

# Church History - Session 8 (The Book of Revelation: A Historic Sequence)

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*The Book of Revelation is a historic sequence of events that outlines the judgments of God poured out on the decaying Roman Empire and apostate Christendom, and the rise of the Reformation and the new knowledge.*

**Duration:** 59:51

**Scripture:** Revelation 11:2-3, Revelation 12:6, Revelation 13:5

**Topics:** "Bible Prophecy", "Church History"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the second row and how it signifies the end of the advancing power of Turkey. The preacher then references the biblical passage of the seventh angel sounding and the voices in heaven proclaiming the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of the Lord and His Christ. The preacher also mentions the four and twenty elders worshiping God and giving thanks for His great power and reign. The sermon further delves into the opening of the temple of God in heaven and the significance of the Reformation verse 4, which is connected to a pattern in history.

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## Transcript

Lesson, lesson eight, and the last week's lesson too, if you'll have with you now. You won't have time to read all the notes of last week's lesson now, but do check through, they are quite important. Here in lesson eight we have a look, a brief review of the previous lesson.

The dark ages and the judgments poured on the decaying Roman Empire, east and west, with its apostate Christendom, were remarkably outlined in the six trumpets of Revelation eight and nine. And the last bastion of Eastern Rome, Constantinople, fell in 1453 before the new terror of fire, smoke and brimstone of the Turkish woe. Explosives were first used on a big scale in the seat of Constantinople.

The result was that scholarship and the sciences fled westward into Europe. The new knowledge, during rise to the Renaissance, particularly in Italy, printing, also coming over with the migration, and the Bible, met in the Reformation. God had his men there at the right hour, the foreordained hour of his purposes.

And the bright era of the little book, Revelation chapter 10, was closely followed on the last great woe. So we see that the chapters of Revelation so far have had a historic sequence, with just a little break, view into heaven once or twice, but by and large a historic sequence in which the Lord did what he said he

would do. He said he would show to his church things which would shortly come to pass.

And as we have looked, we have seen that indeed history, church history, was outlined by the Lord from heaven. That's why I don't think I need a politicize for teaching church history from the angle of prophecy. For who knows better how to map it out than the Lord Jesus? Who knows better what important things to emphasize than he? With the Reformation era, it was also an era of invention and discovery.

Columbus discovered America. History entered into its modern period. Now we come to look at the following three chapters, chapters 11, 12 and 13 in Revelation.

And the fact that the theme here is emphasized so much indicates that it holds an important place in the Lord's eyes too. The following three chapters, 11, 12 and 13, are associated with the sounding of the seventh trumpet. If you'll have a look at Revelation 10, 7, the mighty angel who seems to represent the Lord Jesus says, In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he has declared to his servants the prophets.

And then again in chapter 11, 15, and the seventh angel sounded, that is after the second law is passed. And the sounding of the of the seventh angel, seventh trumpet, will it appears include the seven angels of chapter 14 and the seven vials of chapter 15 and 16, that they all telescope one into another. You see, our Lord designed this book so that it wouldn't give away its secrets too quickly.

The various parts tend to telescope one into the other. But as history passes by, so we learn to draw them out and see how they match and the developments of world, especially church history. Now these three chapters, 11, 12 and 13, include a time period.

In Revelation 11 and verse two, the court that which is without the temple leave out and measure it not, it is given to the Gentiles and the holy city shall they trade under foot forty and two months. The witnesses prophesy, verse three, I will give power to my two witnesses and Rachel prophesy a thousand two hundred and sackcloth. That is the same period only expressed in days.

One thousand two sixty days is the same as forty two months and equals three and a half years. The free woman, chapter 12 and verse six, the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days. Once again, the same period.

And then power given to the persecuting beast, Revelation 13 and verse five, there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies and power was given to him to continue forty and two months. So there are four, actually five, parallels, references to the same period, all characterized by three and a half years. So it is probable that all these refer to the same period and give the inside story of what was happening during the trumpets era.

