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## Studies in the book of the Revelation Section V

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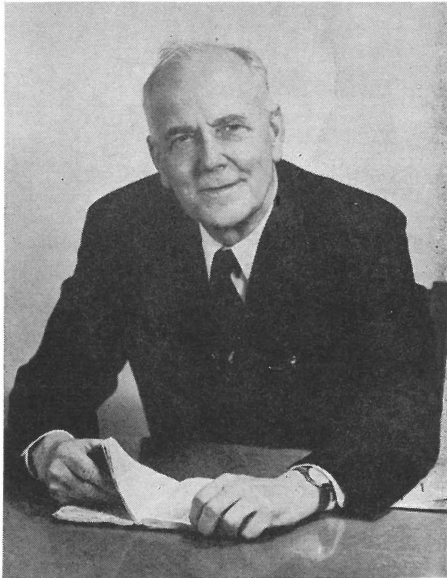
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SECTION V

# STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

By Louis T. Talbot, D. D.

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CHRIST, THE HIGH PRIEST

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer” (8:2, 3).

John sees the seven angels standing before God; he sees them receiving the trumpets. But before they step forward, one by one, to sound the trumpets, John beholds “another angel,” who holds in his hand a golden censer.

The question arises: Who is this angel who holds in his hand the golden censer? There can be but one answer. I believe that this angel is not a created being like other angels, but that He is the Lord Jesus Himself who is seen in His office of Intercessor and Great High Priest on Israel’s behalf. Why do I believe that? Read what follows:

“And there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

Who alone has the right to offer the prayers of the saints to God? Who alone can make the prayers of the people acceptable to the Great Ruler of this universe? Only the Son of God can do that. He is the one and only Mediator between God and men, and He alone can intercede for mankind. “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). Angels and archangels are mighty beings, but they cannot stand between a sinner and God as mediators. The Son of God alone can do this.

But why is the Son of God represented as an angel? We must bear in mind that during the period of time covered by the events recorded in chapters 4-22, God is again dealing with Israel as a nation. Consequently, the Lord Jesus Christ is represented as He was in the Old Testament days in His relation to His Chosen People. In the Old Testament it is recorded how the “angel of Jehovah” dealt with the patriarchs. He talked with Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, and met Moses upon the mount. He was none other than the Lord Jesus Himself before the incarnation.

Ever since Israel rejected her King, God has ceased to deal with her *as a nation*. In her persecution and sorrow, she has had no Mediator, *as a nation*. But after the church age is over, the Son of God will once more deal with Israel *as a nation*, and will exercise the same relationship to her that He did during her early history. That is why we see Him in Rev. 8:3-5, as the Angel of the Covenant, gathering up the prayers of the saints, the prayers of the martyred souls that we saw under the altar in 6:9, 10, as well as the prayers of the Jewish remnant living upon the earth. That is why we see Him offering these prayers before the throne.

Are these prayers for mercy upon those who are persecuting the people of God? No, they are prayers for vengeance. They are in keeping with the attitude of God toward evil doers in that day. And how are they answered? John tells us in symbolic language just how God will answer the cry of His persecuted people:

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake” (verse 5).

Israel’s prayer is for divine intervention, and God hears and answers accordingly; for thunderings and lightnings are the symbols of judgment upon the enemies of God’s people. This judgment is described in the seven trumpets, which follow immediately.

### THE FIRST TRUMPET

Rev. 8:7

“The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.”

There are some people who contend that the events set forth in symbolic form in the book of Revelation have already taken place; but a careful student of the Word of God, after taking into consideration the scope of “this prophecy,” will

realize that the judgments which follow the sounding of the trumpets have not yet descended. God’s suffering people, the persecuted Jewish remnant left upon the earth, will cry for vengeance, and God will hear and answer their prayer.

Hail, fire, and blood, symbols of divine wrath, fall upon the earth when the first angel sounds his trumpet. You will remember that, when the children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt, they cried unto the Lord; “and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Ex. 2:23, 24). He sent plagues upon the Egyptians, one of them being the plague of hail, and fire mingled with the hail. Just as He heard their cry in those days, so also will He hear their cry again, in the last days.

