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**THE LITTLE HORN
AND
THE NORTH**

**Bible Study:
THE ANTICHRIST
AND
THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH**

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PREFACE

The “Little Horn and the North” is a book inspired from the Word of God and dedicated to the subject of the last days of humanity, which closes with the stage curtain of Antichrist’s kingdom. It is inspired from the Word of God and by personal study and search of the Holy Scriptures. It expresses a sincere interest in the truth of the last days that I had from my childhood. And it expresses, at the same time, a kind of awe that I feel for the dramatic and inglorious end of humanity.

What touched and particularly troubled my soul as a child and aroused my imagination was the description of the things to happen, which are depicted with formidable images and likenings, which take dramatic dimensions and evolutions and which present Antichrist as a superman-monster who transforms men into puppets and obliges them to bow and worship before him as their Lord and God, and who finally ends up in his crush under the glorious appearance of the true heavenly King.

These events, which in their prophetic description are so terrible, dreadful, tragic and surpassing our imagination, incite us and at the same time prepare us to face them with wisdom and understanding and not to ignore them as if they were a Disney tale. The prophecy concerning the last days offers the last opportunity to the human race to wake up in time from the lethargy of error and of sin that keeps it in ignorance and

indifference and incites it to repentance and conversion to the living God before its fatal end.

Each and every man should, therefore, become serious with these events that humanity will face in reality in the near future. God's Word is the truth! Truth warns us so that we may be able to escape, with God's help, the consequences of Antichrist's kingdom and the wrath of God on the wicked. God will assist us and will cut short the days in favour of His faithful and elect children. We must be interested from now in this truth because only the truth sets man free! And only the Word of God offers the truth, which prevents and reveals to us future events. God's warning about future things and, in particular, of the last days of Antichrist's kingdom is great mercy for the present life and that of the future!

Finally, I would like to thank God for this book, which He has enabled me to write based on His Word alone! The writing of this book comprises at the same time the fulfilment of a desire of my young age to deal with eschatological subjects. The text of this book was published in the notable daily afternoon newspaper THE FREE HOUR (ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΗ ΩΡΑ), from the 20th September, 1993 to 5th January 5, 1994. This study is republished in the form of the present book with certain improvements and details.

Xenia Baltatzis

“The Lord is not slack concerning [His] promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation...”
(2 Peter 3:9-15 NKJV)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

(All Bible references are from the NKJV, unless otherwise noted)

Different opinions about the Antichrist

Man's imagination is galloping. He has been repeatedly writing since the European Economic Community (EEC) was established and has been prophesying on its behalf concerning the future events about the Antichrist. Eschatologists of our days, official and unofficial, have expressed, without any hesitation, the opinion that the EEC ---which has been transformed into European Union (EU)--- will be the Antichrist's Headquarters. Also that the 10 Member States that formed it, during the first stages of its enlargement, were the 10 horns of the Antichrist's super-government, described in Daniel's book. They expressed their opinion with such certainty that they influenced the international public opinion that began to face with distrust and caution that politico-economic union of Western European States, with the result that Norway refused to adhere among the Member States during its first enlargement.

Erroneous predictions

However, though nothing has been proved up to this date against the EEC/EU and the 10 horns increased to 12 with the accession of Spain and Portugal ---and they became 16 and more with the accession of certain EFTA countries, as of Austria, Sweden and Finland, and now ten other countries have adhered--- some fanciful eschatologists insist stubbornly on their original declaration and keep the international public opinion against EEC and against the necessity and expediency of its existence.

These eschatologists, with their prolonged persistence that the European Union will constitute the future Antichrist's Headquarters, but that nothing has come true from their forecasts and prognostications, have become accustomed, nevertheless, to believe it and to proclaim it as if it were a fact. This proclamation of theirs, however, does not differ from that with which, it has been some years now, Jehovah Witnesses have tried to convince the world regarding the United Nations Organization (UNO) --- immediately after its establishment on 25th June, 1945--- that it is the **“abomination of the desolation”**, which was established by the Little Horn, Antichrist. This opinion of theirs is expressed in a Jehovah Witnesses book entitled “LET YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH”, pages 299-301, but also elsewhere. And although more than 50 years have already passed, instead of seven (7), according to the Biblical declaration (Dan.9:27 and 8:14), and although the UNO consists of about two hundred “horns” (Member States) and not of ten, these eschatologists continue their myth.

We are, therefore, obliged to point out that it is time to put an end to the mythology of both of them. This myth concerning Antichrist identified once with the UN and once with the EU has been self-belied. The Word of God also does not confirm this prophecy, as it should. If we, therefore, want to learn the truth about Antichrist, we must be objective based on the letter and the spirit of the Word of God. Then and only then can the truth be proved. Not through human interpretations, imaginations and comments. In order, therefore, to arrive at secure conclusions it is absolutely necessary to examine certain basic verses, which refer to the subject of the last days and in particular to the Rapture of the Church by the Lord. Certain erroneous positions can be proved right from the beginning by the following passages:

What the Bible says about the Antichrist

The Holy Scriptures declare that the Antichrist neither is an organization nor will he be represented by any organization, but it is a certain person, as it is declared:

- 1) By Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4: **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”**

- 2) By John in Revelation, 13:18: **“Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast,**

for it is the number of a man: His number [is] six hundred and sixty-six.” (666). In ancient times, letters of the alphabet were used for counting, and this is the reason why the letters are used, which refer to the number 666. This number is actually discussed and is widely accepted.

- 3) By Daniel, in 8:23-24: **“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes. His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people.”**

Consequently, it is clearly stated and specified in the Holy Bible, which speaks about Antichrist and foretells what is going to happen during his kingdom, that it is a person that will govern as a king-god. It is a good thing that the new Europe under its ever new politico-economic treaties will constitute in the future Antichrist's strongest adversary, as we are informed by Daniel in his final prophecy: **“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many.”** (Dan.11:44). That is evidently contrary to what is commonly believed. Because if the EU is transformed into the Antichrist's Headquarters, the above-mentioned prophecy about the “north” is annulled. Then there is no north, since even Russia is an eastern country as compared with the EU Headquarters, in Brussels.

The EU will also be the strongest Russia's rival, which will go against Israel: **“...Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I [am] against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal... Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your**

companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. “After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword [and] gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. “You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you.” (Eze.38:3-9)

And the Word of God continues: **“Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, ‘Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder? Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes. ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: Are [you] he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?’” (Eze.38:13-17).**

The Russian Bloc and Israel

The above-mentioned passage from Ezekiel prophesies Russia’s assault against Israel and the reaction of the nations Sheba, Dedan and Tarshish. Sheba and Dedan are regions of the

Sinai Peninsula, that is regions of Saudi Arabia. Tarshish is the region of the western Mediterranean between Italy and Spain. In other words, we have to do with countries belonging to the EU and, consequently, the EU. Russia's attack precedes the Antichrist according to Ezekiel. It is during that period that the Russian bloc and all the enemies of Israel that participate in it, will be destroyed as it is described concretely in the passage included between Ezekiel 38:18 and the end of chapter 39. That event is prophesied and described in detail because it will constitute the greatest judgement of God against the Nation enemies of Israel, the racists or the Neo-Nazis or the Communists or the Muslim countries and religions of our age, which will participate in this Anti-Zionist bloc. This war will also mean the faithful and constantly renewed accomplishment of God's covenant to Abraham, even if many centuries and many events intervene. In spite of its Diaspora, their tests and serious crises through which the people of Israel have passed during the past centuries and are still passing, God, faithful to His promises, has returned and has been returning his people to His land, with the intention of fulfilling the following promise: **“On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: “To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates”** (Ge.15:18; 17:7-8 as well as Ge.18:18; 26:3-5; 27:29; 28:13).

An Enigma

It is an enigma for us to visualize how Gomer (most probably Germany and Austria of the United Europe) will coexist and cooperate with Russia and the satellites of the Russian bloc in its attack against Israel: **“I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and**

horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company [with] bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them [with] shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah [from] the far north and all its troops—many people [are] with you. Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them.” (Eze.38:4-7). Unless it has to do with ancient German Celtic tribes that had originally been established in the regions of Crimea, Caspian, of the Danube and of eastern Asia Minor that have been assimilated with the local elements of those regions and which preserve the same racist hostile spirit of those people against Israel. Or, unless this prophecy refers to regions of Russia that are populated by Mongols and Tartars, as assert certain eschatologists, or it has to do with modern Armenia in whose region were established the Cimmerians in 650 b.C. after they had been chased by the Assyrians, who were Gomer’s descendants, son of Jephtha (Gen.11:2).

CHAPTER 2

THE ANTICHRIST AND THE PAST

Some of the characteristics of the Antichrist

The Antichrist, who will be the last dictator of the world, will no doubt obtain great power before the North and the countries of the East intervene: **“His power shall be mighty, ... He shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people. Through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt [himself] in his heart. He shall destroy many in [their] prosperity...”** (Da.8:24-25). **“But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his power.”** (Da.11:16). That means that he will be a new dictator more terrible than Hitler in spirit, invested with Satanic power, enemy of all those who deny him and especially of the people of Israel. The fact that he will govern as king-god does not constitute a novelty. The Pharaohs of Egypt had the title of king-god, so that Alexander the Great was honoured by Ammon-Rah’s priests as son of God, as it is described by the French Egyptologist Masperaut. When the young lord of the world of those days went to the seat of the oracle (Manteion) of Ammon-Rah, the statue went out of the

shrine to meet and welcome him. And, after they exchanged the usual pompous salutations, then followed the elocution by the statue: *“Approach son of my bowels who love me so much that I give you valour to subdue all nations and religions under your feet. I give you strength to bruise with your arm all peoples united.”*

Thus, the priests-magicians conquered their conqueror. It was not, however, the first time those priests-magicians made miracles by Satan’s miracle-power and made Ammon-Rah’s statue to speak in front of Alexander the Great’s amazed eyes. In the days of Moses, they had done the same thing in front of Pharaoh Ramsee II of the 19th Dynasty, in the thirteen century b.C., who is believed to have been the Pharaoh of Moses’ days. They transformed their sticks into snakes, as Moses had done. These miracles, done by the priests-magicians, elucidate us, therefore, about Satan’s capacities. Ammon-Rah’s priests-magicians had established, in an oasis, a temple and a seat of an oracle, where Ammon-Rah’s statue could speak, move its head and accept or reject questions. The false-prophet will not make more miracles than the miracles done by Egypt’s priests-magicians so that men may believe in him. In the same way, he will also make the image of the Beast to speak and fire to fall from heaven (Rev.13:13-16).

Satan’s power is limited

But the priests-magicians, did they not, as we already said, also transform:

- 1) Their sticks into snakes? **“... And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent... so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents...”** (Ex.7:10-12).

- 2) The water into blood, as Moses did? **“...he (Aaron) lifted up the rod and struck the waters that [were] in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the waters that [were] in the river were turned to blood... Then the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments...”** (Ex.7:20-22).

- 3) As well as the plague of frogs? **“Then the LORD spoke to Moses... Stretch out your hand... and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt... And the magicians did so with their enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt”** (Ex.8:5-7).

CHAPTER 3

THE FALSE PROPHET

Antichrist's publicity

The miracle working power, therefore, of the false prophet that will provide favourable publicity for the Beast, that is the Little Horn (Re.16:13 and 19:20), will not differ much from the miracle working power of Pharaoh's magicians/priests. However, he will demand that people worship him and the Little Horn as god and he will seal them. Something that Pharaoh's priests-magicians did not do. It is there that lays the difference. They did not impose Pharaoh as god even if he had the title of a king-god or deified themselves on account of their miracle working power, as gods, because they attributed their power to their gods and because they respected and feared gods: **“Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, this [is] the finger of God...”** (Ex.8:19). But Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said... However, the false prophet, who is the second beast, will neither respect nor fear any god, but he will impose and require worldly recognition. He will also impose the worship of the image of the Little Horn. **“He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed”**

(Re.13:15). Then, the Little Horn as the apostle Paul prophesies **“... he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”** (2Th.2:4). He will not only limit himself in titles as the Pharaohs, but he will put forth himself through the dragon: **“...The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”** (Re.13:2).

The Antichrist's Headquarters

He will not only bear the title of king-god but he will also prove himself that he is god and will demand to be worshipped as god. And his headquarters, as the apostle Paul tells us in the previous verse, will not be the EU or the UNO, as certain people believe, but will be the temple of God in Jerusalem, since he will sit in the temple of God as god! Here is, then, the place where he will have his headquarters: **“And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily [sacrifices], and place [there] the abomination of desolation.”** (Da.11:31 and 2Thes.2:4, as above).

