is, that you never get angels giving a reason for their worship, but the elders, i.e., saints, do say why they worship.

I regard the church as the instrument of the power which is symbolised by the beasts.

Ques. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" Does that come in here?

It will be part of it.

I do not take the Lamb in chapter 5:6, to be the Redeemer in character. He is the Redeemer, but this is not the feature of His humiliation that comes before us here. He is seen, not as Redeemer, but as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and as such, He opens the book.

Ques. What are the seven horns and the seven eyes?

129 The perfection of power and the perfection of intelligence.

Ques. What is the difference between these eyes, and the eyes of the beasts within, as in chapter 4?

It is quite distinct action; here, they are sent out into all the earth; but in the other, it is divine perception of every thing - the direct government of the earth, in contrast with the indirect government of God as now. In chapter 4:6, the thought of the eyes is that of all-seeing; but in chapter 5, it is governmental intelligence. "Without," i.e., as seeing events; "within," as seeing by divine intelligence.

"Eyes within" are a real thing now; the spiritual man judgeth all things; we now have the mind of Christ; and, as to range, we shall not have more in the millennium. The church depends now, in point of fact, upon her spirituality. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

There is a perpetual contradiction between my place before God, as in the new creation, and the circumstances of my body, which is still part of the groaning creation.

In chapter 4, it is the praises of creation, and in chapter 5, the praises of redemption.

Ques. In chapter 4, have we the resumption of God's action on the earth?

Not exactly; we see that the thrones are set in view of all that is going to follow. When you get God in heaven, you must have that which is according to God in heaven, and therefore the seraphim are brought in here. When, too, man fails in his place, God comes out according to what He is in Himself. Just as, in the first three gospels, we have the presentation of Christ to men in their responsibility and their rejection of Him; so, in the last gospel, there is the bringing in of God.

Ques. But is not the gospel of John limited to the Jews?

No; "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."

Ques. But has not such an interpretation been put on John's gospel?

Whenever you put an interpretation, you go wrong; there is a remark of one of the old fathers (so-called), to this effect, that "he reads Scripture well, who brings back a sense from it, and not one to it."

130 In chapter 6, the dealings of God, when the horses come out, are in view of the Lamb.

It is not God, but the kings who say, "the great day of his wrath is come"; this is not really the end, though it has been so taken.

In chapter 7 the church is no longer here; the closing verses do not refer to us, for it all takes place after the church is gone. It is a striking evidence as to the state of souls, that this description should be taken to be that of the highest kind of blessing, whereas, after all, it is blessing for those saints who will be found on the earth after the church has been removed. A frequent use of this passage is that which makes God a mere Comforter of man now, just relieving man where he is. Of course, it is blessed, because it is really consolation from God.

The presence of the temple shews it is not the church. Yet these saints will have the advantage over those who have their origin in the millennium, because they have had to go through the great tribulation in which they have learned most blessed experiences of God. At the present time, the church has dropped down to the condition of earth, so that Christians have assumed all this applies to them. It is not so, because it is written of those who have come out of the great tribulation.

Ques. If the church is already gone from the earth, where does this multitude come from?

Clearly from the peoples still living upon the earth.

Ques. What is the nature of the "everlasting gospel"?

It is an immediate warning of judgment, something like John the baptist's gospel.

Ques. Does the great multitude include the hundred and forty-four thousand?

No. This is not the time of Jacob's trouble of Jeremiah and Matthew 24, though contemporary with it. The great tribulation comes on all the earth, and is confined to the three and a half years.

It is my own conviction that in the Revelation only the last half of the seventieth week of Daniel is referred to.

Ques. What are the "white robes" of Revelation 6:11?

The sign, I suppose, of acceptance in righteousness. The sixth seal has the character of an answer to their prayer.

From Psalms 93-100 we can see the character of the everlasting gospel. Psalm 93 exhibits Jehovah reigning, and the throne established in holiness after all the raging of men.

131 Psalm 94 is a cry in distress for Jehovah's coming in vengeance, and for the power of wickedness to be set aside.

Psalm 95 is a last appeal to Israel to come to Jehovah as their God.

Psalm 96 is a testimony that goes out to the Gentiles because Jehovah is coming.

Psalm 97 is Jehovah actually coming in the full power of His reign.

Psalm 98, that He is come; and that He remembers His truth to Israel, and sets aside their enemies.

In Psalm 99 He is seen sitting between the cherubim in Jerusalem on earth.

Psalm 100 is the call to the Gentiles to come up and praise.

Ques. What is the silence spoken of in chapter 8:1?

That after the terrible shaking at the end of the sixth seal, there is no action in heaven's mind.

Thereupon, another angel - Christ - comes and stands at the altar, and gives efficacy (this is, I believe, the force of it) to the prayers of the saints. It struck me, the other day, that when we see the saints as priests, they do not pray at all. But here, when Christ is priest, He adds incense and gives efficacy to the saints' prayers. These latter are suffering saints on earth; chap. 8:4.

In the first four trumpets, we have judgments on the state and circumstances of people. God is here clearing the ground. Christ is not seen in action through these scenes, His proper judicial action not being manifested until chapter 19. The Lamb does not anything more here than to open the seals. This continues to chapter 11:17, and then, in verse 18, we are carried right over to the end of all.

In chapters 12-16 we have the opening out of fuller details, with chapters 17 and 18 added as an appendix to the two previous ones (chapters 15 and 16).

After which, Christ comes out, and the final scene is then displayed.

In the earlier trumpets we have, I believe, the judgments of the western nations; and in the fifth and sixth trumpets, that of the eastern nations. The seventh trumpet closes up everything. In the first four, the state of things is touched. Grass represents general prosperity. In chapters 9 and 10, people are attacked. The contents of the little book of chapter 10 are found in chapter 11.

132 Possession is about to be taken of everything, and the angel, therefore, declares there shall be no longer delay; chap. 10:6 (New Translation).