David could not understand why the wicked prosper, and he talked to God about it. He wondered why they were not cut off, and God said to him, “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed forever” (Psa. 92:7). And so it will be when the first trumpet is sounded. Grass and green, growing things stand for the prosperity of the rich man; and we see here that man’s prosperity is to end in calamity. The destruction of the trees and of the green grass speaks to us of the judgment that shall strike at the rich, unregenerated men who have become prosperous in the things of the world, but who have rejected the Gospel of grace.

Nebuchadnezzar is a type of the rich, independent, God-ignoring, rich man. In the book of Daniel we see him, in his prime, likened to a great tree. And what happened to that tree? God ordered it cut down. His prosperity, his pride, his independence became as nothing; and he lost his reason, becoming as the very beast of the field, eating grass like the oxen.

James sounds a warning to the unregenerated rich man. “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten” (James 5:1, 2).

The rich of the earth have had a little foretaste of those miseries through depressions and revolution and the confiscation of property by ruthless dictators; but what has happened is as nothing compared with what will take place “in the last days.”

The Lord Jesus Christ speaks to men through His Word and through His messengers, but He has other ways of speaking to them. Many a man and many a woman will thank God through all eternity for the times of depression through which the world has passed from time to time.

I recall an incident which I witnessed several years ago when the 1929 depression came. A friend took me to visit the Stock Exchange in Philadelphia. It was a fascinating scene. A man in front of a blackboard was putting up figures, and those figures were changed constantly. I saw a woman, well-dressed, near the front of the crowd, watching with a tense, strained look on her face. When the man at the board changed some figures, making a difference of twenty-five points, that woman cried out, "My God!" and toppled over in a dead faint. She had lost a quarter of a million dollars just by that change in figures. I do not know whether she knew Jesus Christ or not, but I do know this: She cried out to God when her calamity came. And some men and women who have ignored Him in the days of their prosperity will find God through their adversity.

But it will not be so in the period of the seventieth week of Daniel. The hearts of men will be hardened; and the man who is "grinding the faces of the poor," laying up treasures on earth, will be everlastingly lost if he does not repent and turn to God while there is yet time.

### THE SECOND TRUMPET

*Rev. 8:8, 9*

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."

It is a little difficult to know what is the nature of this second trumpet. A mountain in the Word of God represents two things: First, it stands for a kingdom. (Isa. 2:2; Zech. 4:7; Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35). The sea, of course, is typical of the nations. This burning mountain may represent some

kingdom internally on fire, signifying probably revolutions which will be precipitated into the restless sea of nations, bringing about destruction of life and commerce, the latter represented by the ships.

Second, a mountain represents Babylon. In Jer. 51:25 Babylon is likened to a mountain of burning fire. We know what Babylon was and how it was the center of heathen religions, those religions which found their fullest expression in the fifteenth century when they corrupted the church. In the verses quoted we have a picture of how the apostate church, Babylon the Great, will be cast into the sea of nations. In other words, God will "spew out" of His mouth the false church for which Babylon stands; then the nations will turn on this false church and destroy it.

### THE THIRD TRUMPET

*Rev. 8:10, 11*

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters: and the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

"The third part" mentioned in the book of Revelation, in connection with the trumpet judgments, represents the Roman Empire. In the preceding verses we are told that "hail and fire mingled with blood" were cast upon the earth; but here, when the third trumpet sounds, we see that a star falls. As we have already intimated, the stars represent the ecclesiastical leaders of the people, those leaders in Romanism and Protestantism that will be left behind when the true church is translated, as portrayed in the opening verse of chapter four.

John says a "great star" fell from heaven; and in the falling of that star, multitudes of people will be affected. Whom does this star represent? Undoubtedly some person who has great authority in a religious way and who becomes an

avowed apostate. Since there is to be a union of the authority of the revived Roman Empire and the Roman Catholic Church, it is likely that the great leader referred to will be the ecclesiastical head of the empire. We know what a powerful influence is wielded by the head of the Roman Catholic system; and it is reasonable to suppose that in the last days, when men have only an intellectual belief, which is not based on regeneration, the head of that empire will get an even greater hold upon his followers. Think of the confusion that will exist among those followers when the millions, who shall have followed blindly his teachings and leadership, find that he becomes an apostate.