Jesus Christ himself confirms this Daniel's prophecy in Matthew (24:15-16) and Mark's gospels (13:14) and explains it: **“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place... then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”** (Mt.24:15-16). Consequently, it is clearly stated by Jesus that the Antichrist's Headquarters will be Jerusalem and in particular God's temple, as Paul prophesies in 2Thes.2:4, where he appears as god and deceives the whole world. This is why Jesus instructs his people to **“flee to the mountains”** when they see **“standing**

in the holy place ‘the abomination of desolation’” (Mat.24:15), which is in the temple of God in Jerusalem! He will proceed immediately to the persecution of the people of Israel and in executions of his disavowers.

Antichrist and Antiochus Epiphanes

Daniel’s prophecy in question in chapter 11 of his book in verse 31 should not be attributed to Antiochus Epiphanes, who in 167 b. C. had desecrated the sanctuary of the Temple in Jerusalem in order to bend Judaism and turn it toward the Greek idolatry of his era in order to civilize them... as he believed. And this profanation, some eschatologists identify with the **“abomination of desolation”** that Jesus also is referring to. Because the **“abomination of desolation”**:

- 1) Is prophesied by Daniel for the last days;
- 2) Refers specifically to Antichrist, who will not only desecrate God’s sanctuary, as did Antiochus Epiphanes with sacrifices of unclean and prohibited animals, contrary to Mosaic Law, but he will sit in the Temple of God as God, **“showing himself that he is God”**! Something that Antiochus did not do, nor did a false prophet promote him;
- 3) He **“...shall take away the daily [sacrifices], and place [there] the abomination of desolation.”** (Da.11:31). That is, he will abolish the worship of God and the sacrifices and he will impose his own personal worship by killing his opponents;

- 4) Never did Antiochus Epiphanes, though he re-conquered Jerusalem after Jason's uprising, manage to re-conquer permanently and for a long time again all Judea, as did his father Antiochus the III, but only the fortress of Jerusalem which was re-conquered in 164 b.C. under the leadership of Judah the Maccabean. Since then, Judea formed an independent state for a century. All efforts of Antiochus to hellenize Judea and impose the worship of Olympian Zeus in God's Temple faced the reaction of pious Jews (Hasid) and failed. Never has his reign influenced the whole pagan inhabited world of that era, ---in spite of some conquests in Egypt, in Cyprus and on Parthians--- so that his personality to be identified with the Biblical description of the Antichrist to come. And never did he impose his deification on the Jews, so that they flee to the mountains nor did he seal them with the number $\chi\xi\xi$ (666). Never did he reign together with ten horns and never did he eliminate three horns...; and finally,
- 5) Antiochus's reign was two centuries before Christ while Jesus Christ prophesies for the “...**‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place...**” (Mt.24:15) two centuries after Antiochus. Consequently, it was not possible that Jesus' prophecy referred to Antiochus, who preceded Jesus by two centuries, or to exhort prophetically the Jews “**to flee to the mountains**”, when they will see the abomination of desolation, if that event had already taken place during the period of Antiochus, even symbolically!

CHAPTER 4

THE ANTICHRIST AND HIS ORIGIN

The first king of Greece and his four successors

The marks of his recognition and his origin are defined over again in Daniel's book: **“The ram which you saw, having the two horns—[they are] the kings of Media and Persia. And the male goat [is] the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that [is] between its eyes [is] the first king. As for the broken [horn] and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power. And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features, who understands sinister schemes (Antichrist). His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people.”** (Da.8:20-24)

In the above-mentioned passage, the vision that Daniel had, is interpreted by the angel Gabriel; it is contained in the beginning of this chapter, and in particular in verses 5-9: **“And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat [had] a notable horn between his eyes. Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had**

seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand. Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious [Land]” (Dan.8:5-9).

The Little Horn and his self-deification

This passage mentions clearly that the small horn expands and becomes prominent toward the south and the east and toward the land of glory, and declares and pre-announces the establishment of a new empire in the basin of east Mediterranean in the person of the Little Horn who will come **FROM ONE OF THE FOUR late states of Alexander the Great**. His empire is described in more detail in Daniel, chapters 7 and 8, where his presence is identified in a more concrete way in the Mediterranean region and who finally develops into a strange politico-spiritual personality, very dynamic, who will demand his personal worship in the pattern of Roman emperors, who will require from all, and especially from early Christians, to honour them as gods and to renounce their faith in Christ. Thus, the Little Horn will become prominent as god instead of Christ under the absolute authority of satanic powers and the support of a false prophet who will work miracles: **“Then the beast was captured,**

and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” (Re.19:20).

In the above passage and in chapter 13 of Revelation, the fact of his self-promotion and the way in which he will impose it are prophesied: **“He was granted [power] to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”** (Re.13:15-17).

Antichrist's era will incarnate in an absolute degree the Roman spirit of persecutions and of systematic organization of crime, which was raised to a spectacular athletic event, as well as the spirit of witchcraft of the Egyptian priests-magicians who worked miracles before Pharaoh and those who attended, thus promoting the worship of god Amon-Rah and that of the king-god-Pharaoh. In the same way, also, the false prophet magician will work miracles before men for the account of the Little Horn to the end of his deification.

CHAPTER 5

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST 666

Speculations concerning the number of the beast 666

In ancient times, as we have seen, they used the letters of the alphabet for counting; for this reason, the $\chi\xi\varsigma=666$. Some attributed the number 666 to Antiochus Epiphanes. Others to a Roman emperor, as to Nero or to Emperor Titus, who in 70 a.D. leveled down the temple of God in Jerusalem and slaughtered the Jews. Others ascribed it to a religious leader such as Mohammed or to a conqueror or even to a Pope, and lastly to Hitler. For the last one, on the basis of the numbering of the so-called Latin alphabet, some tried to attribute the number 666 to HITLER, beginning with A=100, B=101, C=102, D=103 etc., while the name Hitler does not result in the number 666 with the correct Latin or with the Greek numbering of letters, because the Romans used the letters with the sense of numbers, for example V=5, X=10, L=50, C=100, etc. and not as the ancient Greeks, who used the letters for numbers, for example, $\alpha=1$, $\beta=2$, $\gamma=3$ etc. Others again, with the help of the Jewish alphabet, were trying to relate that number to the name of a great leader. However, all these opinions are rejected Biblically, even if certain names coincided with the number 666, since the real Antichrist will originate in one of the late states of Alexander the Great and will put his

headquarters in Jerusalem. This will be the most noticeable event in world history of the last days, since it will have to do with an emissary of Satan, who is enthroned explicitly in the temple of God in Jerusalem as god and especially after the death of the two prophets of God (Re.11), who will be discussed later!

The other noteworthy fact is that the number 666 with which he will seal his own is not going to happen by the EU, as it is believed, because this is not confirmed Biblically. The Antichrist will have his headquarters in Jerusalem. The north (Europe-EU) will go against the Antichrist. A high official of the European Community declared, inter alia, that a gigantic system of computers is being prepared to deal with problems concerning the whole world and will be able to register, analyse and direct international trade.

How every human being will be identified

Every human being on earth will have his own number, which will be given him by this electronic system so that he may buy and sell, probably according to the pattern of the registration number of each functionary of the EU, as it is being done. It is also said that the number will be invisible and that it will be placed on the front or on the hand of a man with laser rays. It has also been said that with the use of three six-digit numbers, all the population of the world will be able to have his own individual number. This numbering system may become an instrument for the peace of the world or can be used as a weapon by some world dictator.

This information is very exciting! If it is true, to advertise such a system of numbering of the earth population, on the basis

of three six-digit numbers (666) as well as the reason why men will be obliged to have their own number in order to be able to buy and sell. However, this is not going to be accomplished by the EU, for the account of the Antichrist, as it is notoriously promulgated, since his headquarters will be in the temple of God in Jerusalem. The north will go against him. Otherwise, technology has been and is still being diffused as fast as lightning. The Antichrist, therefore, will not lag behind concerning the same technological knowledge and exploits in his headquarters and even much more. We should not, therefore, identify the Antichrist with the EU, especially after its ongoing enlargement toward the Eastern and south-eastern Europe since it will represent the North.

His presence in the Mediterranean region will not also represent Greece, which belongs to the EU, even if it comes from one of the late states of Alexander the Great but will represent his own new empire which he will show forth through his conquests toward the South (Egypt), the East (countries of the Eastern Mediterranean region) and the land of glory (Israel - Dan.8:9). And we are of the opinion that the Antichrist must be of Jewish origin in order to claim the title of the expected Messiah, unless he manages to promote himself as the Messiah through the performance of miracles of the false prophet and not necessarily because of his origin.

CHAPTER 6

THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE PERSECUTED

The false prophet and the Antichrist

The false prophet, therefore, the second beast, will seal all and will impose the worship of the image of the first beast, namely the Little Horn, which will be the Antichrist (Re.13:15). It has to do, therefore, with a duality (dyandria). The one beast plays the role of the prophet magician, and he is the “false prophet”, and the other will play the role of god! Both of the beasts are supported by the dragon who is Satan himself (Rev.13:2-4). It is not three men's show (triandria) because the dragon is not a man. **“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their**

testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time. Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*.” (Re.12:7-13). He will simply perform his authority through the false prophet and the Little Horn and he will reward with honours and glorify those who will acknowledge him: And “... **he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.**” (Dan.11:39).

His own, if they accept to bear “**the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name**” (Re.13:17) will be favoured by the Antichrist, as we are informed above in the books of Revelation and of Daniel. His own will surely be tormented, but only by God through the last plagues described in Revelation, chapter 16.

Since the days of the apostles, Antichrists appear (1Joh.2:18) but not the awaited Antichrist. He and his kingdom are prophesied for “**...the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.**” (Da.12:4).

Two of the characteristics of the last days

Both of these two special signs are typical of our days: That man goes around the earth (tourism, satellites etc.) and that knowledge (scientific and technological progress, informatics, Internet etc.) will increase continually more and more. However, even if this prophecy has been accomplished in our days, the time of the Antichrist is not so near, as it is believed. There are certain

other events that will precede: amongst them the war of Russia against Israel, which takes place before the Antichrist's reign, prophesied by Ezekiel in chapters 38 and 39, as we have already mentioned. Subsequently, great glory and prosperity of the people of Israel will follow for at least seven years after the destruction of the Russian bloc: **“Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. They will not take wood from the field nor cut down [any] from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them, says the Lord GOD.”** (Eze.39:9-10).

The Russian war against Israel and Armageddon

This war should not be identified with the period of the reign of the Antichrist. The facts themselves exclude it because they cannot coexist during his reign, since during his kingdom the temple of God in Jerusalem will be occupied by the Antichrist and the people of Israel will suffer persecution.

Also, the Russian war against Israel should not be identified with Armageddon. Armageddon is the last world war and it is linked with the sixth plague of God's judgement: **“Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [coming] out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing**

signs, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. “Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed [is] he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.” And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.” (Re.16:12-16).

Consequently, the Russian war against Israel is the war of all enemy nations exclusively against the people of Israel. It is during this war that a distinction is made between the people of Israel and their enemies and it is God who fights on behalf of Israel against the Russian bloc, which consists of the north eastern states and their allies Persia, Ethiopia and Libya that are mentioned by name and are described in detail and in a very picturesque way in chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel as well as all the enemy nations of Israel. This war results in the recognition of Israel and in its rehabilitation in the conscience of all nations of the earth as well as in the humiliation of the enemies for the glory of the God of Israel, as in the days of Moses: **“And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel, says the Lord GOD, [that] My fury will show in My face. For in My jealousy [and] in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: ‘Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, ‘so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who [are] on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.’ I will call for a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains, says the Lord GOD. Every man’s sword will be against his brother. And I will bring him to judgement with pestilence and bloodshed; I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who [are] with**

him, flooding rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus I will magnify Myself and sanctify Myself, and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I [am] the LORD.” (Eze.38:18-23). “And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord GOD.” (Eze.39:29).

This war, therefore, which is carried out by God in favour of Israel will restore the honour and the glory of the nation of Israel, “... **just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, let your hands be strong.**” (Zec.8:13). This is the reason why it is excluded that these events should not be identified and take place during the Antichrist’s reign, since Israel during that same period will be persecuted by the Antichrist within his own land, as well as all his deniers and Antichrist’s authority will prevail.

CHAPTER 7

THE TEN HORNS

Ten leading personalities of the same state

But which are the ten horns? The ten horns do not represent different nations because Daniel does not express his prophecy as if it had to do with a union of ten horns ---that is ten nations--- that would result in the fourth kingdom, as it is believed by some. But it has to do with ten leading personalities who rise from within the same nation and constitute the government in the political power of the Antichrist. This position is supported by Daniel: **“Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, [with] its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, [which] devoured, broke in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; and the ten horns that [were] on its head, and the other [horn] which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth which spoke pompous words, whose appearance [was] greater than his fellows. I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made [in favor] of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. Thus he**

said: ‘The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns [are] ten kings [who] shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first [ones], and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time. ‘But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy [it] forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom [is] an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Da.7:19-27).