Then follows the last persecution of Jerusalem. The holy city is trodden under-foot forty-two months; whilst from chapter 13:5, we see that the beast continues for the same period. The forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, I take to represent the same space of time; if it were not so, the second verse should follow the third verse.

The only place where we have the whole week distinctly mentioned is in Daniel 9. He does not say how long after the sixty-two weeks, the cutting off of Messiah takes place. But to us, and to faith, Christ's ministry was the first half of the seventieth week; and that is just what unbelieving Jews do not own. Notice, too, that in Daniel 7:25, the times and laws are given, not, as some have said, into the hands of the saints, but into the beast's hands.

Ques. Do you think that the first book of the Psalms refers to the first half-week?

Yes, I do. Observe this, that when Christ came, the nation would not receive Him, though a remnant did; but when the false Christ comes, it will be the reverse of this, for then the nation will receive him, but the remnant will not.

There will be both worship and testimony during the forty-two months.

Ques. If the forty-two months and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days be the same period, why is it not forty-two months also in verse 3?

In verse 3, it is given in days to shew the constancy of the testimony, which is a daily one.

We must remember that all computation of time is Jewish, and not at all for the church; we belong to heaven, and we do not count time in heaven.

Ques. What about the children of the saints, after we have been caught up, if they have refused the truth?

In that case, they will be lost; but if they died now, it would be just the same thing.

The best thing for us is to have a heavenly portion and hope to draw our hearts out of the world; but so often it is by the candle of the Lord that we are driven out of it rather than by the drawing of the Daystar.

133 In chapter 11:19, God is giving a heavenly security to His covenant with Israel.

In chapter 12, the sun is the emblem of supreme authority. A circle is a divine thing; a cube is finite; you never get to the end of a circle, but you do to a cube every way.

To the woman a child is born. Then the devil, in the shape of the Roman empire, wants to devour the child, which is caught up to the throne of God, whilst the woman is left to persecution. This introduces the three and a half years. The devil is cast out of heaven at the beginning of the last half-week.

Ques. Is the woman Judah only?

She is Israel as well; for she has a crown of twelve stars. Chapter 13 gives us both the persecution and the instruments of it. We find there, also, a second beast, whom I believe to be the antichrist, because he has two horns and he speaks like a lamb. In chapter 12 the devil is anti-priest, accuser of the brethren, but here, he is seen as cast out of heaven, and consequently, no longer as anti-priest; so he takes the place of king and prophet; it is false, of course. The two horns indicate power, rule.

Chapter 14 gives the process of God's dealing at this time; first, the everlasting gospel is proclaimed, and then the Son of man comes and reaps the harvest.

In chapter 7, we find a mystic number of all who may be gathered from east, west, north, and south; but here, in chapter 14, it is those who have been specially faithful in time of trial. They learn the heavenly song, though they are not in heaven. It is then too late to be taken up to heaven, unless they are killed, and they therefore follow the Lamb upon earth. They are the first-fruits on earth, just as we are the first-fruits in heaven. Chapters 12-14 go together. In chapters 15 and 16, the vials of God's wrath are poured out

Chapter 15 begins before the end of chapter 14. 'Each angel,' implies that there is a distinct testimony borne. And notice that there are seven distinct testimonies found in chapter 14.

Babylon is the evil of corruption, but the beast is the evil of power. Each is a centre; only the corrupt system rides the beast, and is finally destroyed, not by the Lamb, but, providentially by God.

In chapter 17, we have the connection of the beast with Babylon; and in chapter 18, the judgment of Babylon. Observe, too, that though the beast was the killer of people, yet all the blood of prophets and saints was found in Babylon, just as of old all the blood shed from Abel onwards was found in Jerusalem.

134 Corrupt religionism is the most hateful thing of all to God.

In chapter 19, the marriage of the Lamb is come, followed by Christ coming out and destroying the beast. It is Christ's coming and taking power.

In chapter 20, Satan is bound; and then we have the millennium and the resurrection of the wicked dead.

The eighth verse of chapter 21 finishes, properly speaking, the prophecy. From verse 9, we have the description of the heavenly Jerusalem; and then, lastly, warnings.

And just as, at the beginning of the book, we have the relationship of the church with Christ, so again, after the book is ended, do we find the same thing.

Ques. Is there any connection between this Jerusalem and that mentioned in Hebrews 12?

There, we have Mount Zion, which is royal grace on earth in contrast with Sinai; the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly; the church of the first-born which are written in heaven, God the Judge of all, not in sovereign grace, but power in judging;

so, next, just men are brought in; then, the Mediator of the new covenant, which introduces earthly blessing; and, lastly, the blood of sprinkling.

Ques. But did not Abraham look for that city?

Yes; not that I believe he has it, but he looked for the blessing that accompanied that state of things.

Ephesians 5 settles for us who is the church, the bride, the Lamb's wife; and also what is the heavenly Jerusalem.

Further notes on the Revelation

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We find a very important characteristic in chapter 1:8, as well as in chapter 4:8, and that is, the name of "Lord God Almighty." These names give to us leading thoughts, which are very valuable guides in the understanding of the Scriptures. The "Father," that is to say, the relationship of Father, is not found at all in this book. It is prophecy, and this is not relationship, but a testimony to a people unfaithful in relationship, or who have not got it. It is not church-relationship, nor Son-relationship.

But we do get the Old Testament names of God, and these give us the character of the book, i.e., government, judgment. In chapter 4, it is a throne, not the Father's house. These names are:-

1. Almighty (Shaddai), with the patriarchs;
2. Jehovah, with Israel.
3. Most High, in the millennium.

But the name of "Father" is the name of God revealed in
grace to us Christians.

Ques. Was "Most High" not given to Abraham?

It was told to Abraham when he had overcome all his enemies; and God gave him then the blessing of the millennial day; Gen. 14:18 - 20.