That is, we're going back over the ground again and looking at it from a different angle. When we saw that the trumpets in operation, the divine judgments were being poured in upon the decaying empire and across the Christendom from the outside, from across the Rhine and across the Danube, up from the Mediterranean and then finally from the east as the Pharisees and later on the Turks brought their woes into Europe. But these chapters show you the same story from the inside and evidently contain the heart of the message of the book of Revelation.

It's all been building up to this. You may think of this section as being some of those things written on the back side of the roll. You remember the roll of Revelation 5 verse 1, there's a roll written on the front and on the back side.

When there's an urgent prophecy, as in Ezekiel, loaded with warnings, the roll was sometimes written on both sides of the usual factors of writing on one side of the roll to indicate urgency. And you may think of these chapters as giving additional information covering the same ground. When the early church received this book and looked at this period of three and a half years, they thought that the time period would be a literal three and a half years.

That's right, so they should because they were early in the day and they had to expect the coming of the Lord in their own time. And so very naturally they thought of that period as being a literal three and a half years. But when over a thousand years had passed and darkness had increased over Christendom to an unimaginable degree and Christ had not come, the thought gradually took hold of those who studied the Bible that the period might be much longer.

And that the Lord, who had graciously concealed from the first Christians the length of the great apostasy, had also graciously left for later generations, including ourselves, generations instructed by the passing of the centuries, the key of Ezekiel 4 verse 6. That key is a day that represents a year. A day that represents a year. You've already met it in Daniel's 70 weeks.

You saw it in Genesis, twice again in Ezekiel. You may remember it in our Lord's reply to the Pharisees when they said Herod desires to kill you. He said go tell that fox I do yours today and tomorrow and the third day shall I be perfected.

Not literal days, but years. The three years of his ministry. So as you write through scripture we have this year day pattern in prophetic things.

And so those who were inquiring into these things after a whole thousand years had gone by began to think maybe that is the scale which we should use in understanding revelation. But there's a difficulty. How can you apply a time measure like 1260 years instead of 1260 days to an institution which arose, triumphed and decayed over long periods.

You have already seen that the mystery of iniquity was beginning to work in the time of Paul, in the time of John. Antichrists were already operating then. And we saw how it wasn't until the 7th century that the whole system put it out.

It just continued growing little by little until it grew over those years to the great power that would control the then known Christian world. And in its decay, it began to decay with the reformation. There were further stages in its decay in the great revolutions which have shaped Europe since then.

But the end is not yet. So how do you measure something so insidious and gentle in its growth and so slow in its decay with a time period? That the man of sin was to come with all deceivableness. And he was to be consumed.

That is a slow process before his end. So we are certainly not able to use a time period to calculate the day of our Lord's return. So don't play any tricks like that if you understand the year-day system.

Many people have done so, and have fallen into sad mistakes. But we can use the time measure like a pair of dividers over the page of history. That is, 1-2-60 years characterizes the range of the great apostasy in history.

And if you take each great starting point and measure 1-2-60 years, you will come to a similar terminating point. Let me give you one or two instances of this. In 254 AD, Cyprian was the first to say that the Bishop of Rome was the successor of Peter.

No one thought of it before then, but Cyprian definitely said so. And that the Church of Rome is entitled to precedence over all other churches. That was one start of the growth of the apostasy.

1-2-60 years later, 1514, Pope Leo X announced a general rejoicing and thanksgiving that all heresy had been wiped out at the Lateran Council. That ought to be a full stop after Lateran Council. In fact, you better put at the Lateran Council in brackets.

Three and a half years later, the Reformation burst forth. I'll show you the full format of that later. This pattern, P-A-W-T-E-R-N, is stamped across church history.

It is a pattern which God has taken from the solar system. Do you know that he set the sun and the moon to control times and seasons? Well, this 1-2-60 year period is one of the great combination periods of the sun and the moon. 1-2-60 years.

2-5-20 years is another one. 10-40 years is a third one. The sun and the moon are like the great big hands of God's clock, and they only cross at certain times.