Therefore, it is clearly declared in the above passage that it has to do with ten kings who **“come from” the same state kingdom**, and that it does not refer to ten representatives of different nations but who come **from the same state**, which is identified with one of the late states of Alexander the Great, because the meaning of the word “rise” from the same kingdom defines exactly the origin of the ten horns (Dan.7:24). Consequently, it does not refer to the EU or to the UNO, which consists of different and more than ten states but it refers to one of the former states of Alexander the Great (Dan.8:8-11). If it had to do with representatives of different states of the EU, the number ten not only would be preserved but a different terminology would also be used in order to express clearly that difference, as this is used clearly in the case of the difference of the North and the South or in the cases of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia and of the land of glory (Israel). Its

territorial limits, as we have seen, expand eastwards and southwards and toward the land of glory (Israel) (Dan.8:9), and not northwards where the EU has its headquarters, so that we may infer that it refers to the EU, or toward America, so that we may infer that it refers to the United Nations Organization (UNO).

“As kings”

The word “kings”, in our opinion, does not refer to real kings, because it is expressed with the phrase **“as kings”** (Rev.17:12) but it undoubtedly refers to ten leading and dynamic personalities which will constitute a group governing together with the Antichrist. The Antichrist is identified as the Little Horn but will be the eleventh terrible and strong horn which will be different from the first ones, given his unscrupulous character, the fact that he subdues three of them that were before him, that he is put at the head of them, the terrible words that he speaks out and finally his self-deification. **“The ten horns [are] ten kings [who] shall arise from this kingdom. And another shall rise after them; he shall be different from the first [ones], and shall subdue three kings. He shall speak [pompous] words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then [the saints] shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”** (Da.7:24-26).

The fact that these ten horns will give the power and the honour to the Little Horn and will govern together as co-rulers in his kingdom is stated in the book of Revelation of John: **“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as**

kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those [who are] with Him [are] called, chosen, and faithful.” (Re.17:12-14).

Is it ever possible to have that same verse speak of ten different nations and real kings and speak at the same time of their leaders “**...who have not yet received a kingdom...**” if they were really kings and exerted before their royal rule in their own countries and that they simply wanted to cooperate with the Little Horn as co-rulers in his own kingdom, so that they might form the ten horns?

CHAPTER 8

ISRAEL AND THE ANTICHRIST

Israel and his pact with the Antichrist

Another point which has not been understood and which has been misinterpreted is that the people of Israel will conclude a so-called pact with the Antichrist and will support his kingdom on account of the Messiah that Israel has been waiting for. This is a great unscriptural error. The people of Israel may, at the beginning, be deceived and be impressed by his miraculous and spectacular demonstrations and because the people are waiting for their Messiah. As it is, however, declared both in Daniel and in Revelation, it will be the first people that will suffer persecution by the Antichrist, namely the Little Horn, just because they will understand what it is about and will reject him and will not accept him as their Messiah. Even if eschatologists are right in their opinion that the Antichrist will be a Jew in origin, this will not contribute to his final recognition by the Jews, especially after the testimony of the two martyrs and their resurrection, which will contribute greatly to the awakening of the Jewish people for the fulfilment of the prophecy that, “**...they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him.... as one grieves for a firstborn.**” (Zec.12:10).

The people of Israel will reject the Antichrist

The people of Israel will reject the Antichrist. He will not succeed in imposing himself as the Messiah in the conscience of the Jewish nation. This is the reason why Christ exhorts them: **“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains”** (Mt.24:16).

Israel’s spiritual struggles are described in a particular way in the book of Daniel: **“Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out [great exploits]. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet [for many] days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering”** (Da.11:32-33).

Consequently, those who will make a treaty with him will not be the people of Israel but **“with flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant.”** (AV). As a result, there will be few people who will betray their faith in God for material benefits as well as all the others who will worship him. There are always traitors, but they, in such a case, do not represent their people but themselves. The people of Israel will be represented by **“the wise of the people”** and the two martyrs of God who will prophesy for three and a half years and who will teach the truth to the people of Israel and to the whole world, which will watch them through TV and other media before the Antichrist is enthroned.

The two Israelite martyrs sent by God

These two Israelite martyrs sent by God will rule in the name of Christ all over the earth, in such a way that they will convert water into blood and will strike the earth whenever they please with all plagues, just as Moses who was invested with divine authority and power did. Likewise, they will be invested with divine power which is described in Revelation (11:3-6): **“And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees and the two lamp stands standing before the God of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire”**.

The conclusion that the whole human race will watch them through all mass media and especially through TV is undoubtedly drawn from the description of their death: **“Then [those] from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves... And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth. Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, Come up**

here. And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them. (Re.11:9-12).

How will men of the peoples, races, tongues, and nations see “their dead bodies”, their resurrection, and their ascension without TV and other mass media?

The two martyrs and the previous prophets

These two martyrs should, by no means, be identified with any of the previous prophets, neither with Elijah nor with Enoch, as some believe, since the Word of God does not name them specifically. The only sure thing is that it has to do with two new martyrs of God, Israelites, whose testimony God seals that they are sent by Him, invested by divine power during their life and then with their death and their resurrection as well as with their ascension alive in heaven in the pattern of the ascension of Jesus Christ and in the face of all the earth.

Also, we should not alter Elijah and Enoch’s rapture alive in heaven, as it is proclaimed in God’s Word, in another sense. And, in particular, we read about Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11: “Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire [appeared] with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.” About Enoch, we read in the epistle to Hebrews, 11:5: “By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, and was not found, because God had taken him”; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God”. Why, therefore, should they come back to experience death, since God took them up alive in honour, just in order not to experience death?

CHAPTER 9

DESTINY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Conversion and salvation of the people of Israel

The people of Israel will be saved! They will be saved because God will save His people in the desert:

- **“Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days” (Re.12:6).**
- **“Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male [Child]. But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.” (Re.12:13-16).**

If we wrongly identify the woman with the people of Israel, while it has to do with the Church of Christ, as certain commentators believe, the result does not change. Since Israel will reject the Antichrist and will recognize Jesus as His real Messiah, as it is prophesied in Zec.12:10, then he will have the same fate with the Church of Christ, which will be persecuted! Anyway, the word “woman” is more harmonized and identified with the people of Israel, since Israel begot, according to the flesh, Christ! “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.” (Rev.12:5).

Also, in the book of Daniel we read: **“At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered.”** (12:1).

With the above-mentioned verse, therefore, from Daniel, the opinion is clearly supported that John is referring more particularly to Israel. That is, the **“woman”** is the people of Israel and more concretely all the believers from the people of Israel, who will be awakened and will reject the Antichrist as their Messiah. And those, they will be many. **“And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.”** (Rom.11:26). The woman (Israel) will be saved in the desert **“... where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.”** (Rev 12:14). That is three and a half years, as many as the years of the Antichrist’s kingdom.

Protection and preservation of Israel

The desert where Israel will be saved, some scholars believe that it will be the desert near the city called Petra, which was built on a rocky region of mountainous Jordan, south of the Dead Sea and which was included within the region which in the past was called Edom. Today one can find the ruins of this ancient civilization but this region constitutes a wonderful stronghold in the holes of rocks. And because these regions of Jordan will not be conquered by the Antichrist, according to the prophecy of Daniel in verse 11:41. **“He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many [countries] shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.”** (Da.11:41). Their nourishment and protection, therefore, are guaranteed by God for three and a half years, may be in a similar way as they were fed during the days of Moses with the “Manna” in the desert.

This way of protection and preservation of the people of Israel comprises undoubtedly a wonderful intervention of God on their behalf, as it is prophesied: **“Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days”... “But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.”** (Re.12:6, 14).

The principle of God’s selective protection exists in the Holy Scriptures. God’s wrath falls, in a selective way, against the

wicked as it is described in the book of Revelation and in the following verses:

- 1) **“Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”** (Re.9:3-4);
- 2) **“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.” So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”** (Re.16:1-2), and
- 3) **“And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.”**(Re.16:9-11)

Consequently, the saints will be exempted from those crises and specifically the saints who will be alive in the day of Christ’s appearance. Let us remember also the cases of Noah and of Jeremiah. However, one thing is sure, that all true believers will not undergo God’s wrath.

Israel's conversion

For this reason, God comforts his people prophetically, saying: **“Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.”** (Hos.3:5).

The land of Israel will be trodden by the nations and by the Antichrist: **“... And they will tread the holy city underfoot [for] forty-two months.”** (Re.11:2). That is, three and a half years, while God will save the people of Israel in the desert. Their deliverance by God is a fact that has been prophesied and means a pact: **“... The King of Israel, the LORD, [is] in your midst; you shall see disaster no more.... Behold, at that time I will deal with all who afflict you; I will save the lame, and gather those who were driven out; I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame. At that time I will bring you back, even at the time I gather you; for I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I return your captives before your eyes, says the LORD.”** (Zep.3:15-20). Also, there will be other nations that will escape his destructive passion, as we read in the book of Daniel, and these will be the following: **“He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many [countries] shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon (regions of Jordan, as it was mentioned before). He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the**

Libyans and Ethiopians [shall follow] at his heels.” (Dan.11:41-43). His only supporters, therefore, would be the Libyans and the Ethiopians and not the people of Israel, as some erroneously believe and turn themselves against him. If this came true, then this word would contradict the word of God’s prophecy and his covenant with Abraham: **“since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?”** (Ge.18:18).

How would Israel become a nation and all the nations of the earth would be blessed if the people of Israel were to be rejected by their God, on account of the Antichrist that he would be the Messiah and at the same time it is prophesied:

- **“...then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for [his] only [son], and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.”** (Zec.12:10);
- **“They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This [is] My people’; and each one will say, ‘The LORD [is] my God.’”** (Zec.13:9);
- **“And it shall come to pass [that] just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, let your hands be strong.”** (Zec.8:13);
- **“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard [that] God [is] with you “.”** (Zec.8:23); and

- **“... I will appoint them for praise and fame in every land where they were put to shame.” (Zep.3:19).**

How is it possible, then, that the above prophecies will be fulfilled and at the same time Israel will make a definite treaty with the Antichrist? Or, how is it possible that the people of Israel will make a treaty with Antichrist and at the same time --- we repeat it--- be prophesied that: **“...then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for [his] only [son], and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn” (Zec.12:10).** Consequently, the people of Israel will mourn for Jesus Christ that they had rejected and crucified.

CHAPTER 10

“THE LITTLE HORN”’S ENEMIES

Of whom the Antichrist will be afraid

Egypt will be one of the countries, which will resist him but will suffer the same fate as Israel, in spite of its efforts to escape from the hands of the Little Horn (Antichrist). Finally, it will be conquered and plundered by him: **“He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians [shall follow] at his heels.”** (Da.11:42-43). On the contrary, other people, countries and regions which are in a concrete way identified in and referred to in the book of Daniel, as the North and the East will resist him effectively, as we saw Daniel to inform us and to comfort us: **“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”** (Da.11:44-45).

In this passage, Daniel reassures us that he will neither be invincible nor will he be supported by all and especially by the

North where the EU is and which will become his strongest enemy, even if at the beginning the “North” will be impressed by him, as well as all the inhabited world. In due time, their memory will work and will help them to come to themselves from their surprise and will become conscious and understand with whom they have to deal with.

Many people today, in spite of the lack of interest that prevails for the prophecies of the Bible, accept the Bible, know and accept the prophecies of Daniel, of Paul, of John and of other prophets and apostles of the Lord that speak about the last days. For this reason, the spirit of Apostasy will not be able to smother so effectively the voice of conscience, which will begin to react immediately and intensely within them. His “mania” to govern as God and the means he will use in order to extinguish his refuters will incite all against him, as it happened in the days of Julius Caesar in 44 b.C, whose picture was carried among the pictures of gods and his statue was erected in the temple with the insignia: “To the invincible god”. There were also designed priests of this “god”. Finally, a group of friends and supporters of his assassinated him because his demands about his divine attributes had made him unsupportable. How much more in the case of the Antichrist...!

Let us not think that the spirit changes because the era changes. Many kings of the world from the beginning claimed the divine qualities and had the title of king god, whether they were Babylonians or Persians or Egyptians and many others. In spite of his initial impressive appearance, the influence of his political and military power, his terrorism and the fear that he is going to spread throughout the world, it will not be too late to see appearing a spiritual and psychological reaction, which will turn into a military revolt against him by all the nations and especially

by the North that are saturated with the knowledge of the Bible. Antichrist will not be able to deceive them for a long time with his myths.

The fact that is worth noting is that the Little Horn that will be at the head of the new empire from one of the late states of Alexander the Great (Dan.8:5-15) and in the power of Satan, will not be invincible in spite of many powers and authorities that will be given to him. Many nations will resist him and will turn against his kingdom and others will be saved from his destructive “mania”, as it is declared by Daniel. Others still will cause him anxieties and will humble him (Dan.11:40-45).