We have a most beautiful dialogue in Psalm 91 founded on these three names.

The subject of the fourth book of Psalms is, the bringing in the First begotten into the world; and it gives a kind of title to the book, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High"; this raises the question as to who is the Most High, and the answer is, that whoever has found out the secret, that one "shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," i.e., of Abraham's God.

Then Messiah says, "I say of Jehovah, My refuge and my fortress; my God, I will confide in him." And the reply comes, in verses 3-8, "Surely he shall deliver thee," etc. In verses 9-13, it is the Jewish remnant that is speaking. Then, in verses 14-16, the voice of Jehovah is heard. But we do not find "Father" until Christ came and revealed the name of Father to us.

Ques. What is "Most High" in Deuteronomy 32?

136 It is the bringing in of the millennium. And so, too, after seven years of madness, Nebuchadnezzar owns the Most High

Ques. Is his being a beast symbolical, or not?

It is both. It happened to him as written, and Nitocris took care of everything for him. He says, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was walking in the midst of my palace," etc., and he who had been set up a golden head became really a beast until seven times passed over him. But it is also a symbol.

Ques. In Psalm 91:9, where the pronoun is changed, who is speaking?

The Jews or Jerusalem. In verse 3, it is the testimony of the Spirit in the same. This Psalm is, so to speak, a riddle propounded by the Holy Ghost: he who has the secret of the Most High, shall have all the promises and blessings of Abraham's God. This is the Psalm which the devil quotes to Christ, to shew that God would take care of Him. But what a key it gives to the devil's quotations!

Ques. In verse 2, is it Christ who is speaking?

Yes.

It is well to notice the difference between cherubim and seraphim, because here it is a judicial, governmental throne that will carry out God's purposes; but that which is seraphic is judgment according to the holiness of God's nature; at the end, there will be found both these things. There will be governmental judgment in putting an end to heathen power; and with this, positive judgment of evil: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," i.e., judgment according to God's holiness.

Ques. Does the seraphic character include government?

Well, yes, it will do so. But when they were carried away to Babylon, it was not seraphic judgment, because they were to be restored later on. In Isaiah 6, it is government: their cities wasted, and their land desolate, and so on. The whole relationship of Israel was broken; it was, therefore, condemnation as well as judicial government, though they were to be brought back. But when they rejected Christ, then it was all over with them.

Ques. How would you define "Providence"?

It is in God seeing and ordering everything, so that not a sparrow falls to the ground without Him.

Isaiah 6 is a testimony to judgment, but, of course, it had not been executed.

137 Ques. Was it then, final?

No; it was final only as under the old covenant; but sovereign grace will bring them in under a new covenant. Christ refers to this passage, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." It was, therefore, all over with them: "Ye see me no more"; they were entirely lost and cut off.

Ques. The old covenant was law mingled with mercy and long suffering?

Yes; though it was still law; and although mercy spared them, they were, governmentally, put back under law.

Ques. Do we find any seraphic work in Israel?

Not that I know of, it is cherubic there.

Ques. But are the cherubim connected with the live coal?

"Seraph" means a burner. It is the word for burn, and the only other thing called a seraph, is the fiery serpent. The point is, that they cry, "Holy, holy, holy"; in the Revelation, they have eyes within and eyes without. He takes a coal, because directly a person is upright in grace, it purifies. When Isaiah said, "I am a man of unclean lips," etc., then the seraph flew and laid the coal upon his mouth, and his iniquity was taken away. In Isaiah 6, we find the final thing, as well as judicial government; there is the actual closing of the relationship, but a remnant reserved.

Ques. What, then, is Matthew 25?

It is both seraphic and cherubic; that is to say, there is the burning judgment of God in that way; if there is good, it purges the dross away; but if there is not, it becomes final judgment.

"Every-one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." Salt is the power of grace separating from evil. The sacrifices were salted with salt; salt is that which purges entirely by separating from evil. Every sacrifice had it. It is called "the salt of the covenant of thy God," because it was the complete setting apart to God.

The judgment, then, was the entire setting aside of Israel as to the ground of their responsibility. It was final, in the sense that God had gone through everything with them.

Christ is really the root and offspring of David. Priesthood had failed in Eli; prophets had been rejected in Samuel; then comes David, who was prophet, priest, and king. But Solomon also fails, and so Babylon is brought in, and God's throne is taken from the earth. He then sends the true Son of David, who is rejected. That was final. Not that God cannot restore them in grace, for He will yet do this; but, as to responsibility, He cannot. He will restore them in sovereign grace under a new covenant.

138 In John 12, we read, "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled," etc. (vv. 38-41). There we find one of the proofs that Christ was Jehovah; for it says, "These things said Esaias; when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

And therein is shewn the Lord's patience; for the judgment pronounced in Isaiah, He never put into execution for more than eight hundred years.

The throne of Jehovah was thus removed from Israel, and His people were sent to Babylon; but a remnant was brought back to be tested by the coming of the Son of David; and this remnant rejected Him.

The rejected Son of David then assumes another character, and becomes Saviour of the world.

Ques. Is this rejection quite fulfilled until the end of the Acts

No; but it was fulfilled in the remnant.

In Revelation 4, the elders give, as always, a reason for their worship; there is spiritual intelligence shewn by them; but the angels never give any reason.

Ques. Do the twenty-four elders include all the heavenly saints in glory?

Yes; the number is an allusion to the twenty-four courses of the priests. Here, they are seen as twenty-four kings crowned and sitting on the twenty-four thrones, and they cast down their crowns and worship. The beasts and the elders are here quite distinct from each other, and there are no angels seen.

The Lamb then appears, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

He is able to open the book; and the beasts and elders are now seen together, whilst the angels take a distinct place. In chapter 4, the beasts and the elders are separate, and there are no angels, because unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But in chapter 5, the living creatures (i.e., power) are mixed up with the elders; Christ having taken authority, there is transfer of power to men, the angels being apart; and so the living creatures are seen distinct from the angels. The expression, "living creatures," is, of course, symbolic.

