

The Three Powers Of Armageddon

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An Exposition of Revelation 16:13-16

One thing is certain in scripture and that is that sin and rebellion are to come to an end. After six thousand years of human history, there will climax the greatest conflict ever known, the conflict that involves God and his people, and Satan and the enemies of God. This conflict will reach its climax just before the second advent of Christ. Today evil is increasing and the conflict is intensifying between good and evil. As the Revelator declared,

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil is come down to you having great wrath because he knows that he has but a short time.” Revelation 12:12

The closer we approach the climax of history, the more frenzied will be Satan’s efforts to bring the world to ruin. (See Appendix 1) The climax of this conflict, is called in scripture, by the term, Armageddon. In the book of Revelation, up to the Second Advent, all proper nouns have a symbolic application. Armageddon is symbolic of the great finale of the conflict between good and evil. It is featured in the sixth plague. When we study the seven last plagues it is evident that the seventh plague brings about the destruction of Babylon. (1) The sixth plague prepares the way for its destruction, and reveals who is the prime mover in precipitating Armageddon.

“I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth to the kings of the Earth and the whole world to gather [or unite] them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.” Revelation 16:13-14, 16.

Today in the professedly Christian world there has been a tremendous revival of the powers of the occult. This revival commenced in 1848 with the manifestation of modern spiritualism. Under various guises this deceptive power has rapidly spread throughout the western world and is making its mark in every strata of society.

According to this prediction of Revelation 16 the “spirits of devils” are to work through three great powers or organizations symbolized by “the dragon, the beast and the false prophet”. The three unclean spirits come “out of the mouth” of each of these three powers, indicating that the “spirits” must first take possession of the three powers and then speak and work through them. These three powers or organizations become the mediums of Satan to convince and to unite the rest of the world.

It is important to correctly interpret these three symbols so that we know where to watch for the fulfillment of prophecy. We will examine first, the central power which is called “the beast”. This organization, we will show, is to be the earthly leader in Armageddon. The beast is fully described in Revelation 13:1-10 and it is indisputable that this power is the Papacy. (2) This means that according to the prediction, “the spirits of devils” are to take possession of the Papacy and speak and work through it, to influence the rest of the world to unite against God and his people. There is ample evidence to show that in the past as well as the present, the powers of Spiritualism have resided within the Papacy.

Not only does the Roman Catholic Church hold festivals to honor the departed spirits of loved ones, but it claims to have within the church, members who claim to receive messages from the dead. Instead of calling this practice of the occult, NECROMANCY, THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH CALLS IT MYSTICISM. AND INSTEAD OF CALLING THE PEOPLE WHO PERFORM THIS ABOMINATION (MEDIUMS), THEY ARE CALLED MYSTICS.” (3)

Roman Catholicism is famous for its miracles and so called responses from departed saints. Some miracles are inexplicable from a human point of view. The miracles at Lourdes, that great Catholic centre of Mariolatry, speak of a supernatural power, At Lourdes, there are not only Catholic but Protestant and non religious doctors. They all admit that miracles occur. These miracles confirm in the mind of the Catholic that God is in the Catholic Church. The miracles also convince many Protestants that God must be in the Catholic Church. Thirdly, the miracles in the church of Rome declare to the world at large that God is in the Catholic Church. Lourdes is impressive. One who is unaware of the warnings of scripture in regard to the deceptive and alluring influence of evil spirits, would be soundly convinced that the power of God is present at Lourdes.

At this juncture let it be clearly understood that while scripture exposes the Catholic system it also reveals that some of God's true people are in the church of Rome, but he will ultimately call them out. “Come out of her my people” (Revelation 18:4) Generally speaking, the evidence reveals that the church of Rome is under the influence of occult powers but generally in an attractive way, in order to deceive.

Undoubtedly in the future, the influence of evil spirits in the Church of Rome will become more pronounced. The beast then, the central power through which the spiritual forces of Satan will work in the last days to unite the world against God, represents the Papacy.