Do you understand that? Each month the moon is in a slightly different position in relation to the sun and the earth. 1-2-60 years brings the whole system just without that to its starting place again. God is the author of times and seasons.

And it marks the general length of the great apostasy. Thus, from the decree of Pocus, who conceded to Pope Boniface III headship over all the churches of Christendom, from the great dates of the rise of the papacy, to the loss of all papal dominion, that should be dominion, 1870. Actually 1866 was the beginning of that period of trouble.

There was the same period of 1-2-60 years, marking the rise and marking the fall. We'll have a look at Revelation 11. Verse 1 and 2, There was given me a reed like unto a rod, and the angel stood saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

But the court which is without the temple read out, and measure it not, for it is given unto the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they trade under foot forty and two months. This being a message to the church, for the church, concerning the church, you will have usually the antitypical meaning of Jerusalem, and the holy city, and Babylon, and so on. All antitypical.

So that, in this case, the temple would be at what Paul says, Ye are the temple of God. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God? Measuring implies appreciation. You get it in Ezekiel.

When Ezekiel sees the angel taking a measuring rod to go and measure the temple, God measuring those who really and truly belong to him. But the cause of the Gentiles, the area spreading around the temple, what might very well suggest to us the professing church. A great number of people who were attached to

the church, called Christians, but aren't really Christians.

You know that in this age we have this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. He measures them. And your side of the thing is, let him that name it in the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.

There is the mark of God's measurement. So here is a state of affairs, measured by the great bracket of 1-2-60, in which God marks his elect, but recognizes that most of what is professing to be the church is corrupt and not worthy of notice. Now then, verse 3, I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.

Who are they? We've all heard Gethse's explanations as to who they might be. Some have said Enoch, must be one of the witnesses, because he didn't die. But the Bible says, and the witnesses do die don't they, but the Bible says Enoch was translated that he should not see them.

So I believe the Bible. Enoch's not going to die. And some have said Elijah.

And if I show to them Matthew 11, 14, all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. But, and if you will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come. He even had ears to hear, let him hear.

Then they haven't ears to hear, and they say, oh well, it says if we receive it. And they say they didn't receive him, so he wasn't Elijah. But if I, if I then go to Luke, and I think it's Luke 9. I've got a corresponding passage in there.

Matthew 17 is it? Yes. At Matthew 17, verse 10, his disciples asked him, coming down from the mountain, why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? Jesus answered and said, Elijah truly shall first come and restore all things. But I found you that Elijah is come already.

And they knew him not, but had done to him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake to them of John the Baptist.

Now Jesus said, Elijah is come already. Do you believe him? Or do you say, I have a better idea? So our law doesn't encourage us to think that Elijah is going to be one of the witnesses. Some say Moses.

Well Moses did die, didn't he? And God buried him. So I rather doubt, it's quite unlikely that he'll be brought back to earth again to die the second time. Anyone else, any points on that? Well you can interrupt me later on if you like.

And they are defined, the Bible itself says who they are. These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. What does a candlestick stand for in the book of Revelation? Use your keys.

Use the keys that God has given you in the book. What does a candlestick stand for in the book of Revelation? A church, thank you. That's the key, number one.

And the other, the olive tree. So if you'll come back to Zechariah, you'll see the delightful symbol of the prophet has been taken and slightly adapted to apply to the revelation situation. Perhaps I'd better try and draw what Zechariah saw in chapter four.

A candlestick, I can't even draw straight, never mind, because it's wrong. So the whole thing is linked up. And on either side of it, there are two olive trees.

And the olive trees are rich with oil, and they pour the oil out of themselves into the candlestick. And then Zechariah asks the angel what it means, verse four. So I answered and spake to the angel that talked with me, saying what are these my lord? Then the angel that talked with me answered and said unto me knowest thou not what these be? And I said no my lord.