We are not dogmatic in the assertion that the "star" will be the pope of Rome, but without question it represents some great apostate who exercises influence over millions of people. We know no other ecclesiastical leader who does this.

"The third part of the waters became wormwood"; that is, bitter. Water, in the Scriptures, represents the truth of God. This great apostate will corrupt the truth of God and will promulgate doctrines that will take away what hope men might cherish.

"Many men die . . ." Having rejected salvation through the shed blood of the Son of God, those who embrace the doctrines of this false leader will find not only physical, but spiritual death as well.

#### THE FOURTH TRUMPET

*Rev. 8:12, 13*

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

The light which God has given to men will be withdrawn from them. There will come a time when men will be enveloped by a terrible moral darkness.

As we have already learned, God will send a strong delusion upon men; and even now the shadows of spiritual darkness are deepening. You have only to look about you to realize that fact. All sorts of damnable cults and heresies are being advanced in the name of Christ, and are deceiving many. Scores of professed Christians are going out of the church into Christian Science and Theosophy. Not long ago there was an account in the papers of a woman who left her church to embrace the Hindoo faith.

Do you ask why it is that men and women turn from the light of the Christian faith, and go away into the darkness of false religions? It is because they have steeled their hearts against God. They have heard the truth, time and time again perhaps, and have rejected it. It is a very serious matter to play with the things of God, to listen to the Gospel of grace, and then go out from the house of God, repudiating the Son of God. The man who has not heard the truth over and over again, can see more clearly than can the one who sits, Sunday after Sunday, listening to the message from the Word of God, and then goes out without accepting Christ as his Savior. The darkness is never so dark as when you have been in the light for a time, and then go out into the dark.

Do not steel your heart against God, my friend. If you do, He will withdraw His light from you. And let me add this: The man who has no religion at all, stands a better chance of coming to the place of repentance than the man who hears the true Gospel, rejects it, and then falls a prey to some of the false doctrines and abominable cults which are flooding the land. The following incident will illustrate what I mean.

Sometime ago I was pastor of a church in Chicago. One day a little woman who was one of my members, came up to me and said:

"Mr. Talbot, I should like for you to come up and talk with me in my home. I want you to come and have a meal with me; but you had better come at noon, instead of in the evening, because my husband will not have preachers there at all."

I looked at that little woman as she stood there. She was

a pitiful, thin, anemic-looking being, colorless and wan. I went to her home, and she told me her story—how every month, when her husband got his pay-check, she had to go to the place where he worked and see that he got home with it. If she did not do that, he would take his money and drink until he was so drunk he hardly knew where he lived.

Well, one day that man was persuaded to go to church, and he heard the Gospel preached. After the meeting, he said to me:

“Mr. Talbot, I have a different slant on preachers. They are not as bad as I thought they were. I know what I ought to do, but do not press this thing about Christ and my need. Do not press it.”

I pressed it as far as I could, but he would not be moved. I left Chicago, to take a church in Texas. Years afterwards, I returned to Chicago. While having lunch in a restaurant, I saw a man sitting at another table not very far away, who kept looking every once in a while in my direction. Finally he came over and said, “You are Mr. Talbot, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Well, don’t you know me?” I looked at him a few moments, and then I said:

“You are Mr.—”

“Yes,” he answered, “but I am a different man. You go out to my home now and talk to my wife about me, and she will tell you that I have not been drunk in five years. I have not tasted liquor for all that time. I never fight with my wife. My home is a regular heaven now.”

“My dear brother,” I said, “you must have come in contact with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God!”

At my words, a sneer came over his face.

“Jesus Christ, the Son of God? Jesus Christ, nothing! I do not believe in that stuff about the blood of Jesus. The thing that has made me a different man is not what you preach. It is because I have taken up Christian Science that I am a different man.”

Poor deluded man! Stumbling along in the darkness of a false doctrine, rejecting the light of God, he thought he was a different man. In one sense he was perhaps; but he was like the man who swept his house clean, and then allowed to enter seven other spirits more wicked than himself. And of that man the Lord said, “The last state . . . is worse than the first.”