The next row is called the dragon? There has been much confusion in identifying the dragon. The current view that the dragon represents Spiritualism cannot be upheld from scripture. It is based, we believe, on a misunderstanding of an isolated statement in the book, “The Great Controversy.” (4) The dragon is first introduced in Revelation 12. In verses 3-4 a woman is pictured, representing the Church of God. She is described as giving birth to a man child - Jesus. A great red dragon stands before the woman to devour her child as soon as it is born. Who is the dragon here? First of all the dragon is Satan, “...that old serpent called the Devil and Satan”. (Verse 9) But Satan always works through earthly agencies, through political powers, etc. Some have held that the dragon represents “paganism”, but this must be rejected entirely. (See Appendix 2) What power was used by Satan to try and destroy Jesus at his birth? According to history it was Pagan Rome under the Caesars. It was Herod the Great, King of Judaea, the Roman governor, who endeavored to destroy the Christ child, in the destruction of the babes of Bethlehem. (Matthew 2:16) As one author correctly comments:

“While the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.” (5)

But the dragon or serpent power in Revelation 12 continues down through the Christian era to the last days. Therefore the dragon involves more than Pagan Rome. In prophecy a beast represents a political power (Daniel 7:17) therefore the dragon (which is a beast) must represent political powers that are used by Satan to oppose the cause of God. What political powers were used by Satan to oppose his people after the fall of pagan Rome? Rome's territory was occupied by the Gothic barbarians who formed themselves into the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. Most of these powers of Europe at various times were effective agents of Satan in opposing God's people.

In Revelation 12:3 the dragon is described as having “ten horns”. These represent the ten divisions of Western Rome (Daniel 7.24). Whenever one reads of the ten horns in Daniel or Revelation, they always represent, at least, or initially, the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. Thus the original kingdoms of Western Europe are clearly a part of the dragon power. The same author quoted above lays down a principle as to what constitutes the dragon power.

“Kings, rulers and governors have placed upon themselves the brand of antichrist and are represented as the dragon who goes to make war with the saints.” (6)

If the dragon of Revelation 12:3-4 was Pagan Rome and in Revelation 12:14-16 was the ten kingdoms of Western Europe, who then comprises the dragon in verse 17 in the end time? The answer is, "Kings, rulers and governors [who] have placed themselves under the brand of antichrist." The earthly Antichrist is the Papacy. The dragon, therefore, of verse 17 represents the political powers who in the last days, place themselves under the brand of the Papacy and make war on God's people. (Further details for rejecting the view that the dragon represents Spiritualism are outlined in Appendix 3.)

Do the scriptures reveal any particular political powers that could fulfill the description of the dragon in the last days? Notice the prediction in Revelation 17 concerning the final conflict.

"The ten horns which thou saw, are ten kings [or kingdoms] which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings [or kingdoms] one hour with the beast [the Papacy]. These have one mind and shall give their power and strength to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful" Revelation 17:12-14

The ten horns in this prediction play their part in the end time, at which time they give their strength and power to the beast or Papacy. In doing this, do they not "place" upon themselves the brand of antichrist, and are represented as the dragon? If so, then it is important to identify the powers who comprise the horns in the end time. Revelation 17 is a repetition and enlargement of Revelation 16 especially the portion dealing with the punishment of Babylon. Seeing "the dragon" is one of the agencies through which the powers of the occult or spiritualism is to work, we suggest that whoever is represented by the ten horns or ten kingdoms comprises the dragon.

The ten horns were initially the ten kingdoms of Western Europe. However, the civilization and culture of Western Europe has not remained static. In the process of exploration, discovery and colonization of the new areas of the world - it was the Western European powers that were involved. These were the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, French, German, Belgian and Italian - all Western Europe.

In this way the Western European kingdoms extended their territories and multiplied their numbers and influence.