Then he answered and spake unto me saying this is the word of the lord and is irrevocable not by might nor by power but by my spirit said the lord of hosts. And that wonderful prophecy about the power of the holy spirit is found transferred right to the middle of revelation. So how can the holy spirits have been taken out in chapter five? There it is, right in the middle of revelation, not by might nor by power but by my spirit.

These two olive trees represent the two thumbs of oil, the two anointed ones. Perhaps in Zerubbabel's day it referred to the two prophets Haggai and Zechariah supplying by the holy spirit that ability for the testimony of Israel to keep alight in a time of darkness and difficulty, for they were a difficult time for Israel. And here in revelation the two symbols are united.

These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks, the two anointed ones that stand before the god of the earth, indicating a prophetic function, standing like Elijah. God stood, Elijah stood before God, God of Israel before whom I stand. So they are churches endowed with the power of the holy spirit, reduced to the minimal number for witness, clothed in sackcloth.

They testify in sorrow and suffering and mourning over the corruptions that surround them. Have there been such people during all that long age of apostasy? Well, you know by this time, yes, we've been looking at some of them. The Polychaeans, the Waldenses, the Lalans, the Tetrabrusians, several other little groups, all the way through Europe there are little groups, particularly two major groups, the Polychaeans in the east and the Waldenses in the west, who maintain a testimony in the midst of darkness, standing true to the bible and to the gospel and to a simple form of worship, all through those long years of darkness.

I will give power. God has not left himself without witness. During all those dark years of apostasy and evil, some of the horrors of which I dare not read to you, but you may find a summary in Harry, during all those years God did not leave himself without witness, but there were the precious people of God preserved by him to maintain the testimony of Christ.

I will give power to my two witnesses and they shall prophesy. Not a great number, a limited number, not living in prosperity, but clothed in sackcloth, testifying. As I mentioned to you, I think, last week about those called for territories to go through Europe, carrying their packs, and where they found opportunity they would testify for Christ.

Sometimes they suffered, were caught, tortured, and killed, but they maintained a testimony throughout the dark ages. And when they have finished their testimony, not only for Christ, but against Antichrist, the beast shall make war and kill them. We'll have a look at the beast, verse 7 it is.

The beast at the bottom of this pit shall make war against them, shall overcome them, and kill them. In Sisymondes' History of the Albigenses, he says of them and the Baudois, all agreed in regarding the Church of Rome as having absolutely perverted Christianity, and in maintaining that it was she who was designated in the Apocalypse by the name of the Whore of Babylon. Rome could not endure this testimony.

She drew her deadly sword and waged war against those who bore it. In the year 1208, the Albigenses were murderously persecuted. Innocent III employed the Crusaders in this dreadful work.

The whole crusade was turned against Bible believers. Now you know what character the Crusades had. They were wicked through and through.

Dressed up by the Roman Church, by Roman historians to be picturesque figures, but actually wicked. Murdering Jews and believers in Britain, robbing, killing men of low character. The cross on their shields didn't make them Christians.

The war of extermination was denominated sacred, and if I remember rightly, a plenary absolution was given granted to everybody who fought in it. The Pope's soldiers prosecuted it with pious ardour. Men, women, and children were all precipitated into the flames.

Whole cities were burned. Seven thousand dead bodies were counted in a single church where the people had taken refuge. The whole country was laid waste, an entire people were slaughtered, and the eloquent witness of these early reformers was reduced to the silence of a grave.

Thus began the tremendous war against the saints foretold in Daniel and the Apocalypse, and thenceforward it was murderously prosecuted from century to century. Early in the 13th century was founded the Inquisition, and full persecuting powers entrusted by the Popes to the Dominicans. A remnant of the boudoir, escaping from the south of France, took refuge in the Alps.

I'll miss his description of their lovely countryside. These valleys were the refuge of the Israel of the Alps, Protestants before the Reformation. These noble mountaineers resolutely refused to bow their knees.