The place where his power will be centered

Thus, his real power will be centered in the eastern Mediterranean region and in particular in Israel, where he will pretend to be God, and not in the North where the EU is, even if Daniel calls him “the king of the north” in Daniel 11:40-43. On the contrary, the North, as Daniel states it in verse 11:44 will become his source of fear. The words “the king of the north” and “the north” should not be considered and identified as one and the same thing, because the phrase “the king of the north” refers to the Antichrist (Dan.11:40), who is the Little Horn in relation to Egypt which corresponds to the “king of the south” while the word “the north” refers to the countries of the north: “But reports from the east and the north will alarm him...” (Dan.11:44 NIV.)

Consequently, let not his power be exaggerated and be given dimensions beyond those defined in the Word of God. As in the days of the Roman empire, the peoples of its territory were

groaning under its yoke and Carthage was extinguished and men were being enslaved, India, under Asoka, was flourishing as well as other countries of the east which were not under the yoke of the Roman sovereignty. In the same way, during the period of Antichrist, while the countries of eastern Mediterranean region will be oppressed and will be extinguished by the Antichrist, the West, the North, Edom, Moab and Ammon (Jordan) (Dan.11:41) will remain free and will escape from his hands, as well as the people of Israel who will escape in the desert and will be saved by their God (Re.12:6, 14).

Antichrist will not dominate over the whole world

Also, it is written that: “**...authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.**” (Re.13:7). But even this should not be taken literally, namely that the whole world will be dominated because it is cancelled by other prophecies of Daniel, which prophesy what has to do with his kingdom and designate exactly the countries on which he will dominate. We must especially pay attention to Daniel’s prophecies if we want to understand exactly the events concerning the Antichrist’s kingdom. We can rely literally only on his prophetic descriptions, interpretations and explanations. Daniel is the only prophet who describes clearly and in detail the events of the last days and those concerning the Antichrist’s kingdom, even if John gives us certain complementary information about him. Daniel determines, also, in detail even the duration of his kingdom. Let us pay attention to it: “**Then I heard a holy one speaking; and [another] holy one said to that certain [one] who was speaking, “How long [will] the vision [be, concerning] the daily [sacrifices] and the transgression of desolation, the**

giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?” And he said to me, “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed.” (Daniel 8:13-14).

CHAPTER 11

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

The Great Tribulation and the last plagues of God

However, what must draw our attention is not the Antichrist himself, even if the spirit of barbarism and of crime of the Roman era will be revived or that of the Nazi of Hitler against the Jews. The Great Tribulation during the Antichrist's days will basically come from the last plagues of God! And in this comprises the Great Tribulation. All those who will escape from Antichrist's persecution, provided that they will accept to obey and be sealed, will not escape God's judgement described in the book of Revelation, chapters 15 and 16. That judgement will take place against the Antichrist's kingdom and against all those who will worship him either within his empire in the Mediterranean region or outside his dominion all over the world, where his kingdom will exert his influence, as it is the case nowadays with the Satan worshippers. During that period of Great Tribulation, one third of men will be killed as it is stated in the book of Revelation! (9:15, 18). **“So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.”** (Re.9:15).

The Great Tribulation and the Roman persecutions

The Great Tribulation, therefore, during the Antichrist's era will be multi-facial because God also intervenes against him. As regards Israel's tribulation during the Antichrist, we wonder whether it will be greater, since Israel will be saved by God in the desert in comparison with that of the Nazi period of Hitler, during which the Israel of Diaspora did not have the time to escape and 6.000.000 were killed, that is a number perhaps equal to the one of the actual number of Israelis living in Israel today. Or, is it going to be proved more barbarous than that of the Roman Empire which dug upside down Carthage from a population of half a million, in 146 b.C., and only 50.000 survived. In the same year in Corinth, a flourishing city of Greece, the Romans killed all men of Corinth, which had a population of 1.000.000 and sold women and children as slaves. Or, in one day only the Romans crucified 6.000 gladiators and slave followers of Spartacus and the wild beasts were devouring Christians for three centuries during which the persecutions of Christians in the Roman arenas and not only three and a half years that will last the Antichrist's era. Or, of the period of Tamerlane who had the hobby to make pyramids from skulls in the lands that he conquered. Or, is not in our days a lot of crimes and of acts of cannibalism taking place as, for example, in Cambodia where millions of people were massacred, and also in Rwanda, in Burundi, in Bosnia, in Algeria etc.? Let us take notice of this, so that we may not be influenced by impressions, which do not give an objective picture of the reality of the past in relation to the future...

Intense but of short- duration persecutions

The Antichrist's era will not add anything new to the criminality of humanity in comparison with the criminality of the past. It will simply be a repetition and especially of a short period of three and a half years against his deniers. On the contrary, God's people will be the object of a favourable treatment by God with His interventions against the Antichrist through the last plagues and through the shortening of the period of their affliction, because God will **“shorten the days”** on their behalf, as the Apostle Matthew informs and comforts us: **“If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”** (Mt.24:22 as well as Mark.13:20).

CHAPTER 12

THE RAPTURE

The uncertainty about the moment of the Rapture

It is clear in the Bible that God, in His mercy and providence for His people, will rapture the Church from the earth before its final destruction. No true believer doubts about the glorious event of the Rapture of the Church. This is the reason why they have wrongly identified the Rapture with the “The Blessed Hope”... What is not clear in the mind of many believers is the moment when the Rapture will take place, that is, before the Great Tribulation, in the middle of the Great Tribulation or at the end of the Great Tribulation.

What most Christians believe about the Rapture

Nowadays, the great majority of believers have adopted the position that the Church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation. Numerous Christians rigorously stick to this doctrine just because they have been so taught and have accepted it without having examined it for themselves on the basis of the Holy Scriptures. In addition, it is a doctrine that is so agreeable and comforting! Why should they worry? Why should they get

ready to face the Great Tribulation, since they believe that they will not be there to experience its hardships because they will have been raptured? This theory has been attacked as lacking the necessary Biblical support. Of course, those who dare attack this broadly accepted theory become the object of counter attacks and are considered as troublemakers!

The theory that the Rapture will take place before the Great Tribulation is so widely spread and so firmly believed that he who would dare attack it will have to face the opposition if not the enmity of believers. He will be considered as a false teacher subverting the faith of believers and as trying to divide the Church! Christian Universities, Seminaries or Bible Colleges, as well as television and radio teachers and even Christian films promote pre-Great Tribulationism. This theory is publicized now even through web sites. And Christian bookstores are overflowing with pre-Great Tribulation publications.

According to this doctrine, the Lord will come before the Great Tribulation in a secret way for His Church to take her up and be with Him. At the end of the Great Tribulation, He will come in a public way to judge and condemn the wicked. If this doctrine is true, believers have no reason to be anxious over the coming Great Tribulation since they will not be anymore here. In case that theory is false, the believers who have adopted it must change their attitude and be prepared to endure the hardships of the Great Tribulation.

Those who believe in this theory accept directly or indirectly:

- 1) that the Great Tribulation is only for the saints of the Great Tribulation;

- 2) that there are two peoples of God, having excluded from the Church the saints of the Great Tribulation whose names are also written in the Lamb's book of life; and
- 3) that there are two future comings of the Lord, one of which, that is the first, is in the form of the Rapture, which they believe will occur before the Great Tribulation.

Not to reject anything before having examined it

The Bible, nevertheless, exhorts us not to reject anything before having examined it. The Bible says: **“Test all things; hold fast what is good.”** (1Th.5:21). And **“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”** (1Jo.4:1). What the majority believes does not constitute always a guarantee of Scriptural truth...

Who belong to the Church?

A. Questions concerning the Great Tribulation saints

If, as certain eschatologists suppose, the Church will have been raptured before the Great Tribulation, then believers coming from the Great Tribulation, and the two martyrs who prophecy for a certain period during the Great Tribulation should not be true members of the Church of Christ but would form a special class of believers who will be treated differently! In that case, certain chain questions must be answered:

- 1) How is it possible to them, despite the terrible persecution, to **“... keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”** (Re.12:17)?
- 2) How is it possible for them to hold the **“testimony of Jesus”** and not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ?
- 3) How do they belong to Jesus and hold **“His testimony”** without having the Spirit of God indwelling in them?
- 4) If, however, they are converted and are born again, **then** they belong to Jesus and they have the Spirit of God. Consequently, they are true Christians and belong to the Church.
- 5) If they are true Christians and belong to the Church, then the Church is not raptured before the Great Tribulation.

Consequently, their assertion that the Rapture takes place before the Great Tribulation cannot be valid!

Also, the Bible says about the Great Tribulation saints that:

- **“Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from? And I said to him, Sir, you know. So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall**

not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Re.7:13-17)

- **“It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them... All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” (Re.13:7-8)**

The **saints** in question must have had their names **written** in the Book of Life of the Lamb! Then which are the differences between the Church **saints** and the Great Tribulation **saints**? And if there are no differences, then the Church is present during the Great Tribulation!

B. Questions concerning the Old Testament saints

And what about the Old Testament saints? Do they belong to the Church of Christ or not? It is written in the epistle to the Hebrews that, **“But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”** (Heb.10:3-4)! If it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats take away sins, then all Old Testament saints’ sins have never been forgiven! But what about Jeremiah’s prophecy of a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah? (Jer.31: 27). None other than the Lord Jesus Christ made that covenant effectual. **“...He takes away the first that He may establish the second”** (Heb.10:9). This was accomplished through His death

on the cross. **“And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”** (Heb.9:15). This means Jesus’ death on the cross was not just for people saved during the period between the Pentecost and the Rapture but also for Old Testament saints and the Great Tribulation saints.

And what should we say about the absolute resemblance of Exodus 19:6: **“... you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”** and 1Peter 2:9 **“... you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation ...”**. Do they not both speak about the same thing and the same purpose?

Nowhere does the Bible teach that God has two or three separate peoples for His own possession. Revelation’s description of the New Jerusalem suggests just the opposite: **“Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are [the names] of the *twelve tribes of the children of Israel*... Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the *twelve apostles of the Lamb*.”** (Re.21:12, 14), who belong to the Church.

Will there be two Comings and two Raptures?

Where does the Bible say that there will be two Comings? All relevant verses reveal different aspects or phases of the same event. Verse 1The.4:17 says, **“Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to**

meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” So, the saints will go out to meet the Lord in the air and then they will return with Him. The Rapture will be the opening act of His Second Coming! Where does the Bible say that the saints will be transported to heaven seven years before His Second Coming?

The Church of Christ includes saints of all ages

The Bible reveals that a great host of people will come to faith in Jesus during the Great Tribulation. If these believers are part of the Church, then the Church includes saints of all ages! And this because according to the eleventh chapter of Hebrews the Church includes all Old Testament revered saints, including Abraham, of whom the Scripture says we are sons if we are in the faith **“Therefore know that *only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*”** (Ga.3:7). The same thing is also true for Moses, David and the prophets. What does the Bible mean when it says: **“whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,”** (Ro.3:25). Which are **“...the sins that were previously committed”**, if this expression refers only to New Testament believers?

Also, where does the Bible say that the so-called “Tribulation saints” are excluded from the Body of Christ and that will not be raptured?

What is the “blessed hope”?

The expression “blessed hope” is to be found in Tit.2:13:“**looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ**”. *This verse refers to the glorious appearing of our Lord and NOT to the Rapture!*

Our hope in Christ is indeed a blessed hope because it has to do with our salvation. Our Biblical hope is the expectation that all God's promises concerning our salvation will be fulfilled.

There are many different promises concerning our hope in Christ: the hope of eternal life, the hope of glory, the hope of the gospel, the hope of deliverance from the flesh, Satan and the world, the hope that “**the perishable must put on the imperishable**”, the hope that we will be changed and we shall see Him just as He is, and that forever we will be united with the Lord etc. For all these reasons, His promised Glorious Appearing is called the “**blessed hope**”. It is blessed because it is the event, which leads to the fulfilment of ALL our “salvation” hopes.

Misinterpretation of Titus 2:13

The “blessed hope” has clearly to do *with the glory of the Lord's appearing*, which will be a matter of public display, and not a secret event. At His appearing “**...they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**” (Mt.24:30). Consequently, there are no two future Comings, one of which is the Rapture. Another proof of this is the verse “**...Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into**

heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Ac.1:11).

The verse Tit.2:13 has been misinterpreted. One of the reasons of this error is that those who believe in the Rapture before the Great Tribulation believe that believers cannot survive the false prophet's persecutions or the prophesied natural disasters. But according to Scripture, believers will survive this trial just because God can make them survive! Suffice to remember how the Israelites survived the plagues in Egypt and the three young men whose story we read in the Book of Daniel, **““Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace [and] spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come [here].” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire.”** (Dan.3:25-26)

Important parallel relevant Bible verses

The Church of Christ has gone through many tribulations. Remember what the Bible says in Hebrews 11:35-38 and especially what Peter says in 1Pe.4:12-13: **“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”**

The Lord, Himself, indicated persecution would be our “plight” in this life: **“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.”** (Mt.24:9). Paul likewise said, **“...through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God”** (Ac.14:22). In addition, it is an honour to suffer shame for our Saviour and Lord! So, whether we go through Tribulation the promise of the revelation of His glory (1Pe.4:13) will always be our **“blessed hope.”** The Bible, however, declares that we will be kept from the day of the wrath of the Lord because we will be under His protection: See Zep.1.7-18, 3.14-17; Isa.13.6; 2Pet.3.10; Ob.1:15; Eze.13.5; Joe.3:1-2; 12.14; Isa.13.10; Joel 2:31.