139 Ques. Are they the same in chapters 4 and 5?

They are always the same symbol, but they are transferred in their connection. Here, they form part, as it were, of the governmental throne.

There are two words employed for "round about," meaning, (1) that which forms part of the thing as round about, and (2) that which is in a circle around it; just like, for instance, the four legs of this table which are round about it; or, just as we are all sitting around it.

When the Lamb comes out, they sing (not "sung") a new song. Notice that the angels never sing. People make them sing, but they never do in Scripture. Angels shout and cry, but there is only one note found with them. Man has all kinds of infirmities, but he can be tuned; it takes such as man to be tuned. The angels shout and praise, and that is lovely. And they stand. And at the tomb, two angels sat. But these elders sing a new song.

In verse 9, it is a question whether the "us" should read "them," or be left out altogether; but in verse 10, "And made them" is settled.

When the Lamb is brought in here, then we find priests. "Which are the prayers of saints," does not mean that they pray for the saints.

Ques. If, in verse 10, we say, "they," is it as speaking of the church?

Yes; but if "us" is put in verse 9, and "they" in verse 10, then it would be the church speaking of those still on the earth.

Ques. How could the living creatures join in and say "us"?

It is not so, as I think; for we find here that the beasts and the elders are together, and the angels apart, and, accordingly, the "us" would be better left out.

The living creatures are the symbol of the governmental power of God. First, God employs the angels, as we see from Hebrews 2. Angels are in power until Christ comes out, but when the Lamb does come out, power is transferred to men; chap. 5.

Ques. To whom do the "they" and the "them" refer, in verse 10?

To those who are redeemed out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

140 Ques. Would it include themselves?

Yes, of course it would.

Ques. What of, "they sing," in verse 9?

That is an impersonal expression; it is not "they sung," for that would carry on the history.

Ques. Has this anything to do with, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world"?

That to which that passage refers is more governmental-the throne proper; but in the millennium, it is not a question of seraphs.

Ques. You said angels do not sing, but in chapter 5:11, it says, "I heard the voice of many angels"?

Just so; it is "the voice"; that does not say they sang. The nearest thing is in Job, when "the morning stars sang together"; but there, the whole expression is an image.

Ques. Do you distinguish between "the morning stars," and "the sons of God," Job 38?

One is clearly a figure. I had thought of them both as being the same, but I do not know that they need be so taken.

Ques. But if that is of creation, how then?

It is only "the earth": "Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" So that there is no difficulty.

It is not necessary that they should be the same, though I had always taken them as the same.

Ques. "Seen of angels," in 1 Timothy 3:16, has been taken to shew that God had not been seen by angels before He was manifested in the flesh; if this is so, how do you understand the words in Matthew 18:10, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven"?

Well, it is merely to shew they have the best and most honourable place.

When the Lamb begins to open the book (chap. 5), we have in a general way providential dealings in the earth.

Ques. What are "horses"?

They express God's power, just as we see in Zechariah 1.

Ques. Are the beasts and the elders distinct, again, in chapter 5:14?

It does not say that the beasts fell down, but merely that they say, "Amen."

It is a great thing to lay hold of symbols in an abstract way.

Horses, as in Zechariah, are the symbols of God's power introducing a certain state of things on the earth. A white horse is a symbol of triumph, it may be of good or of evil; what is important is to get hold of the abstract idea. So as regards the sun: Christ is the Sun of righteousness; but, when it is evil, the sun scorches people terribly.

141 Ques. What about the other colours in Zechariah 1?

I do not know, just now, as to the exact translation about them.

Ques. Are the four horses, the four Gentile powers?

It is more God's overruling providence in the midst of them. They are found again in Zechariah 6. They had quieted His Spirit in the north country, because God had put down Babylon, which was the first of the four kingdoms of the Gentiles.

Babylon was put down by Persia, which thus became, in that way, a horse to execute God's purpose.

Angelic power is occupied in this; for when Gabriel came to speak to Daniel, he had been kept waiting three weeks, because it was a question whether the Jews should be restored; nobody stood by him but Israel's angel - "Michael your prince."

Ques. Does Michael represent the Lord Himself?

No, he does not; the passage in Jude makes that quite clear.

Ques. What are the four horns?

They are really these four kings, viewed in this particular character. Then the carpenters come to fray them away; and in the last one Christ is, so to speak, the carpenter, for it is He who puts down the beast.

Ques. What is the pale horse in Revelation 6:8?

It is the power of death; and hell (hades) follows him.

The Lord is here beginning to get ready the judgments; then the fifth seal is opened, and the martyrs are seen under the altar; they had been slain for Christ's sake and their righteousness is here recognised, only they must wait a little longer.

Ques. Are these future martyrs?

They are chiefly, but not necessarily, so; the future martyrs are those that should be killed like them. So these must wait for the martyrs of the last half-week.

Ques. What part will Israel have in these trials?

Here, we have nothing to do with Israel. And we do not find any Jews until chapters 10 and 11. Sealed of God they are in chapter 7, but they are not the subject of this prophecy.

Chapter 6 is a complete revolution; things are closing in, and they end in the breaking up of everything. The sun, i.e., supreme authority, becomes black; the moon, i.e., subordinate authority, becomes as blood; and the stars of heaven (inferior authorities) fall. The heaven also departs, i.e., the whole scene of

government. The complete subversion of all earthly authority takes place.

142 They think, mistakenly, that the great day of wrath is come; it is, of course, judgment, but not that of the great day.

Ques. Why do they speak of the wrath of the Lamb?

Because they have been fighting against Him.

Ques. How do they know Him?

It is the Lamb who has to take the power.

Ques. Why is it the Lamb?