They were a faithful remnant of the early church, preserved all through the central eighties of apostasy. This folio volume, he's had an election, he has some books in front of him on the desk, this folio volume is a faithful history of the Waldensees, written 217 years ago, now 300 years ago, by the Waldensean pastor Leger. He tells with simple clearness the story of the Waldensees.

He gives him full their confession of faith, and narrates the history of their martyrdoms, including the dreadful massacre in the Vale of Liz Cerner in 1655, of which he himself was eyewitness. It contains numerous depositions concerning it, rendered on oath, and long lists of the names of those who were its victims. He gives also plates depicting the dreadful ways in which they were slaughtered.

These plates represent men, women, and children being dismembered, disemboweled, ripped up, run through with swords, impaled on stakes, torn limb from limb, clung from presses, roasted in flames. They're almost too horrible to look at. And this was only one of a long series of massacres of the Waldensees extending through 600 painful years.

Milton wrote of these Protestant sufferers when he wrote an appeal to Cromwell to send support for the starting remnants. Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold, in them who kept thy truth so pure of old, when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones, forget not. In thy book record their groans, who were thy sheep, and in their ancient folds slain by the bloody Piedmontese that rolled mother with infant down the rocks.

Their moans the veils redoubled to the hills and lay to heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow, O all the Italian fields, where still doth sway that triple silent, that from these may grow a hundredfold, who,

having learned thy way, early may fly the Babylonian woe. I must say that the soldiers of the papal army were only able to overcome them by a piece of trickery.

The Waldensees had been able to hold those valleys against all comers for hundreds of years. A handful of men in those mountain passes time and again kept away a whole army. Armies were devoured by the mountains and the fogs.

No one could get near them. But then the papal agents approached the Waldensees with offers of peace, which they gladly accepted, and said, as a gesture of our mutual confidence, will you let our soldiers lodge in your villages for three nights? And they said yes. And that's how that plotter took place.

How did the Waldensees think of the Antichrist? Here is Leger's book. In simple telling terms, that treatise brands the Romanist church as the harlot Babylon, the papacy of the man of sin and Antichrist. In Bohemia, a reformation sprung up more than a century before the time of Luther, and it was quenched in seas of blood.

Their testimony was that Rome is Babylon and the papacy the Antichrist. In England, five hundred, six hundred years ago, God raised up John Wycliffe. He translated the scriptures into the English tongue, waged wars against the errors and abominations of the church of Rome.

How did he interpret these prophecies? As the Waldensees did. He wrote a special treatise, The Mirror of Antichrist. From Wycliffe sprang the English lawyers.

They numbered hundreds of thousands. What was their testimony? Here is one of them from Lord Collins. He wrote before King Henry V, admonished to submit himself to the Pope.

This is his answer. As touching the Pope and his spirituality, I owe them neither suit nor service, for as much as I know him by the scriptures to be the great Antichrist, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and an abomination standing in the holy place. He was condemned to death, laid on a hurdle, drawn to St. Giles' field.

He exalted the multitude, and then he was hanged up there in the middle, in chains of iron and burned, praising God as long as his life lasted. My writer here gets a bit emotional. All these were burned, I'm missing out some of what he said, before the Reformation, and thousands more.

They were burned, but their words were not burned. Their testimony wasn't burned. It lived on.

Fire could not scourge it, scorch it. Chains could not bind it. Gangs could not silence it.

Zales could not stifle it. Swords could not slay it, nor could destroy it. Truth is immortal, unconquerable.

Imprison it, and it comes forth free. Bury it, and it rises again. Crush it to the earth, it springs up victorious.

Cure for the conflict, nobler for the victory. Here's the testimony of William Tyndale. Tyndale was the man who gave us the English Bible.

He was persecuted in Britain, fled to the continent, published the scripture there, got it sent over secretly to Britain, was at last betrayed by a fellow Englishman, and he was hanged and burned. Before publishing the scripture, he spoke plainly, plainly, and called the Pope antichrist. Antichrist, in another manner, had sent forth his disciples, those false anointed of which Christ warned us before, that they should come and

show miracles and wonders, even to bring the very elect out of the way if it were possible.