The verse **“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD”** (Joel 2:31), mentioned also by the apostle Peter in Ac.2:20, records that the prophesied signs come before the day of the Lord. If the Great Tribulation coincides with the day of the Lord, then the signs listed by Joel would also come before the Great Tribulation! The following verse must also be taken into consideration: **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood”** (Re.6:12). This means the day of the Lord cannot occur until well after the Great Tribulation has begun.

At any moment?

Everyone agrees that many events are prophesied to take place before the Glorious Appearing of the Lord at the end of the age (the Antichrist's appearing, the appearance of the two witnesses, signs in the heavens, etc.). Those who believe that the rapture takes place before the Great Tribulation base their belief mainly in the following verses:

- **“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”** (Joh.14:1-3).
- **“who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven”** (Ac.1:11).
- **“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”** (1Co.15:51-52).
- **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”** (Php.3:20).

- **“When Christ [who is] our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”** (Col.3:4), where there is a clear reference to His coming and of the Rapture. Those who believe in the Rapture at any moment believe it without taking seriously into consideration the abovementioned prophesied events. How is it, however, possible that **passages, which are silent on the matter of the signs that precede**, can be said to prove the “at any moment”?

They say that “imminency’ is necessary for the well-being of the Church otherwise the Church will go to sleep... The Scriptures NEVER present the Rapture as a signless (imminent) event. A number of Scriptures seem to contradict the doctrine:

- 1) **The Lord’s promise to Peter that he would die at an old age** (Joh.21:18-19). If the Rapture was presented as imminent, that means Peter’s translation could have happened at any moment even before Peter’s death! The Rapture could not have occurred before Peter’s death. Consequently, the Lord did not teach imminency. Is it correct to assume that which one is trying to prove?
- 2) **The parables, which imply a long interval of time before the Lord returns.** The parable of the talents (Mt.25:14-30 and Lu.19:11-27). These passages argue against the concept of at any moment Rapture. They presuppose the lapse of considerable time.
 - The kingdom compared to a mustard seed. Though small at first, it will grow, implying a passage of time.
 - The kingdom compared to leaven. Though insignificant at first, over time it will permeate everywhere.

3) **Various passages, which imply that the program for this age would be extensive.** These texts imply a considerable period of time before the Lord returns. An extended delay is inconsistent with the teaching of at any moment rapture.

Included are the following signs:

- The Great Commission (Mt.28:19-20). This is the command to make disciples of all the nations. It should be noted that it has not been fully accomplished after a span of nearly 20 centuries. If the Rapture would take place at any moment, how would it be possible to make disciples of all nations?
- Paul's extensive missionary plans and his knowledge of his approaching death. As in the prophecy concerning Peter, we see the necessity of a passage of time and a prophesied future event—Paul's death—before the rapture could occur.
- The prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, preceding the Lord's return (Lu.21:20-24).
- The specific signs of the Lord's coming given at the Olivet Discourse (Mt.24:1-25; Mt.24:30).

Consequently, the case for the Rapture in Re.4:1-2 is a pure assumption! To make John's being caught up into heaven mean that the Church is raptured at that time is purely allegorical. The fact that the word "Church" is not to be found in the chapters following ch.4 does not constitute a proof that the Church was not anymore present! The word "Church" is not used in Peter's epistles but the Church was present when Peter wrote them. In the book of Revelation, let us repeat it, it is written that the Great Tribulation believers **keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus** as all other members of the body of Christ! It is also written that their names have been

written **“from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”** (Re.12:17; 13:8). They belong to the Church of Christ.

Afflictions, the believer's “portion” in this life

If we compare Re.3:10, **“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth”** with Lu.21:16-19; and Joh.17:15 and in particular with Mt.24:9, which says **“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake”**, then the supposed promise directly contradicts the words of our Lord and the words of the Bible in general because we see that afflictions comprise the believer's **“portion”** in this life.

- **“...In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”** (Joh.16:33)
- **“...We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”** (Ac.14:22)
- **“... for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this.”** (1Th.3:3)
- **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”** (2Ti.3:12)
- **“... but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able...”** (1Co.10:13)
- **“Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is**

revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” (1Pe.4:12-13)

- **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [Shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.” (Ro.8:35-37)**
- **“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory” (2Co.4:17)**
- **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” (Jas.1:2-4).**
- **“And not only [that], but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Ro.5:3-5)**
- **“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt.10:28).**

Beyond these general Biblical principles, there is a host of passages, which are *either intended for the believers in general or can wonderfully apply also to believers* of the Great Tribulation period:

- **“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” (Mt.24:9)**
- **“Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.” (Mt.24:11)**
- **“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Mt.24:10) and “You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put [some] of you to death”. (Lu.21:16)**
- **“But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly.” (Lu.21:34)**
- **“Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.” (Mark 13:33)**
- **“But when they arrest [you] and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.” (Mr.13:11)**
- **“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls.” (Lu.21:17-19)**

Passages for the believers of the Great Tribulation

- **“The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,” (2Thes.2:9)**
- **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition” (2Th.2:3)**

- **“And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,” (2Th.2:11)**
- **“saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.” (Re.7:3) and “They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.” (Re.9:4)**
- **“men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken.” (Lu.21:26) and “I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.” (Re.6:12-13)**
- **“Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.” (Lu.21:36)**
- **“But the heavens and the earth [which] are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (2Pe.3:7)**
- **“Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives [his] mark on his forehead or on his hand, “he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” (Re.14:9-10)**

- **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” (Re.12:11)**
- **“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Re.12:17). And, “Here is the patience of the saints; here [are] those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” (Re.14:12)**
- **“Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed [are] the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’“ “Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.” (Re.14:13)**
- **“At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, [even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book.” (Dan.12:1)**

How is it possible that those who assert that the Rapture will take place before the Great Tribulation can insist that there are no instructions for the Great Tribulation and that they are not intended for the Christians of the Church but for the believers of the Great Tribulation and that the Church has no need for them because she will not be here during the Great Tribulation?

We conclude, therefore, that those who believe that the Rapture will take place before the Great Tribulations do not accept the relevant warnings and instructions as directed at the Church, since, by definition, no members of the Church will experience the Great Tribulation. They assert that this doctrine does no harm but on the contrary is profitable by keeping

Christians alert. However, what counts is not what we think but what the Bible teaches: **“But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; "the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. "Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven”.** (Mr.13:24-27).

If this doctrine is not in the Bible, then it is not according to God's plans and consequently it is a false teaching and/or a fallacy. And if it is a false teaching then it is inescapably dangerous and harmful in spite of its harmless appearance. The doctrine of the Rapture is EITHER YES ... OR NO.

CHAPTER 13

THE GREAT TRIBULATION AND THE ROMAN ERA

Tribulations of the past and the Great Tribulation

In reality, from the point of view of persecutions, there will be no great difference between these two periods of the past and of the future. But then why is the Antichrist's period called the Great Tribulation?

- 1) The reply is to be found exactly in the fact that it has to do with the kingdom of Satan himself in the world in the person of the Little Horn and constitutes the last period of the life of humanity, during which humanity will be tested with the workings of Satan and of his followers. And Satan's worship has already begun to spread! Satan worshippers would have already begun a criminal march if the fear of the law were not hindering them. We realize, therefore, what is going to happen during the Antichrist's kingdom from his followers in all the world, where they will be supported by it: That is, the distortion of their error will be manifested freely in the form of human sacrifices and in hatred against God and against their fellow men, something that is being spread more and more.

- 2) Such a conscious Satan worship had not prevailed in the past or during the Roman era, as it is going to be imposed during the days of the Antichrist, even if Roman emperors had the mania to deify themselves and believe in idols. They were simply idolaters and full of megalomania, as all the peoples of their era. Nevertheless, they respected and honoured the gods of their fathers as gods and they never imposed the worship of Satan consciously as a worship of god, in the way the Antichrist (the Little Horn) is going to impose it and who will be his immediate representative and will no more respect any god! **“Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above [them] all. But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things.”** (Da.11:36-38)
- 3) The thing that should also not escape our attention is that the duration of the Great Tribulation will be very short, that is, of only three and a half years in comparison with the years of persecutions of the Roman era of three centuries. However, the method of extermination of the Antichrist's deniers, even if it will differ from the method of the Roman era, which subdued the reaction of its Christian deniers by putting them to death by wild beasts, it will not be lacking in efficiency. The Antichrist will try to oblige them even psychologically to worship him on account of his astuteness, which will make him prominent. And those will be no less painful conditions

of their life and with the famine to death which will impose them, since his deniers will not be able to sell or buy without his number and since Satan worshipping will have prevailed in his territory.

- 4) Also, spiritual, physical and intellectual perversions will intensify as well as their undesirable repercussions on the last period of man's life, so that the human kind will face problems in everything. All humanity will be under depression and will suffer the consequences of the satanic presence and of its influences. All men will be tested and will suffer the results of the hostile environment where they will be living. And no one will escape the testing of his choice, even if he will be under the immediate Antichrist's authority, or escape physical death, because God interprets spiritually the Great Tribulation as a test of all the inhabited world: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** (Rev.3:10 DBY). Thus, even if God saves his own, as it is declared in that verse, the whole humanity will suffer the test of the temptation of the impressing miracles of the false prophet and of his terror, which will be spread all over the world through his followers and his advertising through mass media, so that the world will suffer directly the influence of that wicked spirit.
- 5) The thing is that, we emphasize it again, must terrify and problematize humanity ---and that will make more intense the Great Tribulation--- will be God's last plagues! We repeat that during that period of the Great Tribulation one third of the human population will be put to death as it is stated in Revelation! (9:15, 18). **“So the four angels, who had been**

prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind”. And in that thing, also, the Roman era will be basically different from the Antichrist’s era: That through those plagues men will be terribly tormented, as the Word of God describes them to us in Revelation, during different stages of God’s judgement during the Great Tribulation. We mark out two cases from the seven plagues in the book of Revelation:

- **“Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. ...They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth... but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads... In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.”** (Re.9:3-6)
- **“Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.”** (Re.16:10-11)

The plagues in question have not been prophesied for the Roman era. This is the reason why they had not taken place at that time, but only for the Antichrist’s era, which closes the curtain of the history of mankind, for awakening and repentance. The plagues in question as concluded from the immediately above-mentioned verses, are directed only against the Antichrist and his followers, as we read in Revelation 9:4. **“They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.”** (Re.9:4). And we ask: Who

are going to have the seal on their foreheads if the Church is raptured before the Great Tribulation? But we are going to examine this point later.

Consequently, God, even through the last plagues, will try to bring man to repentance before he undergoes his final rejection (Re.11:13)! However, there will be many that will not repent as it is prophesied by the Word of God. **“But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, ... And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.”** (Re.9:20-21). Those who will escape that terrible crisis of the last plagues of God against the Antichrist and of his followers and in general of those who deny God will surely be only the true children of God all over the world, irrespective of denomination and denominational shade who will not receive him and will not acknowledge him in order to be favoured and get rich at the expense of other peoples' fortunes even at the expense of their life, and all those who will not be influenced or be impressed by the boasters and the miracles of the false prophet: **“So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.”** (Re.16:2)

The children of God, that is the true believers, finally, will not only undergo the last plagues of the Great Tribulation but they will also be the object of the highest honour to be protected by God: **“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”** (Re.3:10). Finally, they will be raptured alive in heaven by Jesus

Christ in his Second Coming, and before the holocaust of the earth as it is declared:

- 1) By Paul: **“Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”** (1Th.4:17),
- 2) By John: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** (Re.3:10 DBY), as it has already been referred,
- 3) by Peter: **“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”** (2Pe.3:10), and
- 4) By Jesus Christ:
 - **“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”** (Mt.24:22)
 - **“... so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.”** (Mt.24:39-41)

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience...”

At this point, we consider it necessary to open another parenthesis: In the book of Revelation there is nowhere **clear** mention about the Rapture and especially before the Great Tribulation. There is, however, a verse of basic importance, which we repeat, and this is the verse Re.3:10: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** (Re.3:10 DBY). That verse constitutes a clear indication about the Great Tribulation, which the whole world and the Church will go through. The Holy Scriptures speak about a sudden coming of the Lord as a **“thief in the night”** (1Thes.5:2; 2Pet.3:10; Re.3:3 etc.) and about the need of being vigilant. The protection of the Church is also being discussed. However, special attention should be given to the verb **“keep from”** (**“φυλάττω ἐκ”** or **“τηρέω ἐκ”**) in the Greek ancient text. If we compare verse John 17:15, **“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one”** with the verse under question Re.3:10 we understand that it has to do with spiritual and physical protection of man. Let us pay attention to the similarity of expressions and meanings in the Greek ancient text:

- **“Οὐκ ἐρωτῶ ἵνα ἄρῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, ἀλλ’ ἵνα τηρήσῃς αὐτοὺς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ.”**(Joh.17:15), that is to protect them during the period of their testing from the evil one.
- **“ὄτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κἀγὼ σὲ τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης**

ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης, πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.” (Re.3:10).