## THE FIFTH TRUMPET—THE FIRST WOE

*Rev. 9:1-12*

The closing words of chapter eight are significant: “Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!” No doubt you have taken note of the fact, as we have progressed in our study, that the scenes which the Holy Spirit permitted the Apostle John to behold grew darker and darker. When “the things which shall be hereafter” actually come to pass, the great tribulation comes upon the earth, then the hearts of men will fail them for fear. Spiritual darkness such as the world has never seen will prevail. And so terrible will the judgments be, as the seventieth week of Daniel draws to a close, that the last three trumpet judgments are called the three “woes.”

“And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.”

In the original, the words, “A star fall from heaven,” really reads, “The star which had fallen from heaven.” This is the translation of Weymouth and others. It is not the act of falling in vision here, but the fact of a star which had fallen that is contemplated. The reference undoubtedly is to the star that fell in connection with the blowing of the third trumpet, the star whose falling shall affect multitudes of people. The trend of events shows that the star referred to represents the great apostate whom the devil will use to bring unbelief to a head in the last days.

To this great apostate will be given “the key of the bottomless pit.” He will put that key, as it were, into the door that leads to the bottomless pit; the door will be opened; and out of the pit will come a blinding smoke that will obliterate the supreme source of light, darkening the very air itself.

Following Peter’s great confession of the deity of Christ, our Lord said to him, among other things, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 16:19).

Peter used those keys on the day of Pentecost, when he opened the door of Christian opportunity to Israel by proclaiming the Gentiles when he preached salvation through faith to them in truth to them. He used them again to open the door to the the house of Cornelius. It was what he said and taught concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that opened the door to them.

But not always are keys rightly used. In Luke 11:52 Christ said to the hypocritical leaders of the Jews, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

It is very evident that the great apostate, represented by the fallen star, will use a system of teaching made up of heresy, the heart of which will no doubt be the denial of the Christ who died to save him. As a result of this false teaching, the forces of the unseen world will be loosed. Demon-powers will beset the souls of men, and professing Christendom will "believe a lie," as foretold by Paul in II Thess. 2:11, 12.

"There arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace." Undoubtedly this refers to the "strong delusion" to which we have referred already.

"The sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." The sun represents the Son of God, who is the supreme Source of light in the spiritual realm. The delusion will blot out His teaching. Satan is "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2), and we see him portrayed here as being in supreme control of the intellectual kingdom of apostate Christendom.

In the early dawn of humanity the devil said to Eve, when she told him that she and Adam were not to eat of the fruit of the tree "in the midst of the garden," that they would die if they did:

"Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4, 5).

From that day to this, the devil has been instilling lies into the very souls of men wherever he can; and by trying to hu-

manize God and deify man, he has caused thousands to be lost. The gross spiritual darkness of the end-time will be no new thing; it will be only an intensified form of the darkness that has been in the world ever since sin entered.

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power." This plague of locusts is a symbolical picture, which represents the spreading over Christendom, of the false teaching referred to. When locusts settle down upon a territory, a veritable plague, they devastate completely every green, growing thing. Just so completely will the damnable doctrines of the devil blight the minds of men, that, when Christ returns, He will not find the faith on the earth.

"It was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

If we were to interpret this passage literally, and believe these to be locusts as we know them, then we should have to admit that they would do the very thing they are here forbidden to do; that is, eat "the grass" and growing things. Therefore, it is clear that we are to interpret the passage symbolically.

But the spiritual plague does not strike down every man. Only those who "have not the seal of God in their forehead" are to be stung by their damnable bludgeons. The "sealed company" are to escape. Every child of God is sealed by the Holy Spirit, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to lead those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ into the whole truth. You will never find any man or woman who has been really regenerated by the Spirit of God who will accept any doctrine that denies the deity of the Son of God or the necessity of the atonement. In ignorance of what a system teaches, he may join such a movement; but when he learns the real thing for which any cult stands, he will sever all connection with it. He cannot do otherwise, if he is born again.