I think that, in the Revelation, the "Lamb" indicates that the suffering One is to be the glorified One, and that He is to come judging. It is not exactly the thought of atoning.

Well, although the great day of His wrath was not really come, this was a tremendous political convulsion.

Ques. Could anyone say that this could not happen in the lifetime of persons now on the earth?

No, they could not; but the Church goes up out of all this. The sixth seal is far on in post-rapture times; but it is not yet in the last half-week.

Ques. Does this extend beyond Christendom, or is it confined to this latter?

It takes place mainly in Christendom as a whole; but the Roman empire is more especially in view.

Ques. In verse 15, is "kings of the earth" only those of the Roman empire?

No; I do not confine it to them, for others also may be frightened. Russia and Prussia are not in the Roman earth; a little bit of Prussia still is.

Ques. Is Ireland?

No, but it comes under its feet; he shall stamp the residue with his feet. Neither does the north of Scotland form part of it.

Chapter 7 is a kind of parenthesis, shewing how God takes care of the remnant of Israel, and also of many from amongst the Gentiles.

Ques. Are these found in Christendom?

No, none of them, only in so far as Jews are found in Christendom, but they are not part of it.

143 If men reject the gospel now, they will not get the gospel in that day. People have thought that after the present gospel testimony is closed, they might still get a supplementary one; but 2 Thessalonians is clear enough. And, "He that believeth not is condemned already"; while "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." That embraces all who have had the truth and have not believed it.

Ques. From whence will come the innumerable company?

Not from those who have heard the truth now and have rejected it, but from wherever this gospel testimony goes.

Ques. Who will take out this gospel testimony?

Well, I believe it will be Jews.

Ques. Is there anything that speaks of the conversion of these Jews after the rapture?

You get the two witnesses.

Ques. Does their testimony commence as soon as the church is gone?

Yes; we find them in Psalms 94-100, which speak of the coming in of the First begotten. This last one is worship.

Ques. Is there any reason why there should not be quickened souls, as a sort of dovetail, between these two periods?

I cannot say. God may be now, in a certain way, preparing Jews, just as He may give peace to the earth for Christianity to spread.

Ques. Would men of understanding, in Daniel 11, help as to this point?

Yes; there will be such found amongst these witnesses.

Ques. They testify during the time of the covenant?

Ques. But if the testimony begins at once, there is only one half-week left.

The angel flying in the midst of heaven, in chapter 14:6, 7. and having the everlasting gospel, is quite at the end, for the hour of His judgment is come.

Ques. Would the special action of the Spirit of God at the time mark the commencement?

Yes, but your question is, When will that begin? The moment I get the church taken away, I see God acting in this way: "Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come," but it does not say in so many words when that will be.

144 Ques. Has there ever been a time when there was no testimony?

No.

Ques. So that there is nothing to shew that there may be an interval without any testimony?

Well, except that there is a time of judgment such as that nobody can go into the temple. But that does not say that there will be no testimony, for the two witnesses will be witnessing at that time.

Ques. Are the names of the twelve tribes symbolical?

Not that I know of.

Ques. Why is Dan left out?

Twelve names are wanted. In Jacob's blessing, Dan comes in at the point of apostasy, but consequently, too, at the point of waiting for blessing. In the first ones, we have general responsibility; then Dan is like to an adder in the path biting the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward. And then comes an interjection, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord"; faith says that God must now come in.

Ques. Has this any application to the antichrist?

It will have. The people are bowed down under the burden of the Gentiles (Issachar), with other details; they wait for Jehovah's salvation, and then blessing all follows on. Dan was the first that openly set up idolatry.

At the seventh seal, nothing happens; there is quietness for a little while. Then we come to the trumpets; this is the second series of seven. Judgment becomes now much closer, in consequence of the suffering of the saints, which shews there is a testimony near. This judgment is not merely general and providential, but it falls directly on the "third part," which I have no doubt is the Roman empire.

The three woe trumpets then follow. We see here, the division of seven into three and four, as is the case nearly everywhere in this book; the seven churches are divided at Thyatira, and so on.

Ques. What is the main idea of that?

I do not know. Four go on in a general way, and then come three more; there is quite a division in that way.

Ques. What is the character of the prayers which are put upon the golden altar in chapter 8?

145 It is the cry of the saints, answering to judgment in a general way. The Angel-Priest (Christ) offers the incense, not with the prayers, but to give efficacy to them, i.e., to make them effectual. The dealings of the trumpets are the effect of the answer to these supplications.

Ques. Is this the time of the imprecatory prayers of the Psalms?

Partly so, but not exclusively. I connect it more with Luke 18:7: "Shall not God avenge his own elect?"

In chapter 9, we pass over to the East; at least, I think so myself. That gives us one division of the fours and the threes. Four is generally that which falls on the Roman empire.

And now we close in rapidly towards the end. The bottomless pit is opened, and we have direct diabolical power coming out of it.

When the seals are opened, a general providential ordering of events takes place; then, in the trumpets, we have bitterer judgments; and also judgments on men themselves, not merely on their circumstances.

Ques. Would those in the fifth trumpet be apostate Jews?

Yes, there it would be so.

Ques. And the seven trumpets would be within the seven seals?

Yes.

Ques. Why is the time specified as hour, day, month, and year?

To shew that God has exactly measured the time, even up to an hour.

Ques. This foretells the coming in of the Eastern hordes upon the Roman empire?

Yes.

Ques. Is it the same thing as the way of the kings of the East?

Ah! I did not say that.

The tail of the dragon draws the third part of the stars of heaven; that is, the Roman empire sweeps all these under its power.

Ques. Is there no judgment of the Assyrian in the Revelaation?

No.

There were two classes of prophets; the one, when Israel was owned of God, and the other, when Israel was disowned of God; this latter is Daniel (the vision), and the Revelation, and partly also Zechariah; while in Ezekiel, Israel is never called "My people" as a present thing, but only in the future.