On analyzing the origins of the new countries which were once colonies, it is obvious that they were all Western European. If Western Europe itself is included, there are, we suggest, ten approximate, geographic entities that are of West European influence and culture today. These we suggest could come under the caption of the ten horns or kingdoms in the last days. The ten political entities are:

1. Modern Western Europe including Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia.
2. The U.S.A, which is mostly Anglo-Saxon and West European in culture.
3. Canada - which is of British and French stock.
4. Mexico - which is of Spanish stock and culture.
5. Inter America - Spanish stock and culture.
6. Portuguese South America - Brazil, Portuguese stock and culture.
7. Spanish South America - Argentina, Chile etc., all are of Spanish stock and culture.
8. South Africa - Dutch and British stock and culture.
9. Australia - British stock and culture.
10. New Zealand - British stock and culture.

THESE POLITICAL POWERS HAVE SEVERAL POINTS IN COMMON

1. Nine of them originated as colonies of one of the ten kingdoms of Western Europe.
2. They are Western European in culture and civilization.
3. They are either republican or Protestant in their form of government.
4. They all have strong Roman Catholic populations.
5. The Protestant Churches in them are no longer anti Catholic.
6. They all have similar ideologies.
7. Behind the scenes Roman Catholicism is very influential.

The prediction of Revelation 17 is clear that the political powers represented by the ten horns are to unite. The similarities mentioned above could form a solid basis for unity, in fact already there is a growing unity among these powers. The prediction declares that finally they will “have one mind and will give their power and strength to the beast”, or the Papacy.

We are witnessing closer ties being woven among the above groups. There are economic, financial and trade ties. Political ties are in the making. Finally religious union with the Papacy will be a recognized fact. In the strong Protestant sections of the above ten groups, astute students of the scene, declare that astonishing advances by the Roman Catholic church are now in progress.

Further evidence that the political powers mentioned above could come under the caption of “the dragon” is given in Revelation 13:11-12. These verses predict that the U.S.A., when it compels the earth to worship the papacy, “speaks as a dragon”, The U.S.A. in doing this “places itself under the brand of antichrist”. (Testimonies to Ministers, page 39) Seeing that the U.S.A. is the leader of the Western powers it will influence them to follow its example. As one author declares,

“In the book of Revelation under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view, those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law, and persecuting His people.” **(7a)**

We suggest that the “earthly governments” that are represented by the dragon in the end time, are the “kings, rulers and governors” of the Western world who “place themselves under the brand of the antichrist”.

According to the prediction of Revelation 16, the bewitching powers of Spiritualism are to come “out of the mouth of the dragon”. This could mean that the political powers of the Western world are to especially come under the control of Spiritualistic powers. There are concrete examples of how the forces of the occult have influenced some of these powers in the past.

In the interval between the two world wars the people of Germany became very involved in the practice of witchcraft. It has been suggested that it was this influence that prepared the soil for the reception of Nazism by which Adolph Hitler was enabled to seize control of the German nation. It is also well established, that during World War II, Mussolini and Hitler were influenced by the occult.

Mussolini did nothing of importance without first consulting his astrologer. Hitler also spent many hours of the night in communication with unseen powers. Leading spiritualists of Europe have admitted that Hitler was deeply involved in the occult. According to the famous American medium, Jean Dixon, Franklin D. Roosevelt, during World War II, spent many hours with his war chiefs in contact with occult powers, to obtain direction for the conduct of the war. Today witchcraft, sorcery, astrology and numerous other forms of the occult are riddling the Western world. We believe that this could be preparing the ground for the fulfillment of the prediction of Revelation 16:13-14.

The third power, or organization through which “the spirits of devils” are to work, is termed “The False Prophet”. A false prophet is one who claims to be a spokesman for God, but is not. He is one who claims to receive messages from God but who does not. He speaks falsely. We believe that the False Prophet is a

symbol of Apostate Protestantism. Once the Protestant churches were God's spokesmen, proclaiming God's message, but today they are in apostasy, yet they still pose as God's spokesmen.

The Revelator appears to equate the False Prophet with the Image to the Beast. In Revelation 19 where the False Prophet is described, it will be seen that his details correspond with the description of the Image to the Beast of Revelation 13:12-17. When we recall that "the image to the beast" comprises the united Protestant churches and the U.S.A, civil power it can be seen how the False Prophet and the image to the beast could be identical. (7)

Notice the parallels between the two.