I recall a family I once had in my congregation who had been ostracized by their relatives because they would not take up Christian Science. The brother of the wife understood Christian Science thoroughly, having studied under Mrs. Eddy herself. He understood what it taught concerning God,



concerning Christ, and concerning the blood atonement; and yet, knowing the truth, he accepted Christian Science, denying the other things. His sister came to me one day and asked me to go with her to visit another sister, who was under the brother's influence. That sister was dying of tuberculosis; and as we walked into her room, I saw before me a thin, emaciated form, lying upon a bed. On the stand by her side lay a Bible. In her hand she held a copy of "Science and Health," which she was reading. As we came in, she looked up and said, "This," holding up Mrs. Eddy's book, "is the thing that helps me."

I sat down beside the bed and talked to her. I asked her if she thought she would go to heaven if she died. She said she would. Then I asked her what her conception of heaven was, and what made her entrance there possible. As she talked, I saw that she believed the same things I do. I asked her if she would accept *anything* that denied the Lord Jesus Christ as God's eternal Son who shed His blood for guilty sinners. She said, "Why no!"

"If you read it in a book—no matter whose book—what would you do?" I asked.

"I'd hurl that book from me as I would a serpent!"

"Suppose you found it in that book," I asked, pointing to "Science and Health!"

"Oh, you will never find it there!" she exclaimed.

"I did not say you would find it, but suppose you should find it there?"

"Then I'd never read the book again."

I took the copy of "Science and Health," and turned to a certain page where Mrs. Eddy gives her statement concerning the atonement. I read to her what Mrs. Eddy says, that the blood of Jesus Christ was of no more avail, when it was shed upon the accursed tree, than when it was flowing through His veins in daily life. I shall never forget the look that came into her eyes.

"Does it say that, Mr. Talbot?" she asked. I showed it to her again; and when she read it, she dropped the book out of her hand.

That girl left a will with a strange clause in it, instructing that her funeral service should be in charge of the Christian Science Church to which she belonged, that they should have

their pallbearers and soloists, but that I should get up there and tell them what I told her!

None of these damnable doctrines can touch the elect of God in that day of tribulation which is to come, either. The elect are the faithful Jewish remnant. But what about the rest of the world? What about those who have not the seal of God in their forehead? Of them it is said: "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Their souls will be filled with an anguish far worse than any physical anguish could be.

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle." As another has said, these words speak of the "rapidity" and "irresistibility" of the great system of false doctrine that shall emanate from the pit.

"And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold." This symbolic statement means that in that day intellect will be crowned. Apostasy will be on the throne.

"Their faces were as the faces of men." Here, also, we see that man shall make a god of reason. As is ever the case in any false doctrine, the appeal is to the intellect. So it is in the rationalism that is sweeping throughout professing Christendom today.

"And they had hair as the hair of women." These false doctrines will have a strange subtlety.

"Their teeth were as the teeth of lions." They will fairly destroy those who receive them.

"And they had a king over them . . . whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek . . . Apollyon." In the Word of God, the devil is given many names. In this case, the two names mean the same thing, "destruction." Both apostate Israel and apostate Christendom will be faced with desolation. The light will be blotted out; and in the dreadful darkness, the demons from the pit will do their awful work.

## THE SIXTH TRUMPET—THE SECOND WOE

Rev. 9:13-21

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four

angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

Substitute for "*an hour, a day, a month, and a year*" the definite article "the," and you will see that there is a specific, set time in which these angels are prepared to do their work. The loosing of these angels releases a vast company of horsemen, the number of which is given as "two hundred thousand thousand."

1. \* *The Army of the Two Hundred Million.* "Two hundred thousand thousand" would mean an army of two hundred million men, closing in upon the revived Roman Empire, which will be ruled over by the Antichrist. The "four angels" represent the forces which separate the East from the West. At the time which God has appointed, those forces shall be withdrawn; and when they are, an army of almost uncountable hordes will be seen moving from the East.