146 Chapter 10 is a parenthesis which runs on to chapter 11:14. "I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow," i.e., the covenant with creation, was upon his head. It is Christ coming to take possession, with one foot on the sea and the other on the earth; and then we have the declaration that there should be no longer delay.

Ques. Why does this parenthesis come in here?

Well, we have the trumpets going on regularly to the end; but he wants to bring in what is morally more important than the trumpets, and this he does by introducing, in this parenthesis, the ten-horned beast and all that belongs to it; and thus he includes it in the general history. All that closes totally at chapter 11:18. A number of details are given afterwards.

Ques. When does the last half-week commence?

I do not know. Half a week before the end; but then, when does the end come?

Ques. When is the end of the first half-week?

At the beginning of the second! In one sense, it was the end of the first half-week when Christ was put to death.

In chapter 10, Christ is seen asserting His title to the earth, but John is not allowed to write what the thunders say. A little open book, i.e., something revealed, is then given him. It was pleasant to the taste, to get this knowledge, but it was actually bitter in his belly.

After this, he sets to prophesy again. And, in chapter 11, we have described the state of things in Jerusalem, followed by a history of the evil in the world, which comes to its full head and crisis, together

with the history of the beast and false prophet. God has a people the while. And witnesses testify.

Ques. Who are they?

All that I see in these witnesses is, that the testimony of two men is true.

We find here true worship, and adequate witness. The Gentiles trample down everything, but these witnesses stand before the God of the earth. God is asserting His power and title as to the earth, but men will not have it.

Ques. But they give glory to God, in verse 13?

Yes, but it is too late then, and will not do.

Ques. What is the meaning of the temple?

147 It simply means that He recognises it, that is to say, the house itself. The outside court is given up to the Gentiles. The true inward thing is still owned, but the general profession is trodden under by the Gentiles. There will be these two things; the worship of those that are really the Lord's, though in terrible trouble; and there will be prophecy, too. Both the worship and the testimony will be in the midst of the power of the beast.

Here, we have the same word as in chapter 8:3. "I will give power," or efficacy, "to my two witnesses and they shall prophesy." Not that these things are given in order at all; but there is adequate testimony: two candlesticks, two olive trees. These witnesses have the power of Moses and Elias. Elias prophesied when Israel was apostate, and Moses did so when the nation was under Pharaoh's power; that is the case here, for these witnesses have the characters of Moses and Elias. When they have completed their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit, kills them. Their dead bodies are then seen exposed, and, after three and a half days, the spirit of life from God enters into them, and all those beholding them are awfully afraid.

Now we see one class of heavenly saints, who are not of the church. This is the last act of the first resurrection. The close of chapter 11 looks right on to the end.

Chapters 12-14 are complete in themselves; chapters 15-18 give us another thing, viz., the plagues which fill up. Of both Babylon and the heavenly Jerusalem we have descriptions, but these do not give us the course of history.

First of all, there is the beast; then, in chapter 15, another sign is seen in heaven; then, Babylon, etc., and we find further details given of that which has been already summed up in the parenthesis.

Ques. What about the months and days in chapter 11?

They are the last half-week.

Ques. Not the two half-weeks?

Not as I take it. To support the theory of there being two half-weeks in the Revelation, you are obliged to transpose the verses entirely. In order to bring in the whole week, verse 2 must follow verse 3; for they say that the second half-week is after the witnesses are killed. I see no need to put verses 3 and 4 before the

second verse, specially as it declares that the state of things lasts forty-two and not eighty-four months.

148 Ques. What is, then, the first half-week?

When the beast makes good friends with the Jews, and they think everything is going on all right.

The thing is, that the only place where we get a week is in Daniel. There are sixty-nine weeks up to Messiah, that is to say, seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; the Messiah is then cut off. We have now one week to make up the seventy weeks; in point of fact, the time of Christ's testimony. After the sixty-two weeks, Messiah shall be cut off, this was nearly three and a half years, or the first half-week; but the Jews not believing in Christ, when the beast comes and makes a covenant with them, he does so as if only the sixty-nine weeks were run out, but I know that sixty-nine weeks and a half have run out. And so I believe that there is left only one half-week for faith.

Ques. Was there not John Baptist's time of testimony?

But where do you find that John Baptist was testifying half a week before Christ?

Ques. Then will they have to go over the half-week again?

Yes; but the godly ones will not own it.

When the antichrist comes, the mass receive him and the remnant do not; then the beast, or little horn, in league with antichrist, begins to persecute them, and at the middle of the week, the sacrifices are taken away, with all else, and the Jews as a nation are put down. They say the saints are given into his hands; but Daniel 7: 25 says, He . . . shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand"; i.e., the times and laws, but not the saints. There we see what takes place; the Jewish sacrifices and all are put into his hand. "Shall . . . think to change times and laws." That is abstract.

The seventh angel sounds (v. 15) and Christ takes His power. And the twenty-four elders say, "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty . . . because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." And here we have the whole thing going right on to the new heavens and the new earth.

Ques. Would, "change times and laws," be like to cherubic action?

Yes; just so, like it. Power has come in (v. 18), and the whole thing is finished, going right on to the millennium and beyond. It takes in everything. The last verse really belongs to chapter 12. There, the temple of God is opened in heaven, and the signs of His power are seen.

149 Ques. Would you say, then, that "the time of the dead, that they should be judged" refers to the "great white throne"?

Yes.

Ques. And the giving of rewards, too?

It does not say here what they are, but it includes the great white throne. The rewards are to "Thy servants," and "to the saints," and so on. It is the general description of the result of Christ's taking His power.

We come now to the development of things in connection with Israel; then, to antichrist; and then, to the last days. Chapters 12-14 go together; they give a summary of the whole thing as between Satan and God, Jerusalem being the subject.