THE FOUR PARALLELS BETWEEN THE IMAGE & THE FALSE PROPHET

The following points may make the above a little clearer.

1. The False Prophet is one who was once a genuine spokesman for God but has since become apostate and continues to pose as God's spokesman. Balaam, the false prophet in Numbers 22-24 is considered by some to be typical of the False Prophet of Revelation.
2. The False Prophet, or Image to the Beast, is connected with the second beast of Revelation 13 (the U.S.A.), when it compels obedience to the Papacy, Thus it is a religious entity and is connected with the U.S.A. (Revelation 13:11-14, 16)
3. The False Prophet will also be involved with the Papacy and deceives the people into accepting Papal worship in the form of the mark of the Beast. (Revelation 19:20)

The only religion-political power that fits the above specifications are the American Protestant churches when they finally unite and ally themselves with the civil power of the U.S.A. (8) In Revelation 19 where the final conflict of Armageddon is symbolized, it shows that "the False Prophet" is involved in that conflict:

"And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse and against his army and the beast [Papacy] was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast and them that worship his image." Revelation 19:19-20.

In a previous chapter it has been shown that the Image to the Beast or the False Prophet will be formed when the united apostate Protestants combine with the civil power to enforce the conscience by enacting religious laws. (7) In doing this they will constitute another Papacy, or an Image to the beast. This means then that if "the spirits of devils" are to come out of the mouth of the false prophet, they must first enter into the Protestant or non-Catholic churches and take control. For many decades non-Catholic leaders have revealed a favorable attitude towards Spiritualism. This be expected when the majority of the clergy cling to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, upon which Spiritualism is based.

The evidence is indisputable that Spiritualism has reached a far greater degree of influence in the Protestant churches than is generally realized. (See Appendix 5)

Revelation 13

Verse 12. He causes them to worship the first beast (the Papacy).

Verse 14. 'Miracles he did in sight of the beast' (Papacy).

Verse 14. He deceives by the miracles which he did causes all to receive a mark (Verse 16).

Verse 14. To make an image to the beast

Revelation 19

Verse 19. He is 'with the beast' (The Papacy).

Verse 19. 'Worked miracles in sight of the beast' (Papacy).

Verse 19. 'By which he deceived them who received the mark of beast.'

Verse 19. 'Those who worshipped his image.'

A striking example of Spiritualistic infiltration of Protestantism is the 'charismatic movement'. Thousands of sincere people are led to believe that they receive the Holy Spirit in the form of so-called speaking in tongues. The evidence however, shows that the power involved in this movement, is a form of spiritualism, an impersonation of the Holy Spirit. This charismatic movement is pervading the Protestant churches as well as a section of the Catholic church and it is quite apparent that its aim is to unify all Christians and lead them toward Rome. This is exactly what the prediction of Revelation 16 includes. The spirits of devils will gather or unite the whole world.

Undoubtedly we will witness prolific manifestations of spiritualism in the future within the non Catholic churches, and the political leadership of the Western world.

At this juncture let us analyze the statement from "The Great Controversy" which describes the order in which the three powers, the dragon, beast and false prophet, unite with Spiritualism.

"The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hand across the gulf to grasp the hands of Spiritualism; they [Protestants and Spiritualism] will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; [Papacy] and under the influence of this threefold union, this country [U.S.A.] will follow in the steps of Rome In trampling an the rights of conscience." (9)

In the above statement four powers are involved, the same powers as featured in Revelation 16:13. Spiritualism, the Dragon, the Beast and the False Prophet. The above statement reveals how the coming great union of these four powers will eventuate.

1. The Protestants of the USA take the initiative.
2. Protestants in the USA unite with Spiritualism.
3. The above two then unite with the Roman power.
4. The 3 powers above, in union, then influence "this country" (U.S.A.) to follow in the steps of Rome, i.e. the anti-Christ.
5. Next there will be a five-fold union of Protestantism, Spiritualism, Romanism, the civil powers of the Western world.