When the time comes, the time God has set, He will remove the barriers that separate the East from the West; and there shall arise a great multitude that shall go toward the kingdom of the Antichrist, a great multitude which will be devil-controlled. On and on these shall march, to meet the opposing armies of the West on the plains of Megiddo; and the Battle of Armageddon will be fought. There Christ will return in glory, and set up His kingdom, "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

2. *The Waiting, Watchful East.* A few years ago, as I was traveling to Australia, I met a young Japanese on board ship. He was not the polite, approachable man that the average Oriental is. We exchanged a few words, and then he asked me abruptly,

"Where do you come from?"

"From Australia," I answered.

"What is the size of Australia?"

\* See "The Army of the Two Hundred Million and the Lord's Return" for a more detailed exposition of this portion of Scripture.

"Three million square miles."

"How many people do you have?"

"About five million."

"You know, my land is only a spot compared with that," he said. "We have 375,000 people to the square mile. How many do you have?"

"About one and one-half persons to the square mile," I replied.

"Will Australia allow Orientals to go in there?"

"No," I answered; "they will not."

"Who had that land before the whites got in there?" was the next question he shot at me. I answered, "The Australian black."

"How did the white man get it?"

Well, you know how he got it—the same way he got America. Then that Japanese said,

"The day is coming when my people will be the spokesmen of all the Oriental races of the world; we are just biding our time."

And that is what they have been doing for years. My conversation with that Oriental took place long before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and open war with the West. The day will come when the church will be translated and the apostasy in Christendom will be at its height. Then God will cause those forces that are holding back the East to be removed, and the vast army which the Holy Spirit permitted John the Apostle to see will be on the march!

3. "*And the Rest of the Men . . . Repented Not.*" John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has portrayed to us a world that will have vials of wrath poured out upon it. He has told us how men will be killed and tortured; and yet—so blinded will they have become by that time—they will not repent.

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

Why does the Spirit of God put that statement in? The Roman Catholic tells you that if you go through purgatory, you will be purified through suffering; the Russellite tells you

that in this period of time punishment will touch the hearts of people; the Word of God tells you that during the tribulation, when the power of the devil is manifested as never before, men will not repent; they will be hardened in their sins. Like Ephraim, they will be "joined to idols."

Today, the day of grace, men sit and listen to the Gospel over and over, without making a move toward accepting the Lord Jesus Christ. They may not know it, but day by day they are becoming a little more hardened. Their character is becoming fixed; and the day will come, if they continually reject the call of Christ, when their hearts will be as hard and inflexible as the trees in the petrified forest.

While on a visit to Australia, I stayed with a man who lived on a great farm. One morning he said to me,

"We are going to brand some cattle today. Would you like to see it?"

I went with him to the branding yard, saw them tie a young heifer to the ground, saw a man pull out of the fire a red-hot piece of steel on which were some initials, saw that man place the red-hot iron upon a certain spot on the animal. As the iron seared the flesh, the animal groaned with pain. The ropes were cut; up and away it bounded. Day after day it spent the time, licking the wound. But three weeks later that animal stood quietly grazing on the range. If you had gone up to it and pierced the brand with a sharp knife, the heifer would have continued eating, unconscious of any sensation. Why? Because all the nerves in that spot were paralyzed.

Human beings are like that. Every time the Spirit of God touches a heart, He has a certain effect upon it. If a man goes on and on, listening to the Gospel story, without making any move to accept the salvation which is offered him, the day will come when the voice which spoke to his heart will speak no longer; he can sit and listen to the most impassioned appeals, and none of them will move him. The love of God, the terrors of hell, alike will have no effect upon him.

That is the state to which every unregenerated man who continually rejects the Son of God will come. The Spirit of God is striving with man now; but God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man" (Gen. 6:3). He is trying to touch your heart now, my unsaved friend, "*now* is the day

of salvation." But in those last dread days, the hearts of men will be hopelessly hardened.

Let grace act upon your heart. Exercise your will Godward, and allow the King of Glory to come in! Hear the Spirit of God as He speaks to you: "Harden not your hearts. . . . Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" (Heb. 3:8-15).

## THE SEVENTH TRUMPET—THE THIRD WOE

*Rev. 11:15-18*

According to our plan for this lesson, as stated in the beginning, let us skip over the parenthetical vision recorded in 10:1-11:14, and consider the seventh trumpet. In verse 14 we read, "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly." Immediately we read further: "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; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (verse 15).