Revelation, chapter 4, verse 1

As regards the verse Re.4:1, **“After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this”** it would be risky, unreasonable and unscriptural to be used as a proof about the Rapture and especially before the Great Tribulation.

Special attention should also be paid to the verses Re.14:14-16: **“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat [One] like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. Then another angel came out of the temple and called in a loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud, ‘Take your sickle and reap, because the time to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So he who was seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.”** (NIV).

In Re.14:15-16, in particular, mention is being made about reaping, that is about the Rapture (gathering) as it is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew 13:30 **“Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.”** Verses Re.14:17-20 refer also to the judgement of unbelievers.

The Rapture and the first Resurrection coincide

Finally, very meaningful is the verse **20:4 of Revelation** where John is speaking about the first resurrection of all righteous dead! But the Rapture, does it not coincide with the first resurrection of the righteous dead? **If then the first resurrection is after the Great Tribulation, then the Rapture also is after the Great Tribulation...** Let us not forget that Daniel in chapter 12 and verses 1-2 speaks to us about the resurrection of the dead of Israel who are raptured **after the Tribulation: “At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.”**

God asks from the believers of the Great Tribulation to be armed with patience. That is exactly what He requires also from the believers of the Churches of Revelation. On the one hand, **why does John address his testimony to the Churches if the Churches will not be on this earth during the hour of the temptation? On the other hand, for whom will He shorten the days of the Great Tribulation?**

To the end of reinforcing our position, we deem it necessary to add the following argument: In 1 Corinthians, chapter 15:51-52 we read: **“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will**

sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.” The trumpet is one of the main characteristics of the day of the Lord. This is clearly seen in verse Mt.24:31, which says, **“And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”**

Given the fact that the Rapture takes place at the first resurrection of the righteous dead (Rev.20:4-6) that means that the Rapture will undoubtedly take place after the Great Tribulation. The key to understand this thing is given to us by the words **“last trumpet”** and **“resurrection of the dead”**, which resurrection notably **precedes** the transformation of the then living believers.

These passages, however, refer to one and the same event... **after the Great Tribulation**, after which takes place the resurrection of the dead. Finally, in the verses Mark 13:23-30 mention is being made of the Great Tribulation and the coming of the Lord after the Tribulation. **“But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven. Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.”** (Mark 13:23-30). In verse

29, Christ addressing Himself to his disciples, who were Jews, He tells them, **“Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door.”** Special attention should be paid to the verse Mark 13:37, **“What I say to you, I say TO EVERYONE: ‘Watch!’”** (Mark 13:37 NIV).

“At any moment”

And something else: All the verbs that the Bible uses on this subject, for example **προσδέχομαι, ἀπεκδέχομαι, ἐκδέχομαι, προσδοκῶ, ἐγγίζω, ἀγρυπνῶ, νήφω** etc. concern the description of the nearness of the **Parousia** or of the expectation of that Parousia by the believer. We do not believe that all these verbs mean that the Parousia of the Lord could take place **“at any time”** without certain events having taken place before ... Their meaning depends on the context. The essence of what precedes is the following:

- 1) The disciples do not know when the Lord comes again (Mt.24:42, 44 and 24:13);
- 2) They must watch and be prepared; and
- 3) When the believers see certain events, they can know that the hour of Christ draws nigh (Mt.24:32-33). In essence, that refers to one and the same event, which is the coming of the Lord after the Great Tribulation. Even, then, if no one knows the day and the exact hour, one can, however, know:
 - The “about when” of His coming after the Great Tribulation has begun;
 - That the period of Great Tribulation will be shortened; and

- Even in that case, it will not be possible to fix exactly the moment or the date and the hour of His coming.

Regarding again the argument of “at any moment” of those who disagree the following points must be emphasized:

- 1) That there will be some delay, some expectation, some longsuffering of the Lord before He comes back (Lu.19:11-27; Mt.24:45-51 and 25:5, 19); and
- 2) There are some prophecies, which could not be accomplished if Christ would come back immediately after his ascension. And more concretely:
 - That the apostles and His followers would be His testimonies in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria and even to the utmost parts of the earth (Ac.1:8).
 - That the Gospel should be preached to the whole world before the end would come (Mt.24:14).
 - That Peter was going to die in old age (Joh.21:18-19).
 - That Paul would preach the Gospel in Rome also (Ac.23:11 and 27:24).

Those events should have taken place during the first century. For the apostles who had written all these things, it would be impossible to mean “at any moment” to the recipients of their epistles. On the other hand, there are also other events, which must be accomplished before the “Parousia” of the Lord, as they have already been mentioned. In conclusion, even if nowhere in the Bible the time of the Rapture in relation to the Great Tribulation is mentioned, certain passages of the Bible, certain thoughts and reasonably enough drawn conclusions from the Holy Bible, convince us that we have rightly interpreted what we have interpreted up to this point and that they do not

minimize, even in the slightest degree, the essence and the meaning of the “blessed hope”.

The Blessed Hope of the union of believers with Christ comprises undoubtedly comfort, irrespective of the experiences they have been through.

CHAPTER 14

HE THAT RESTRAINS HIM (RSV)

The prevailing interpretation and its refutation

Most scholarly eschatologists assert without any hesitation, that the Rapture of the Church of Christ precedes the Great Tribulation, which they compare with Noah's flood. They base their opinion on 2 Thessalonians 2:7, which speaks about he that **"witholdeth him"** and identify him that **"witholdeth"** (restrains) him with the Church of Christ: **"For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains [will do so] until He is taken out of the way."** They believe that on account of that reason the Antichrist has not been revealed and that the Church of Christ is his obstacle. When the Church is taken out of the way, that is, is raptured from the earth and is saved, just as Noah in his ark, then **"he that holds him back"** does not exist any more and the curtain opens for the reign of the Antichrist. This is the reason why they believe that the believers will not taste the Great Tribulation. But this opinion of theirs is not supported by any passage of the Word of God and not even by the Apostle Paul who is the only one who speaks about **"he that holds him back"** as the real reason that hinders him from being revealed **"at the proper time"**.

In that same passage, the apostle Paul does not identify the “he who holds him back” with the Church of Christ but on the contrary distinguishes the “he who holds him back” from the Church, since Paul proclaims that the apostasy and the Antichrist must precede the Rapture: **“Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way, for *that day will not come* until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God.”** (2Thes 2:1-4; see also Dan.11:37)

Consequently, the argument about “he who restrains” that it is the Church is not supported by the apostle Paul.

The Apostle Paul, in this passage, **excludes explicitly the possibility of the Rapture of the Church of Christ before the appearance of the Antichrist and his enthronement in the temple of God!** Therefore, the “he who holds him back” explicitly does not represent the Church, whose Rapture he identifies from the point of view of time with the second glorious coming of Christ and not with “the he who holds him back”. If it had to do with the Church, why does he not use that word and its article in the feminine gender, that is “**she who restrains**” or “**ἡ κωλύουσα**” or more correctly “**ἡ κατέχουσα**”, but uses the words “**τό κατέχον**” and “**ὁ κατέχων**” (according to the ancient Greek text) in 2 Thes.2:6 and 7, respectively)

Consequently, the Rapture of the Church takes place after the appearance of the Antichrist. How is it possible,

then, that the Rapture of the Church takes place before the Great Tribulation?

The Rapture AFTER the enthronement of Antichrist

Christ comes to take his Church **AFTER** the appearance of the Antichrist and his enthronement in the temple of God, as Paul prophesies: **“Let not any one deceive you in any manner, because [it will not be] unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, the son of perdition”** (2Th.2:3 DBY)

Paul was trying, with his second epistle to the Thessalonians, to calm their anxiety about the nearness of the end and more particularly with the words of 2 Thes.1:5-7 that he had **already** mentioned before, reassured and comforted the believers that they were not going to be raptured till the appearance of Christ: **“*which is* manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.”** (2Th.1:5-10). In other words, only at the coming of Christ, which will take place

after the Great Tribulation the believers will enjoy the redemption from the sufferings of the present age. Also, we see that in the above-mentioned verses 1Co.15:51 and 1Thes.4:15 that those who would be alive will be raptured.... The **“rest”** will come to both alive and dead during the revelation of Christ, the former through their Rapture the latter through their resurrection. During that revelation of Christ, discussion is being made about the **punishment with everlasting destruction of the wicked.**

In 2 Thes.2:1-12, Paul, as we have already mentioned, tried to calm the Thessalonian believers concerning the Parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and their gathering to Him with the following words: **“Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for [that Day will not come] unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains [will do so] until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the [lawless one] is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason**

God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2Thes.2:1-12)

What precedes the Rapture

He tells them, therefore, that certain events must take place before the day the Lord comes:

- 1) The apostasy (the religious rebellion against God and the overflowing of the iniquity), and
- 2) The revealing (appearance) of the man of iniquity, who is doomed to perdition. Relevant are the verses Mark 13:14; Rev.13:1-8; Dan.7:8, 20-25; 11:36-39)

If the Thessalonian believers were to be raptured before the “**day**” of the Lord, then he should have told them: “*No reason to worry because you will have been gone for the heavens before the Great Tribulation breaks out*”. On the contrary, he warns them that their gathering, that is their Rapture, will not take place before the apostasy and the appearance of the man of iniquity... that is of the Antichrist.

The Rapture of the believers who would be alive in the clouds to meet the Lord takes place during the second coming of Christ during which the resurrection of the dead believers takes place: “**But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive [and] remain until the coming of the**

Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.” (1Th.4:13-18).

Paul's encouragement lies in the fact that all believers, both alive and dead, will take part in the glorious events of the Parousia of Christ and they will always be with the Lord. That hope, that joy set before them, whether it includes a previous experience of the Great Tribulation or not comprised a comforting thought for the Thessalonian believers. The Thessalonian believers had passed through many difficult hours: **“And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit”** (1Thes.1:6) and continued to pass, go through such afflictions: **“that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know.”** (1Thes.3:3-4)

At this point, the following thoughts must be added:

- Both, in the discourse of the Lord in the Mount of Olives and in Paul's epistle mention is being made about angels, clouds, trumpet and about the gathering of the believers. Here is what the Lord says: **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the**

powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Mt.24:29-31). Mention about a trumpet is also being made in the previously mentioned verse 1Co.15:52: **"in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."** Is it then a haphazard "coincidence"? When does the last trumpet sound? Before or after the Great Tribulation?

- The above-mentioned verses 1Thes.4:13-18 have a common characteristic with the verses Dan.12:1-2 where mention is being made about those who are sleeping: **"At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands [watch] over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, [even] to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame [and] everlasting contempt."** (Dan.12:1-2). These verses from Daniel refer clearly to a period after the Great Tribulation, which has never happened in the past, and because after that Tribulation the resurrection of the dead takes place.

The conclusion is one: All the terms that are used for the Second Coming of Christ have to do with His coming after the Tribulation. This is the reason why the believers are exhorted to

expect that coming of the Lord. Nowhere is mention being made for two stages during which the Rapture is separated chronologically from the final event of the Lord's appearance!

These passages, therefore, we repeat, exclude explicitly for us any objection concerning the time of the Rapture of the Church, which takes place after the Antichrist's enthronement and at the advent of Jesus Christ at his Second Coming. The Apostle Peter completes and confirms: **“by which the world [that] then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth [which] are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner [of persons] ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”** (2Pe.3:6-13).

We ask, therefore, those who disagree: Who is that Peter's exhortation addressed to, to look forward and to hasten at the Lord's coming? To those who would have already been raptured and would be with the Lord, before the Great Tribulation?

About Noah's flood and the Day of Judgment

With the same spirit, then, the apostle Peter also expresses his prophecy, which refutes the opinion that the Rapture of the Church will precede, given that the Rapture of the Church is identified with the coming of Jesus Christ which takes place at the end of the Great Tribulation, and saves the believers from the fire, which will burn down the earth, as he had saved Noah from the flood, **“by which the world [that] then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth [which] are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”** (2Pe.3:6-7).

The fact that Jesus compares Noah's flood with his second coming and NOT with the Great Tribulation is clearly declared by Jesus Christ Himself. Let us pay attention to His words: **“For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.”** (Mt.24:38-41)

The flood, then, is not compared by Jesus with the Great Tribulation, as Matthew interprets it, but with the fire of God's judgement, which burns down the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation as the apostle Peter informs us and describes it. The Great Tribulation can be compared from the point of view of meaning with the Roman era of Christian persecutions: **“... And**

unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.” (Mt.24:21-22). It is exactly then with the coming of Jesus Christ that the capture of the beast will take place as well as of the false prophet: **“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, ... These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”** (Re.19:20). And how would it be possible that they be captured and be thrown into the fiery lake, before their reign has preceded to test the whole inhabited world?