Jerusalem is seen clothed with the sun, i.e., with power; she has upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and the moon (i.e., that which had been reflected light under the old covenant) put down under her feet.

Then a son is born.

The dragon, the power of Satan in the form of the Roman empire, stands ready to swallow up the child. But he cannot touch the child, for it is caught up to the throne of God. There we have the church with Christ, and in Christ; and the woman flees into the wilderness.

I get here a purpose of God, and in the woman fleeing away, the oppression of Jerusalem in the last days.

Ques. Is that the same thing as in Ezekiel 20?

No; there, the ten tribes are seen in contrast with what we have here. The ten tribes are brought into the wilderness of the people, and there is all the difference between them and the Jews, for the ten tribes are passed under the rod, and brought under the bond of the covenant. We can see in this the righteous judgment of God in His ways, because the ten tribes, never having rejected Christ, are not put under the antichrist.

Ques. Is "the forest of the south field," in Ezekiel 20:46, Jerusalem?

I do not know; I should rather think it was Egypt. In the next chapter, we find Israel and Jerusalem. Revelation 12:6 shows how the last half-week begins. There is, next, war in heaven; Michael and his angels fight against the dragon. The devil is cast out, and thereby loses his anti-priestly character. As the accuser of the brethren before God day and night, he was anti-priest; but he has still his anti-kingly and anti-prophet characters. It is all over with his accusing; and there is no place for him any more in heaven, though he has place on earth. "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them," i.e., heavenly saints, including those martyred and taken up after the church has gone.

150 The dragon begins then to persecute the woman, and she is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, i.e., three and a half times, or the last half-week.

Ques. What is the difference between the "fleeing" of the woman 1260 days, in verse 6, and what is said of her in verse 14?

The first is the general statement of the "dramatis personae," as they say, of that which is to happen to her; and then, in verse 14, we learn how it is to happen. The beast comes out of the bottomless pit; one of his heads had been wounded to death and was healed; because so far as the world's history is concerned, the Roman empire had been destroyed and was now revived, and so all the world wondered after the beast. Power was given to the beast to continue forty-two months, and this being so, I do not understand how he can continue eighty-four months. Note that we have here the imperial beast, not the antichrist.

Ques. Is one the anti-king?

Two horns like a lamb is so far anti-king.

Ques. What is the difference between this beast of verse 2, and the fourth beast in Daniel 7?

In Daniel 7, it is a description of empire, but here, we find him in his last form. The one is more a temporal thing; but, in the other, we see all the moral mischief.

Ques. Should there not be some alteration in the reading of verse 8?

It should read, "Whose name had not been written from the founding of the world in the book of life of the slain Lamb." As it reads in the Authorised Version, it is very good theology, but it is very bad teaching.

Ques. As to the "dwellers on earth," will there be any people upon earth in that day who will be called dwellers in heaven?

We are dwellers in heaven; but these saints are too late to have that character completely; still, as they have suffered under the beast, they will be taken up.

151 The proper character of Christians is that we dwell in heaven; we are strangers on the earth, although actually on it. After the church is gone, the "earth-dwellers," properly speaking, begin; but during the period that our chapter speaks of, if a saint is killed, he loses blessing on earth, and would lose blessing in heaven; so there is a supplementary taking up of such to heaven. To this class would belong those who had not worshipped the beast.

Ques. Are they not killed?

The beast goes to make war with them; he does not kill all of them, but all he can catch, he kills. The remnant of her seed is just that; when the dragon sought to destroy the woman, it was more the providential action of God that kept her safe; but all of these saints that the beast can catch, he kills.

Ques. Does the Lord refer to this time, when He says, "Except those days should be shortened," etc.?

Yes.

We find, next, a second beast. The first beast had power, and a throne, and authority; but with the second beast there is found proper devil-power, as you may say; this last-named comes up out of the earth, not out of the sea. He sets up to be Messiah the King, but if anyone listens to him, it is the devil: "He spake as a dragon." It is the direct power and influence of Satan amongst the Jews, though his mischief goes out wider still.

Ques. Is this second beast like the horn of Daniel 8?

No, I think not; that horn will come, I suppose, at the end of the Alexandrian kingdom, and from the part of Turkey in Asia.

This second beast makes fire come down from heaven; it is very solemn testimony. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9, the same words are used in the Greek, for the works of the one whose coming is after the power of Satan, as those used for the proofs of the Christ in Acts 2:22: "Power and signs and . . . wonders", that is to say, the same things given to prove the Christ, are given also to prove the antichrist! The things given to prove that Jehovah was not man, but the true God, these same things are what antichrist does. When Elijah was to prove the true God, he says, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." And fire comes down, licks up the water, and consumes the sacrifice.

Antichrist will do all this - but in a lying way, of course.

152 Ques. Will his power extend beyond the Jews?

His mischief will. He causes all to receive the mark, and that is very wide; but it is within the Roman empire.

Ques. What is the number "666"?

I do not know; it will come out in its proper time. Chapter 14 begins at Jerusalem (Zion), and we find here a company that has gone through all the troubles and sorrows, because they would not worship the idols; they are, therefore "virgins." They are not in heaven, but they learn the song that is sung in heaven. They have been spared, and they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; they have a special privilege more than those who have had no trouble at all.

Ques. Are these the same as in chapter 20:4?

No; in that passage, we have all the raised and heavenly saints.

Ques. To whom does the number "666" belong?

To the first beast; at least I have always taken it so. The moment the first beast of chapter 13, i.e., the throne-beast (in verse 2, "seat" is really "throne") goes to the east, the second beast, that is king there, is then seen more as a prophet. Prophet and king are both earthly characters, and as soon as the devil is cast down from heaven, he comes out in these characters.

Then, in chapter 14:6, the last gospel goes out to the heathen. The everlasting gospel is not our gospel; it is, I believe, the gospel concerning the Seed of the woman that is to bruise the serpent's head; and that is now about to take place. "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." God is here seen as Creator according to Psalm 96.