Bishop must be faultless, the husband of one wife, saith the scripture. Nay, saith the Pope, the husband of no wife, but the holder of as many women as he wishes. What saith the Pope? I command to read the gospel in Latin.

He goes on making these points. The emperors and kings are no other but hangmen to the popes and bishops, to kill whomsoever they condemn, without any more ado. He continues his attack in that way.

All the other English reformers, including Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Bradford, and Jewell, held that the Pope was the man of sin. So did John Knox in Scotland. He sounded out his testimony on the subject as with a trumpet.

Here's an old copy of Knox's History of the Reformation, and its contents are described on the title page. The manner and by what persons the life of Christ's gospel has been manifested into this realm, after that horrible and universal detection from the truth which has come by the means of the Roman Antichrist, and so on. There's an endless list of those who stood in those days and completed their testimony, not just by testifying to Christ, but to testify against Antichrist.

And when they completed their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall roar against them, and shall overcome them and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of a great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

And they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and Mary shall send gifts unto another, because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth. I mentioned earlier that the Lateran Council, 1514, rejoiced that every heretic had been wiped out, every voice silenced, every preacher for Christ put away. No more scriptures being published.

The official church was triumphant. Three and a half years later, that is three and a half prophetic days later, Luther nailed his thesis, 1517, to the church hall at Wittenberg. The witnesses rose from the dead, exalted to heaven, and the Reformation had begun.

Exact fulfillment. Praise to that heaven, not the heaven of heavens, but that heaven where the dragon was. You remember, he sees a dragon in heaven, I saw another wonder in heaven.

That is a plate of power. They stood upon their feet. In Ezekiel 37, 10, you know the great multitude who were dead, the dry bones in Ezekiel 37, and they stood upon their feet.

The very same phrase, an exceeding great army. Do you know what that means? Ezekiel 37, 10. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

Then he gave the interpretation, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off from our paths. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves and bring you into the land of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live. And I shall place you in your own land, and then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord. I don't think anyone here who is acquainted with the Ezekiel prophecy and the history of Israel doubts that that is a symbolic and not a literal resurrection.

All right? A symbolic and not a literal resurrection. Now the book of Revelation is definitely stated by the Lord Jesus to be symbolic. So here we have symbolic witnesses in a symbolic death and a symbolic resurrection.

The same was for a great earthquake. The tenth part of the city fell. In the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.

The remnant were uprighted and gave glory to the God of heaven. A tenth part of the city? Whatever would that mean? Why, you remember that the beast had ten horns representing the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire would break up? Did one of those kingdoms fall away in the time of the Reformation and no longer owe any allegiance to a papacy? Yes, indeed. Little Britain broke away at that time, has never been brought back again into bondage, and you have inherited her liberty.

There were slain of men seven thousand. There was indeed tremendous trouble with the Thirty Years' War at that time, but probably the seven thousand might have a little hint about the seven Protestant provinces of Holland. They were little independent provinces and they were cruelly besieged by the Spanish forces in the name of the Pope.

The Spanish forces came against Britain in the Armada and against Holland through the Duke of Alba and sought to destroy these Protestant countries. And by the winds of God, by the miracle of God, those seven provinces were saved and were able to break away from the dominion of Rome. The second woe is past.

That is, that menace of advancing Turkey won't be seen in history anymore. There'll be a losing power now. The third woe is coming, and the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

He shall reign forever and ever. The four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, Forgive thee, thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and was, and art to come, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and his reign. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the art of his testament, that there were lightnings and voices, thunderings and an earthquake, and a great hang. Once again, it looked like the end of the world, didn't it? The other thing is, revelation still goes on. So that in the days when you were involved in that great reformation climax, you had every right to expect the coming of the Lord was very near.

And you'd say, I don't understand the rest of revelation, but it does look as though his coming is very near. And so it was. There was a revived interest in the coming of our Lord Jesus.