CHAPTER 15

THE RESTRAINER AND THE SIGNS

The identity of “he who now restrains”

The Word of God informs us, through the apostle Paul, that the real cause that the Antichrist has not yet been revealed is due to **“he who restrains”**. But who is really he who “restrains”? No other official opinion can we express about he who “restrains” except the only one declared by the Word of God through the apostle Paul, and that is not the Church. But then who is he that “restrains”? Maybe time itself, which as time evolution intervenes for the fulfilment of prophetic events of the signs of the times that Daniel prophesies? There is no doubt that the time of the last days through its signs that God has assigned according to His plans and his counsels play the role of the “restrainer”. How was it possible that the “restrainer” be manifested in the time of Paul since the signs of the times had not been accomplished?

However, the identification of the **“time”** with the “restrainer”, though it is not excluded, does not persuade us that the Apostle Paul insinuated to him. Because the apostle Paul, though he considers the “restrainer” as the only real obstacle of the Antichrist’s appearance, he expresses at the same time his

declaration as if it were a person and not “time”. But which earthly human being could ever be “the restrainer”? Absolutely none! All the persons that have passed in the meantime from the time of Paul up to our days have not had such a spiritual personality so that they might take the place of the “restrainer”. Then? If we correctly interpret it, then that means that the “restrainer” is the Holy Spirit! That is the Advocate! Because the Advocate is the only person that can hinder him when to appear, only the Advocate must be resisting him. How would it ever be possible to let him appear before God’s prophecies having been fulfilled with the events that accompany them and the consequences that follow them?

The signs of the times

But again, many will ask themselves how is it possible that the Holy Spirit should be identified with the “Restrainer” who will be “**...taken out of the way**”? Surely, it is not possible that the Holy Spirit be “taken out of the way” in the sense of His “rejection”! Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit, after the death of the two last God’s Martyrs and since the signs of the times will have been accomplished according to His prophecy, will let the way free to Satan to be manifested through the person of the Antichrist. The existence of the Church and the Holy Spirit are bound together. The prophecies in question are the following:

- 1) Intense and high frequency of wars, pestilences and famines:
“Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”
(Mat.24:7-8).

- 2) The era of the great knowledge: **“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”** (Dan.12:4).
- 3) The return of Israel to his land and his recognition:
- **“Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; “and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.”** (Eze.37:21-22) and **“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Behold, I will save My people from the land of the east and from the land of the west; I will bring them [back], and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness.”** (Zec.8:7-8)
 - **“Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.”** (Hos.3:5)
 - **“When you are in distress, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice”** (De. 4:30)
- 4) The Great Apostasy: **“Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,”** (2Th.2:3).

- 5) The Russian war against Israel: **“And you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal;’ (Eze.38 and 39 and especially 38:3 and 39:1). ‘Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. ‘You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may know Me, when I am hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes.’ (Eze.38:15-16).**
- 6) The exaltation and recognition of the people of Israel: **“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, ‘Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.’ (Zec.8:23).**
- 7) The restoration of the temple in Jerusalem for the enthronement of the Antichrist in the temple where he is going to appear **“... so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” (2Th.2:4).**
- 8) Israel's mourning for Christ whom they have rejected and crucified: **“...then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his only son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” (Zec.12:10).**
- 9) And finally, the two Martyrs who will prophesy during the first three and a half years: **“And I will give [power] to my**

two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth...” (Re.11:3-13), will constitute the most indicative point of the restrainer, that Apostle Paul prophesies (2Co.2).

The Advocate, therefore, is the only person who can have him nailed down. He must be the “Restrainer” who hinders him to appear but not only through the Church but also through the prophecies of the Word of God, which must precede the appearance of the Antichrist and which have not all been accomplished literally. The prophecies themselves hinder him and will finally eliminate him at the end of the Great Tribulation.

The only opinion, therefore, that can become acceptable and which is in harmony with the spirit of the words of Paul is that it has to do with a person, who is higher in authority. If the Advocate Himself does not resist him, no one else can resist him.

The Antichrist would have already made his appearance a lot of time ago, in order to reign but also to belly God’s prophecies! His **“proper time”** (2 Thes.2:6) would speed up, if God did not reign. God, even during the Antichrist’s reign, will remain Lord and protector of believers. And He will limit the Antichrist’s rule with the last plagues and his interventions on behalf of the saints, as he declares to us in His Word (e.g. Re.3:10; 7:3; 9:4; Mt.24:22, 31).

CHAPTER 16

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

And now we put certain questions for the sake of those who would probably question the hermeneutical correctness of our opinion concerning the time of the Rapture:

Who are the elect?

For whom are those days going to be cut short? “...**No-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.**” (Mat.24:22)

Who are the elect? Certain people are of the opinion that Jesus refers more specifically to the Jews. These are the elect of God and that it will be the same who during the period of the Great Tribulation will evangelize humanity, since they are not to be raptured at the same time with the Church of Christ consisting mainly of Gentiles, as it is believed. Their opinion, however, does not reflect the letter and the spirit of the words of Jesus as well as of the whole Bible. How is it possible that Jesus with the word “for the elect” to mean the Jews only, when the word of God itself declares that there are no Jews and Greeks before God?

☐ **“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.”** (Ro.10:12)

- **“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Ga.3:28).**

At this point, we deem it necessary to refer to chapters 24-25 of Matthew, because certain people consider that the eschatological speech of Christ on the Mount of Olives concerned only Israel. Of course, Israel but also the Church. The descriptions of those chapters describe the appearance of Jesus Christ and are **parallel** with what Paul's epistles describe. Consequently, they do not refer only to the people of Israel, as certain people assert, but also to the Church! And if Paul describes us as one and the same event in 1Thes.4:14-16 and in 5:1-8 as well as in 2Thes.1:6-10, that is that of the appearance (Parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ, how can we consider all what Jesus Christ said in Matthew's Gospel chapters 24 and 25:13 and that are so relevant that they refer to **Israel alone** and what Paul said that refer to **the Church alone**? On the other hand, who are the elect? Are they not the members of the Church of Christ irrespective of nationality as in Mt.24:22, 24 and in particular verse 31, which says: **“And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”?**

Also: In the book of Revelation chapter 17 and verse 14 we read: **“These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those *who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.*”** Let us pay attention to the phrase: **“*and those who are with Him are called... chosen...*”** No distinction concerning this point between Gentiles and Jews!

Or when Christ spoke before His people, when did he make such discriminations between his faithful Jewish followers and the Gentile ones? Did he not honour them indiscriminately? Or was it not that very thing that had offended the Jews against Jesus who did not make any distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles according to the Law of Moses? Or was not Paul proclaiming to Gentiles and Jews the circumcision of heart and the cancelling of the ceremonial law of Moses and equality of faith in Christ between peoples, nations, tribes and sex in accordance with the spirit of the New Covenant on the basis of which Christ **“...has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier,... to create in himself one new man ... in this one body to reconcile both of them...”** (Eph.2:14-16). **“... For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** (Gal.3:27-29).

If the Church of God is raptured before the reign of the Antichrist, whom is he going to persecute during his kingdom? Who are they going to be his disowners? And who are they that will proclaim what concerns Jesus' kingdom during the Antichrist's reign, since the Jews will escape in the desert in order to be under God's protection?

The Jehovah witnesses' error about the “elect”

Or, are the “chosen” the Jehovah witnesses, as they believe and assert, because they proclaim the millennium kingdom of Jesus Christ and do not want to take arms? The fact that they speak about the coming kingdom of Christ and want to communicate the spirit of love does them credit. Nevertheless, the interpretations that they give to a great number of basic truths of the Bible classify them into the group of **“vain speakers and deceivers of people's minds”** (**φρεναπάται**: in the Ancient Greek text - Tit.1:10 - DBY).

For that reason, we consider it necessary to open a relevant parenthesis and to refer, in a few words, to the myths of errors of the Jehovah witnesses, because, while they deal a lot with eschatological subjects, unfortunately they have not understood them as the Bible means them, deceiving and being deceived. It is imperative, therefore, to revise their positions, if as they show they are interested in the truth.

As in a sample, we mention certain of their errors mainly on eschatological subjects:

- 1) They assert that the kingdom of Christ was established in 1914, and Christ, since then, reigns invisibly in heaven. However, the Holy Scriptures do not back up such an assertion because Christ's kingdom does not begin invisibly in heaven for the earth:
 - **“Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him...”** (Rev.1:7),
 - **“For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man**

be... the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (Mt.24:27-30).

- And finally, in an express way, the Apostle Luke in his book of Acts confirms the visible descent of Jesus: **“...This [same] Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.” (Ac.1:11).**

And we ask: When did the above-mentioned events take place? When did we see Christ descend from heaven in the same way He went up to heaven? And when did the “powers of heavens” get shaken?

Here is where Christ’s kingdom begins visibly and which the signs of His appearance are! And during Christ’s kingdom, neither the just coexist with the unjust as they continue now to coexist in our days nor do they get married, **“For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.” (Mt.22:30; Mr.12:25 and Luke 20:34).**

- 2) Satan is bound and is imprisoned during a period of one thousand years (the millennium kingdom of Christ): **“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is [the] Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set**

a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished....” (Re.20:1-7).

Is, then, Satan bound in our days, since 1914? Does he not deceive the nations? How, then, has Jesus Christ's kingdom begun since 1914 and nothing has changed in the world's life and especially in the life of the believers?

- 3) When has the world lived the Great Tribulation of the Antichrist's kingdom or has seen God's plagues during his kingdom? When did the Jews escape to the mountains to be saved? And when and how did the Lord shorten the days of the Great Tribulation on behalf of the elect, and when did the dead rise and when were the elect raptured? (1Thes.4:15-16).

- 4) They assert that the hundred and forty-four thousand (144.000) men that are mentioned in the book of Revelation come from and belong to the Jehovah Witnesses Organization, while the Holy Scriptures proclaim that they are all from the people of Israel: **“And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred [and] forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel [were] sealed: (Re.7:4)**, and they are all virgin: **“... They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred [and] forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from [among] men, [being] firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.” (Re.14:1-4).** And we ask them: Those who promote themselves from the Jehovah Witnesses as belonging to the one hundred and forty-four thousand are they Israelis and virgins?

- 5) They identify Jesus Christ with the Archangel Michael! What ignorance and twisting of the Scriptures! Have they never read the first chapter of the epistle to Hebrews, which makes clear the distinction between the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels? **“having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: You are My Son, Today I have begotten You? And again: I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: Let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He says: Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. But to the Son [He says]: Your throne, O God, [is] forever and ever; “scepter of righteousness [is] the scepter of Your Kingdom.”** (Heb.1:4-8). Or are not the Archangels angels? Have they never read Dan.10:13, which reads as follows: **“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia.”** (Da.10:13) Is Jesus Christ one of the chief princes of heaven or **THE** Chief Prince of Heaven?
- 6) Furthermore, they identify their Organization in a naive way with the new Ark of God and exclude all other pious believers from the real new Ark of salvation, which is Jesus Christ! Here is the stupidity of their error, in spite of their zeal, which is not based on true knowledge! But it does not suffice alone the spiritual zeal to know every truth: it is necessary to have a personal study of the Holy Scriptures and not through the so-called **“faithful and wise servant”**, because **“... they shall all be taught by God...”** (Joh.6:45). And because Jesus

commands: **“But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.”** (Mt.23:8). The Word of God is above our opinion and above our denomination. If we want to learn the truth and become God’s “elect”, let us respect His Word and let us abstain from interpretations of some so-called faithful and wise servants, because unfortunately in all denominations there prevailed opinionated teachers, most of all in the context of the Organization of Jehovah witnesses.

Jesus Christ, therefore, is the only Ark of salvation of all men. And all faithful and pious men are his chosen! And because he said: **“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...”** And elsewhere: **“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. “And I give them eternal life...”** (Joh.10:9 and 27-28, respectively). Or, was the thief on the cross saved through the Law of Moses of the Jews or through another doctrine? When, indeed, are men going to wake up from the idea that denomination saves and not Christ, who is the only true Ark of God? Who was crucified and gave his life for the sinner? Who was raised and sits at the right hand of God and intercedes on behalf of the sinner? Who is the Great High Priest between God and men? Is not Jesus Christ and are not all true believers His chosen, irrespective of **“... every tribe and tongue and people and nation”** (Re.5:9) and denomination?

Israel's role during the Great Tribulation

And now the following question should be put: Why does Christ exhort the Jews to escape to the mountains as soon as they see the abomination of the desolation? And why should they escape to the mountains, since, as elect and faithful, will have to be raptured they themselves also as belonging to the Church of Christ? Unless He has destined them to evangelize the nations as certain people believe it.