Then comes another thing and that is, the fall of Babylon, and it is followed by a warning about worshipping the beast.

Ques. What is Babylon?

Popery. But it may have daughters. As a Romish priest once answered one who told him Rome was Babylon, "But who are her daughters, then?"

Next, Christ comes; and we have, first, distinctive, separative judgment; and then, vengeance judgment; i.e., harvest and vintage. The winepress is trodden without the city. And thereupon the whole scene closes.

Chapter 15 begins a new thing. "I saw another sign in heaven," etc.; and I get no sign but the seven last plagues in which is filled up, not the wrath of the Lamb, but the wrath of God. The difference is in the full character of it. God judges corruption, and uses instruments; but the Lamb comes in chapter 19 to execute judgment. Fire is always judgment; and glass is not for a man dirty with walking to wash in (v. 2). Here, they stand on purity, having gone through the fire to get at it. The sea is the same as in chapter 4, but here, it is with fire. They sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb: "Great and wonderful are thy works,

Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, O King of nations." Then come the last plagues of God upon the beast (see chap. 15:6 to chap. 16:2). Pouring out on the sea, is upon the masses of peoples; and "upon the rivers and fountains of waters," is upon the moral principles which give an impulse to their movements. All becomes blood.

153 Ques. Are these judgments the same as the trumpets?

No, of course not; these are the last plagues. Then we see that the sun becomes an awful tyrannical despot. All is wretchedness and darkness. There is no conversion or repentance here. It is poured out, too, upon the beast's throne (not merely upon his "seat"). The way of the kings of the east, whoever they are, is next prepared, that is, preparation for the wars and battles of the last days.

Then three frogs come forth; they are the spirits of devils, gathering all to the battle of the great day. People ask, What is this gathering? Well, at least, the devil is not the gospel gathering; it is the gathering power of evil. Nor is this the same as the close of chapter 14, which carries us through from the beginning to the end. It is another series, shewing all that takes place in the beast's country before the closing judgments.

In chapter 17, Babylon is a fresh object of government.

Ques. How is it that Babylon, which begins as the head of civil power, has here this other character?

That is hardly the correct idea of Babylon. She is noticed in the Old Testament for fornication and corrupting the nations. (Note that the vintage does not take place until all this is over.) When Great Babylon comes into remembrance, the judgments of God within the limits of the beast are closed; chapters 17 and 18 are a kind of appendix. We find the same thing with the description of Jerusalem, when he says, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Here, in chapter 17, we have a particular description of that which has been already judged: "Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."

154 Ques. Why does it say, "into the wilderness" (v. 3)?

Because there, all was desolate and unproductive, no grass, no blessing, nor anything of the kind. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (v. 2), just as they are now doing with Rome.

Ques. What is scarlet?

Grandeur, I suppose; purple is more royalty. Upon her forehead was a name written, "Mystery, great Babylon, the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth." "Abominations" is idolatry, so used of Chemosh, and so on. It is the woman that is drunk, in verse 6, but it is the beast, the civil power, that does the wickedness. What a remarkable trinity of evil do we find in the dragon and these two beasts! The first beast was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit; it is a kind of resurrection; and then he goes into perdition. He was, and is not, and yet is.

We have here a description of Rome; the heads spoken of are different characters of Roman government, for this beast carries government.

The ten kings (v. 12) receive their power one hour with the beast, but this is not the breaking up of the Roman empire by the German power. The German nations upset the beasts entirely, while here they are

all found together. It is Babylon, i.e., Rome. These different nations give their power to the beast. The Lamb overcomes them, but you have saints coming with Him: "They that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful." These are men, i.e., saints. "Chosen and faithful" might be applied to angels, but not "called." Angels are not "called."

Ques. "Many are called, but few are chosen"?

No; that is called by the gospel, and is quite another thing.

"The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth." John was astonished to see this. Then, in chapter 18, we have the complete pulling to pieces of Babylon. She is destroyed by the nations as such; the authorities of the nations are troubled about it; and the infidel power which comes up at the end is astonished at it as well.

155 Ques. Do the ten horns destroy the power of Rome?

Well, it is the nations rather than the kings, because the kings of the earth mourn over it; when the crash comes, they are distinct. The ten horns are not here the individual kings, for these latter are sorry, because they have lost the means of governing.

We have passed over one thing in chapter 12:10: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." This is at the beginning of the three and a half years; that is to say, as soon as ever the evil power is cast out of heaven, and before the earth is made clear. And here, in chapter 19:1, 2, much people are saying, "Allelulia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore," etc.

Then follows the marriage of the Lamb. And heaven opens, and, in triumph, He comes out on a white horse, at any rate to victory.

Ques. But will the saints in heaven return to earth to find their place on it?

They will not come back to the earth, unless, like the angels, there is anything for them to do on it.

In chapter 19:15, we have a quotation from Isaiah 63: "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." And His title, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," is also displayed. In Timothy we read: "Which in his times he shall shew, who is . . . King of kings, and Lord of lords." This refers to God. But here, in the Revelation, this same title is given to Christ. Again, the "Son of man," in Daniel 7:13, was brought to the "Ancient of days," whilst in verse 22, the "Ancient of days" came. This shews Christ to be Ancient of Days. In both these cases, the title of God is applied to Christ.

Ques. Would you say a word as to the righteousness of saints (v. 8)?

It should be plural, "righteousnesses," and it means, I believe, that God owns their practical walk. The language in the Revelation is very Hebrewish, and it is the custom in Hebrew, in moral things, to put the plural for the abstract idea.

There are no angels seen acting here; it is those who are associated with Christ as His companions.

156 Both the beast and the false prophet are destroyed; and then Satan is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit.

After this, comes sessional judgment.

Ques. Do you refer to Matthew 25?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-nelson-darby/notes-on-the-revelation/>

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