The prediction of Revelation 16:13-14 shows that after Spiritualism unites with and takes possession of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, these four then combine to unite the whole of mankind. The prediction reveals the method by which this is accomplished.

1. They will form the False Prophet.
2. Spiritualism is represented by "the 3 unclean spirits".
3. The Roman power is the Papacy - The Beast.
4. The USA in doing this places itself under the brand of anti-Christ and becomes a part of "the dragon." Being the leader of the Western World, the USA will influence the Western World to follow suit by which they will also come "under the brand of anti-Christ" and become the dragon also.
5. "The kings of the earth and of the whole world". i.e. the now, western world.

"I saw three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet for they are the spirits of devils working miracles which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather, [Or unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:13-14.

The word "gather", in the Greek also means, "unite". Thus the prediction declares that the "spirits of devils" working through the Dragon, Beast and. False Prophet, go out to the rest of the world to deceive

and unite them against God. (On the question of “Kings, rulers and governors” and “The kings of the earth” see Appendix 3)

A natural question that arises in connection with the above prediction is, how can all the world possibly be united? This appears to be an utterly impossible proposition. The world has always been divided politically, racially, religiously. Today Communism controls approximately one third of the earth. Much of the intellectual world is atheistic. When we think of China and the millions of Hindus and Moslems, such a union seems out of the question. But the prediction is clear, “the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather [or unite] them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty”.

How will such a union eventuate? The very prophecy itself tells us how the union will be accomplished.

“They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather [unite] them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.”

It is by the working of miracles. Evil spirits - the spirits of devils - the powers of the occult, working and speaking through the three great agents of Satan, the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet, will perform astounding miracles that will sweep in the rest of mankind. These miracles will break down all opposition, and convince the rest of mankind, except the saints that Papal policy is of God. In his Second Advent sermon, Jesus Christ also warned of tremendous deception.

“For there shall arise false christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before.” Matthew 24:24-25.

This is a very clear warning that irresistible deceptions are to come. These signs and wonders will be so overpowering that they will almost deceive God’s very own elect. What overwhelming deception! Revelation chapter 13 makes a similar prediction of amazing miracles that will be performed to produce the desired effect upon the people of the U.S.A. In describing how the U.S.A. brings about the formation of “the image to the beast”, it declares:

“He does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” Revelation 13:13.

Fire from heaven! This reminds us of Elijah, who was given power to bring down literal fire from heaven. This convinced all that he was of the true God. The fire from the heavens in the last days will probably be a counterfeit. The powers of the occult it seems, will manipulate the elements and cause fire or lightning to flash from the heavens in such a way, that it will convince the unsaved, that the leadership is inspired of God. What hope would the most stubborn of men have, of not being taken in by such dramatic, awe inspiring miracles. What hope would the most fervent Communist or the most fanatical religionist have, in the face of such overpowering delusions. Notice how the author of “Great Controversy” describes it thus.

“Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle working demons. The spirits of devils will go forth to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to fasten them in deception and urge them on to unite with Satan in his last great struggle against the government of heaven. By these agencies, rulers and people will be alike deceived.” (10)

Again, “The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his miracle-working power.” (11)

Today we are witnessing movements of all kinds toward union. In the commercial world we are seeing great mergers. In the economic world we are seeing whole nations uniting. In the labor world, the unions are waxing bigger and becoming more powerful. In the financial world there is evident an increasing monopoly. In the religious world there are great movements toward union and not only in the professedly Christian world. The church of Rome uses the term “pandeism”, to describe her current program of bringing under her wing the non-Christian religions of the world. In this, Rome will finally succeed, because the prediction says, “all the world wondered after the beast”. (Revelation 13:3) In the political

world we will see increasing efforts towards union. Currently it seems that the opposite situation prevails in some areas, but if the Papacy is to lead the world, it means that we will see great changes in regard to Communism and other divergent forces. A form of political world union is coming. Of recent years new movements have risen with the avowed aim of bringing about world government. Dr. Alberto R. Rivero in his revelations of the aims of the Jesuits, of which he was a member, has published a diagram depicting the various organizations which are agents of Rome in bringing about world government. **(11a)**