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet, we come to the end of the great tribulation and to the beginning of the millennial period. Jerusalem, which shall have suffered so cruelly at the hands of her enemies, will once again have the favor of God upon her, and become the seat of Christ's earthly kingdom.

"And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God" (verse 16).

You will remember, in our study of chapter four, we found that the elders represent, not angels, but those redeemed by the shed blood of the Son of God. They are the saints of the Old Testament days and the saints of the New Testament days, translated, washed, clothed in white raiment, and singing praises of God. Here again we have them bowing on their faces before God, worshipping Him, rejoicing in the fact that He is coming into His own, and saying:

“We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (verses 17, 18).

With the sounding of the seventh trumpet, as we have said, comes the end of the period of tribulation. But though John gives to us here a brief picture of the end of those seven years when God is dealing with apostate Christendom and apostate Israel, and with those who have turned to Him during that troublous period; yet he takes us back, with the nineteenth verse, and gives to us in the following chapter more details regarding the great tribulation.

“And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of the testament; and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” (verse 19).

The “ark of his covenant” (R. V.) is symbolic of God’s covenant with His people. He has not forgotten them, nor has He forgotten His promises to their fathers. And we shall see, as we enter further into our study of this wonderful book, that He is going to visit His wrath upon the nations which oppress His Chosen People.

If any man thinks he can escape the wrath of God without accepting His Son as Saviour, he will find himself mistaken one of these days. Should our Lord come now, those who are left behind when the church is taken away, will be hurled, as it were, into the dreadful days of the tribulation. God has spoken, and with Him there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” My friend, your only hope of peace and happiness here and eternal salvation hereafter, is to accept *now*, while you have the opportunity, the atonement which Christ made when He shed His blood on the Cross of Calvary. Nothing is promised you in the way of salvation

hereafter, if you reject the “Way of the Cross.” Again I would remind you, “*Now is the day of salvation!*”

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36). God is giving us in this age a blaze of light, but the day is coming when the light will be withdrawn. When the church age is over, the judgments recorded in the book of Revelation will come to pass, and what fearful judgments they will be! Some people think such things are impossible, but not so. Before the war of 1914-1918, men refused to believe that another great war would break out; but it did, and things happened which no man would have thought possible. Many then called it “the war to end wars”; yet look at the world after a few short years had passed! In “the things which shall be hereafter,” after the translation of the church, God is telling us, in symbolic language, that judgment will be visited upon the world. The age of grace will be over; the Holy Spirit will have taken His departure; the Antichrist will be ruling, with an iron hand, and the “strong delusion” will grip the souls of men.

May I urge you again, if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, to accept now this proffered grace? Accept it for your own sake, for your family’s sake, for everybody’s sake, and most of all, for Christ’s sake! It is because He died that you have the chance to live! Do not let this day pass by and have it written of you that another day of grace has passed, another day of light has been shed upon you, without effect.

If you do not know Jesus Christ in His saving power, do not, I beg of you, close your eyes in sleep until you have seen and accepted Him as your Lord and your Saviour!

## Chapter IX

### THE "MIGHTY ANGEL" AND THE "LITTLE BOOK"

#### THE TWO WITNESSES (A Parenthetical Vision)

*Rev. 10:1-11:14*

We return now to the parenthetical vision already referred to, between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The ninth chapter, which closes with the sixth trumpet judgment, presents a very dark picture, indeed. It would seem as though hell were to be triumphant, and the whole world to be given over to the forces of evil. However, we know that is not to be the case, that eventually the Son of God shall triumph over all of His foes. And chapter ten, the beginning of the parenthetical vision, which is our lesson today, gives us a graphic picture of the triumphant Son of God. Let us examine it carefully:

#### THE "MIGHTY ANGEL"

"And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire" (verse 1).

The Word of God has much to say about angels. Some people have a very mistaken idea that those who die in the Lord become angels in glory, but that is not so. Angels are "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14). We find them mentioned many times in both the Old and New Testaments. But there is one Angel that stands out among them all—The Angel of Jehovah. Now I would have you remember that when you find mention in the Scriptures of "The Angel of Jehovah,"