A general feeling, especially among those who had received the Bible and entered into salvation, that the Lord had at last taken over in triumph over the powers of darkness. The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the art of his testament. The art of his testament.

That is, at this time of general distress and overthrow, surely there was new insight given into the central truths of the gospel. It was a tremendous era of rediscovery of Bible truth. Lightnings and voices and thunderings and earthquakes and a great hail, general disruption in Europe, attack and counter-attack of satanic powers.

Chapter 12. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, upon her head a crown of twelve stars. And she being with birth, cried traveling in birth and came to be delivered.

And there appeared another wonder in heaven. Behold the great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his head. His tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven.

He cast them down to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man-child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

Her child was called up unto God and to his throne. The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days. There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels against the dragon.

The dragon fought with his angels and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the devil and Satan which deceived the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, his angels were cast out with him.

And I heard a loud voice say in heaven, Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ for the accusal of our brethren is cast down. We shall accuse them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their line unto the death.

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, for the devil has come down unto you having great wrath because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

And to the woman were given two great wings of an eagle that she might fly to the wilderness into her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time," there's that period again, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Everyone knows that this woman is a symbol, even though they don't like to think of the two witnesses as a symbol. I don't know why that is, but here very obviously the woman is a symbol.

She is in heaven, and she's clothed with the sun. If she were a real woman, she'd be burned up. So at last our wise friends can see that this might be a symbol.

She is clothed with the sun, she has a crown of twelve stars, and the moon is under her feet. Some say that she is a symbol of Israel, some say she's a symbol of the church. She is clothed with the sun, that indicates righteousness, surely, son of righteousness.

Twelve stars in her crown could be the twelve patriarchs that Joseph dreamed about. It could be the twelve apostles as in Revelation 21-14, the foundations of the new Jerusalem. But, and here's my objection to that second opinion, a matron is not usually a symbol of the church.

Mother church is not a biblical concept. I have a spouse who says Paul was a chaste virgin to Christ. Mother church is not a biblical concept.

I don't think anywhere in the bible do you find a church referred to as a mother. Notice also that she has the travail, and the man-child is exalted. The man-child is not likely to be the company of overcomers, who are rewarded for their own suffering, not the travail of another company.

I don't think it would be quite fair if a general church suffered travail so that an elect company can get out of it. I don't think that's reading something artificial into it. The man-child has brethren who suffer with their mother during the oppression of the dragon.

Verse 17. These brethren of the man-child are like John. Look at the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Look at Revelation 1.9. I was in Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. And I think also Revelation 14.12, the elect company. Here is the patience of the saints.

They are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. So you know who the younger brethren of the mother are. They are people like John.

They are Christians. All right. Who is their mother and who is their elder brother? Hebrews 2.11. Here's her elder brother.

For both he that sanctifyeth and they who are sanctified are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, and in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. So the elder brother of the people who are like John, their elder brother is Jesus. Who is the woman? Galatians 4.26. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

We're the children, we're not the mother. Who is our mother? Look back. Verse 22.

It is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory, for these are the two covenants.

Hear that? These two women are the two covenants. Look at it. Galatians 4.24. One from Mount Sinai, which generates the bondage, which is Agar.

But Jerusalem which is above is free. That is the second woman, Sarah. The other covenant, the new covenant, which is the mother of us all.

How were you born? Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth. There's your mother. The gospel is your mother.

That's why you feel at home in a gospel meeting. You are born of the word of truth. You are born of the gospel by the Holy Ghost.

And that wonderful gospel promise was given first of all to Abraham. In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And it was foreshadowed in Eve.

The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. It was sustained through the elect of Israel. All the way, God told Elijah, he had an election in Israel who loved him, who feared him, who believed in him.

There was a seed line that Luke and Matthew trace all the way from Adam and all the way from Abraham, right the way down to the Old Testament. A seed line of the leading people who were to be the forebears of the fulfillment of the promise. They're all waiting for the promise.

And at last our great elder brother was born into the world in fulfillment of the promise. Have a look at Luke chapter 2.

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