“The Catholic Church is the biggest financial power, wealth accumulator and property owner in existence. She is a greater possessor of material riches than any other single institution, corporation, bank, giant trust, government or state of the whole globe. The pope, as the visible ruler of this immense amassment of wealth, is consequently the richest individual of the twentieth century. No one can realistically assess how much he is worth in terms of billions of dollars.” (‘The Vatican Billions’ by Avro Manhattan)
Undoubtedly the plans that are now in action will succeed. World government will eventuate as envisaged by the following author.

“There will be a universal bond of union, one great harmony, a confederacy of Satan’s forces. In the warfare to be waged in the last days, there will be united in opposition to God’s people, all the corrupt powers that have apostatized from allegiance to the law of Jehovah.” **(12)**

This means that all who do not genuinely belong to Christ, all who are not loyal to God’s law, will be united together against God. Finally there will be only two groups - two sides - in the last great conflict. One group - the majority - are classified as worshippers of the beast.

“All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, [the beast] whose names are not written in the book of Life of the Lamb.” Revelation 13:8.

On the other side are the minority, those that worship the Lamb, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus”. (Revelation 14:12)

This is the picture in regard to Armageddon, the great finale of the conflict between Christ and Satan, between the church of God and her enemies. The Revelator declares of those involved in the first group, “These shall make war with the Lamb and the Lamb shall overcome them.” Revelation 17:14.

In the impending battle of Armageddon, how do the enemies of God attack or make war on the Lamb? They attack “the Lamb” when they attack his people for Jesus said,
“In that you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me.” Matthew 25:40
“The dragon was wrath with the women [the church] and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

The word for “war” is the same as the word for “battle” - the battle of Armageddon. It appears that Armageddon begins with the attempt to destroy the people of God. As it is written:

“The world is filled with storm and war and variance, yet under one head, the papal power, the people will unite to oppose God in the person of his witnesses.” **(13)**

This statement shows that while on the one hand the world unites against the saints of God, on the other hand there is continual tension among the various groups, “storm, war and variance”. If this involves military conflict, such conflict will not comprise any part of Armageddon, the last great battle.

As the same author quoted above declares,

“Two great opposing powers are revealed in the last great battle. On one side stands the Creator of heaven and earth. All on his side bear his signet, they are obedient to his commands. On the other side stands the prince of darkness with those who have chosen apostasy and rebellion.” **(14)**

This is the powerful truth in regard to Armageddon. We conclude with the most important question of all. What is the secret of victory? How can we be victorious in the great battle that is imminent and which involves every person on the globe? (15)

“The Lamb shall overcome them for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him are called and chosen and faithful.” Revelation 17:14.

The secret is being with the Lamb. If we are with Him, we will share in His victory. Those with the Lamb, it says, “are called and chosen and faithful”. Every person, sometime in his life, is conscious of the Spirit of God calling him. Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen”. Why are few chosen? Because only a few respond to the call. Only a comparative minority respond to the gospel, and they are the ones who are chosen as God’s elect. But not only are they “called and chosen”, they are also “faithful”. They remain loyal, they stand true - they do not yield when opposition comes, they faithfully follow Christ. God is made first in their lives.

By the grace of God they endure, and “lie that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved”. (Matthew 24:13)

Not only are we to know Christ as our Savior and sin bearer but we must know him as our king. This is the emphasis in the light of the coming conflict. “He is King of kings and Lord of lords.” If he is to be our King and Victor in the coming conflict he must be our King now.

“Every soul that is not fully surrendered to God, and kept by divine power, will form an alliance with Satan against heaven, and join in battle against the ruler of the universe.” (15)

“BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHES”

What is the significance of verses 13-15?

The claim is made that because verse 15 exhorts the reader to “watch and keep his garments”, the timing of the sixth plague must be prior to the close of probation. The answer to this claim is that verse 12 is the verse that actually tells what is involved in the sixth plague. Verses 13-16 are a parenthesis. They are inserted into the sixth plague for a specific purpose. We suggest that one reason is that verses 13-15 reveal the preparations essential to bring about Armageddon.

1. To show the preparations of the powers of evil. (Verses 13-14, 16)

These preparations are now in progress and have been for some time. The “gathering” or uniting of the powers of evil is proceeding. As one author declared in speaking of the influence of Spiritualism on the unsaved, “They are binding in bundles, ready to burn.” (16)

2. To show the essential preparation of the believer who is to be involved in the final conflict.

The preparation of the powers of evil is to effect the union of all the unsaved. Verses 13 and 14 reveal how this is done. The preparation of the saints for the conflict is symbolized in verse 15. It Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” The terminology of this verse appears to be borrowed from the experience of the temple watchmen of Jerusalem in their guard duty during the night. The inspector of the guard was called “The man of the mountain”. If in his nightly rounds of inspection he discovered a guard asleep at his post, the man of the mountain would set fire to the hem of the sleeping guard’s garment, resulting in the rude awakening of the guard and the mutilation of his garment. In the morning parade at the end of the watch, the mutilated garment of the guard would be glaringly apparent, bringing shame upon him. (17)

In the preparation for the final conflict, the saints of God, like the temple guards, are to be at their posts, in spiritual Jerusalem - the remnant church. They must be wide awake, alert to the greatest onslaught of deception ever experienced in the history of the church.

Therefore watchfulness is essential. Thus, “Blessed is he that watcheth. Jesus in his special instruction to the saints awaiting the Second Advent, repeatedly charged them “to watch”. Twelve times the word is used in this setting, indicating the danger of being lulled into a state of false security. (18)

“Watch therefore, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” Matthew 24:42
“Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be ready.” 1 Thessalonians 5:6

Many modern preachers are saying the opposite. Belief in the nearness of the Advent is played down. “Don’t be overly concerned, because if He does not come, you will not suffer discouragement”, is the warning. But Christ’s instruction is, “Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments”.

What is the spiritual garment that covers our spiritual nakedness in the sight of heaven? It is the garment of Christ’s righteousness. This is righteousness imputed and righteousness imparted. It is righteousness credited to us to cover our lack and it is also righteousness imparted, to enable the saint “to keep the commandments of God”.

The warning is that if we fail to continue watching we will lose our spiritual robes and be seen as spiritually naked in the sight of heaven.

The greatest stimulus to inspire the saint to keep prepared for the Advent is the belief that it is near. This is the teaching of the New Testament. (Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:44-51)

APPENDIX 1

“As the church approaches her final deliverance, Satan is at work with greater power. All the depths of Satanic skill and subtlety acquired, all the cruelty developed, during these struggles of the ages, will be brought to bear against God’s people in the final conflict, the coming struggle will be marked with terrible intensity such as the world has never witnessed. Satan’s deceptions will be more subtle, his assaults more determined.” Great Controversy pages 11-13.

APPENDIX 2

What of the view that the dragon represents paganism? This application has been made popular by Uriah Smith in his work “Thoughts on Daniel and Revelation”, first published in the 1870’s. However, after a hundred years of study of the subject, the reasons given by Smith for his conclusions need to be seriously questioned.

Uriah Smith correctly concluded that the dragon “in a secondary sense represents pagan Rome”, (page 557) but he then enters the realm of private interpretation and states that the dragon represents Rome “in its pagan form to which all must agree. The dragon then is a false system of religion.” (page 563) This is pure assumption and clashes with correct Biblical interpretation, in which a beast in prophecy represents a kingdom or political entity. (Daniel 7:17, 23) A dragon is undeniably a beast, therefore it must also represent a political entity.

The religious element such as paganism does not enter the picture unless it is specifically mentioned. Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece are represented in Daniel 7 by particular beasts and all three of those kingdoms were completely pagan in religion, but this is not featured in the symbolism. Likewise with the dragon which represented firstly the Roman Empire under the Caesars. Often when the religious system of Rome is referred to in scripture, it is under the term “abomination of desolation” etc.

Secondly Rome is referred to in prophecy as “the dragon” after it had officially renounced paganism as the state religion. Revelation 13:2 states that the “dragon gave him [the Papacy] his power, seat and great authority”. This was fulfilled first, by the emperor Constantine the Great (330 AD) who professed to be Christian, and later by emperor Justinian, a strong Catholic, (483-565 AD). It was in 380 AD, that the Christian emperor Gratian relinquished the pagan title “Pontifex Maximus” where upon it was assumed by the so-called Christian Bishop of Rome, named Damasus (366-384 AD.)

Thus the dragon does not represent any religious element. What it does represent is a political or civil power which is the agent of Satan in opposing God and his people. The dragon of Revelation 12:17 for example represents the political powers used by Satan in the end time but these political powers are professedly Christian in religion, not pagan.

APPENDIX 3

What of the current view that the dragon represents Spiritualism? This view is based on the following statement,

“The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hand across the If to grasp the hands of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influences of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rare in trampling on the rights of conscience.” (Great Controversy page 588)

This statement makes no hint that Spiritualism is the Dragon. It appears that because a “threefold union¹⁰ is mentioned, it must be the threefold union of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet. But the union involving the latter three is actually a fourfold union, because the three are united with Spiritualism.

To apply the Dragon to Spiritualism confuses the picture. Revelation 16:13-declares that the three unclean spirits that is, spiritualism, “come out of the mouth of the dragon” beast and false prophet. If the dragon is also “spiritualism” then the prediction is made to say that Spiritualism comes out of the mouth of Spiritualism. This does not make sense, so the view must be totally rejected especially in the light of the statement that “Kings, rulers and governors have placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist and are represented as the dragon.” (Testimonies To Ministers, page 39) and “In the book of Revelation under the symbols of a great red dragon a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law, and persecuting His people.” (Great Controversy, page 276, 1886 Edition.)

APPENDIX 4

“Kings, rulers and governors.” If the dragon represents “Kings, rulers and governors”, how is it that “the kings of the earth” of Revelation 16:14 are included among those who are deceived etc., after the unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the dragon (or “Kings, rulers and governors”)? The answer to this apparent confusion is that the dragon represents the “Kings, rulers and governors [who] have placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist, that is, the Papacy. However there are other kings and rulers in the rest of the world who have not placed upon themselves the brand of Antichrist. These are described as, “The kings of the earth and of the whole world”.

APPENDIX 5

In 1949 a spirit medium in Australia Informed the author that he was in contact with two thousand Protestant clergymen in that country who were involved in Spiritualism. In a leading city of Australia in 1960 it was reported to the author by one who was involved that in a prominent popular Protestant church, instead of weekly prayer meetings, spiritualistic sittings were being conducted. Similar practices were reported in other leading cities of Australia.

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1. Revelation 16:19.
2. See the Tract or Chapter, "Antichrist and 666".
3. "The Antichrist and 666". Edited by R.A. Anderson, page 168.
4. "Great Controversy" page 588, (See Appendix 2).
5. "Great Controversy", Ellen G. White, page 438.
6. "Testimonies to ministers", Ellen G. White, page 39.
7. See the Tract or Chapter entitled "America's Ominous Future".
- 7a. "The Great Controversy", Ellen G. White, page 276, 1886 edition.
8. See "S.D.A. Bible Commentary", Volume 7, page 982.
9. "The Great Controversy", Ellen G. White, page 624.
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13. "Testimonies to the Church", Ellen G. White, Volume 7, page 182.
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16. "Early Writings", Ellen G. White, pages 88-89.
17. The "New Testament Pocket Commentary" on Revelation 16:15.
18. Matthew 24:42, 43; 25:13; Mark 13:33, 35, 37; Luke 12:37, 38, 39; Luke 21:36; 1 Thessalonians 5:6.

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