But then, the following questions should be put:

- 1) From the mountains, where they will take refuge, in order to be saved, according to our Lord's Jesus Christ's exhortation, will they evangelize the nations?
- 2) If the Holy Spirit will have left the earth together with the Church of the Christians from the nations, then with what Spirit will the Jews evangelize the world while at the same time they will be trying to protect themselves? The passages Mrk.13:5-13, especially verses 11 and 12, do they refer **only** to the Jews or to everybody?
- 3) Is there going to be a second Rapture for the Christians from the sons of Israel?

The two Witnesses

The real kingdom of the Antichrist begins in the middle of the seven years, since the two Martyrs of God in Jerusalem during the first three and a half years would have nailed him down and will rule on the land of Israel (Re.11).

Are not these two Martyrs the greater reason that he cannot be revealed in his “proper time”? Because his proper time begins from the moment he declares war against them, defeats and kills them. How is it, therefore, possible that the “Restrainer” be the Church and not these two Martyrs who will rule through the Holy Spirit? Some even assert that these two Witnesses from Israel will not be Christians... We ask: Will they speak, therefore, for Christ and will not be Christians? Will they speak for Christ without the Holy Spirit? Will they operate miracles without the Holy Spirit? Will they call Him Lord without the Holy Spirit?

And how does it happen that his kingdom begin after their fall and not with the Rapture of the Church that is clearly declared by Paul that does not precede (2 Thes.2:3), while, on the contrary, the Church will be waiting for the second coming of Jesus according to the parable of the ten virgins, which all waited Him on the earth...? **“...But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was [heard]: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’”** (Mt.25:5-6). Would it be ever possible that they waited for Him on the earth before the Great Tribulation and at the same time the Word declare that **“...at midnight a cry was [heard]: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’”**, if the Rapture takes place before the Great Tribulation? Does not the expression **“at midnight”** constitute a serious *indication* that it symbolizes the Great Tribulation, which comes to an end with the sudden appearance of Christ, which takes place as a lightning? (Mt.24:27). The Rapture, therefore, does not take place before the night but in the middle of the night the cry rang out **“Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!”** This parable of the ten virgins also constitutes an additional *indication* and identifies the time of the coming of Christ and,

with all the previously mentioned verses, puts an end to all doubts concerning the time of the Rapture.

And something else: Who are the wise virgins? Only the sons of Israel or all the believers who have the Spirit of God in themselves?

The nations from the North and from the East

How the nations from the north and from the east will come against the Antichrist (Dan. 11:44), if he is going to prevail on the whole earth? The Great Tribulation will constitute an event beyond any objection during the reign of Antichrist, because there will be no security and those who deny him will be persecuted or will be killed. Nevertheless, many will be those who will escape from his nails and will be saved by God on account of their faith in Christ, as we saw and is stated in the book of Revelation: **“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”** (Re.3:10 AV). Here is, therefore, the elect of God! All true believers who have **“...kept the word of my patience”**, irrespective of nationality and tribe **and denomination**, provided they repent, believe in Christ, call truly upon his name and wait for Him!

Who are going to fight against the Antichrist and humiliate him? The countries which will be against him and will fight him, according to Daniel’s prophetic words, are: The North and the countries of the East: **“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him...”** (Dan.11:44).

Though it is not clear in this passage which countries of the East it has to do, one thing is sure, that the countries of the East and the countries of the North will come up against him and that he will finally be bruised: **“...yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”** (Dan.11:45). It is not excluded, of course, that as “north” Russia is included, though we reserve our position because of her war against Israel, which will precede and because she is called with different names by Ezekiel as **“... Ross, Meshech and Thubal or as “house of Thogarmah from the far north”** (Eze.38:2-3, 6). In a similar way, we emphasize it again, that we should identify the events neither of the coming of the north against the Antichrist, as is prophesied by Daniel, nor with the Battle of Armageddon as prophesied by John in Revelation for the following reasons:

- 1) Because the battle of Armageddon, as it is declared by John in Revelation, is the last world war and has to do with the sixth plague of God against the nations and is provoked by the Antichrist himself and not against the Antichrist as it will be the war of the north. **“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs [coming] out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, [which] go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”** (Re.16:13-16).
- 2) The war of the north is not related to the sixth bowl/plague (πληγήν) of Armageddon, but with the seventh and the last one, which characterizes the attack of the north against the Antichrist: **“But news from the east and the north shall**

trouble him... yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.” (Dan.11:44-45, Rev.11:15 and 16:17).

The Antichrist's kingdom is not continued after the attack of the North as it is continued after the battle of Armageddon, which is identified with the sixth plague, while the war of the north comes to an end with the seventh plague, which is identified:

- 1) With the most terrible earthquake, **“...such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.”** (Re.16:18).
- 2) With the holocaust of Rome that is identified with Babylon: **“...And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”** ... **“The kings of the earth ... will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning,”** (Re.16:19 and 18:9).
- 3) With the plague of hailstones, **“And great hail from heaven fell upon men, [each hailstone] about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.”** (Re.16:21).

The attack of the north reflects the final judgement of God against the Antichrist as it is expressed by Daniel, that **“...he shall come to his end,...”** (Dan.11:45), while the battle of Armageddon reflects the judgment of God against the nations, **“... to the battle on the great day of God Almighty.”** (Rev.16:14) and is identified with the sixth bowl/plague, as we have seen, and not with the seventh bowl/plague and the last during which comes the end of his reign. **“Then the seventh angel poured out his**

bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”” (Re.16:17). And for this reason, we remain hesitant to identify the events that are described in the above war conflicts in question of Armageddon and the descent of the north. And because the north is commented by Daniel that will create fears and anxieties, and that he will bring him **“to his end”** (Dan.11:45), while Armageddon is not commented on and that does not create any anxieties or astonishment. On the contrary, it is commented on as provoked by him (Re.16:13-14).

If we accept that the battle of Armageddon is provoked by the Antichrist’s army, just to face the north in his attack, which has alarmed him, but which is transformed into a battle of God against him as described in Revelation 19:20 **“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet...”** (Re.19:20), that is in accordance with the verse Dan.11:45, **“...yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.”**

However, we must emphasize that as regards the Russian bloc there is no clear prophetic mention that will come against the Antichrist, as the north, but only against Israel. It is also probable that during the Antichrist’s reign to be tolerant with him, since he will turn against Israel, as well as Libya and Ethiopia, which will be **“at his steps”** (Dan.11:43 AV), position that these countries will have taken also during the Russian war against Israel. Also on account of their hatred, which might be preserved in their spirit and especially after the complete destruction that they will suffer from God, before the gates of Israel? The hatred of Gog and Magog, princes of Ross, Meshech and Thubal (Eze.39:1) will be manifested and will be repeated at the end of the thousand-year kingdom of Jesus, as it is again described by John in Revelation but not this time against Israel but against the New Jerusalem. **“Now when the thousand years have expired,**

Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number [is] as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.” (Re.20:7-9).

A serious question

And the question is put: How are these nations going to coexist during the reign of Christ and how will they turn against the saints who will be reigning together with Christ during the thousand years according to the prophecy, while preceding the holocaust of the earth against the wicked men? Many interpreters have tried to solve this mystery, but we limit ourselves to put its interpretation in the context of the mysteries and enigmas that surround us.

But let us come back to the events before the attack from the north while his reign will prevail for three and a half years on the eastern Mediterranean area militarily and politically. His kingdom will be human even if he demonstrates miracles. And only through his political cunning and his diplomacy will he come into contact with those who will abandon the sacred covenant in order to conquer Israel (Dan.11:30).

Nevertheless, as the priests-magicians of Egypt were not able to face Alexander the Great in spite of their miraculous capacities and took refuge to the deceit of the flattery with the title of the king-god that they attributed to him, in the same way

the Antichrist will resort to deception and to flattery in order to deceive the naive of his era to gain the confidence of the world and the land of glory, that is Jerusalem, so that he may govern as God: **“Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule; and he shall exalt [himself] in his heart. He shall destroy many in [their] prosperity...”** (Dan.8:25).

Here is, therefore, a common but very sly dictator. His Satanic power will not save him from the north that will come against him, as Egypt was not saved from the hands of Alexander the Great through the magic power of the priest-magicians of Egypt, because everything has its limits and is bound by physical and spiritual laws that God has established. In the same way, Satan is not of limitless powers but only God ---the Lord of the universe--- that He is the one that **“He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens.”** (Rev.3:7). Only to God, therefore, belong the kingdom and the power and the glory and the honour!

The Antichrist's area of activity

The kingdom of the Beast (Antichrist), therefore, as it can be drawn as a conclusion from the cases that have been described, will have more a relative and Mediterranean character than an absolute universal and general character, as it is believed.

CHAPTER 17

CONCLUSIONS

Two Churches and two Raptures?

If the Church of Christ is raptured before the Great Tribulation, then there will be neither the Great Tribulation for the Church of Christ, as the Bible says, nor for the “elect” believers so that “the days should be shortened”. Only if it were true that Christ was addressing Himself to the Jews and that he calls them “elect” exclusively, then and only then would it be verified, that the Rapture of the Church would take place before the Great Tribulation or at the beginning of it and that only the Jews were destined to lift the burden of reaching out to people during the period of the Great Tribulation. And if really God has assigned only to them the responsibility of the evangelism of the world during the period in question, then why does Jesus advise them to be saved in the mountains? And how is it compatible to save the believers coming from the nations through the Rapture, while exhorting his people, the Jews, to flee to mountains?

In addition, something like that would separate, as it has already been said, the Church of Christ coming from the nations from the Church of the believing Jews. And this constitutes, if we accept it, an interpretational deviation of the words of Paul,

which interpret the words of Jesus: **“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”** (1Co.12:13). Consequently, the Church of Christ is unique, one body, and the “elect” are all the believers irrespective of race and language and for which God will shorten the days and will help them in order to protect their life, even if the elect, par excellence, are, theoretically, the Jews and to whom Jesus was in the first place addressing himself!

John in the Revelation wrote for the multitude of believers of the Great Tribulation: **“... behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes..., So he said to me, These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”** (Re.7:9-14).

The Church of Christ, therefore, continues to exist on earth during the period of the Great Tribulation and all the believers are not going to be transformed into martyrs during that period. Here, it is not a question of martyrs but it is a question, on the contrary, of an innumerable multitude of believers that will be saved through the knowledge of God and their repentance in Christ during the period of the Great Tribulation! This is the reason why Jesus tells us the parable of the ten virgins that were waiting for him in quietness and within conditions very natural and human, since they coexist, cooperate and live together with the unbelievers, as it is stated in the Word of God: **“Then two [men] will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two [women will be] grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.”** (Mt.24:40-41). Unless we accept that we

have to do with two raptures, one before and one after..., but such a case is not Biblically backed up.

Finally, we put the question to those who disagree: **For whom is God going to shorten those days? Who are those elect, if the Church should have been raptured?** And what is going to happen to the elect who will come out of the Great Tribulation? Should they not be raptured before the fire burns down the earth? Or, are they going to be burned with the wicked? **Consequently, if we accept the Rapture before the Great Tribulation, then obligatorily we accept two Raptures: One before the Great Tribulation and one after the Great Tribulation! But such a thing, as we have already mentioned, is not supported by the Bible, one before and one after. But such a thing, we repeat, is not supported by the Bible, because nowhere mention is made for two Raptures but only for one, during the second coming of Jesus Christ, Who will come down with his angels at the last trumpet, a moment at which the dead are raised incorruptible and those alive are transformed and are raptured: “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” (1Co.15:52).**

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days...

The fact that Christ comes to receive His Church after the Great Tribulation is clearly declared by Jesus himself: **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in**

heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt.24:29-31). Consequently, we know the period of Jesus’ coming: He has revealed that to us: **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days ...”** And he describes to us and the way of the Rapture.

The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, comes after the Great Tribulation to take up His Church. What has not become known to us is the day and the moment, because our Lord Jesus Christ said in a special way: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.” (Mt.24:36). Let us pay attention, therefore, to the words of our Lord Jesus in order not to be deceived and deceive others.

CHAPTER 18

HOW THE BELIEVERS WILL BE SAVED

“...let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains”

Jesus Christ Himself has given us the answer to this question: **“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.”** That is, be saved by escaping, **“Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.”** (Mt.24:17). That is, not to think of one's goods, but to make haste and escape. That is what Jesus Christ advises us. This is the only way to escape from the Antichrist's hands. All believers should take refuge in secret places if they want to be saved and to be equipped, if possible, with all that is necessary, in advance, since they will not be able to buy and sell without his seal. Surely, here, Christ is addressing himself to the Jews, because the Antichrist will put his headquarters in Jerusalem, he will put his throne in the temple of God and the Jews will be the first that will suffer from his persecution, if they do not worship him. However, all the believers from the nations, where he will exert his rule, must obey the same advice of the Lord Jesus that he is addressing to the Jews and for their own salvation. The whole world will suffer directly or indirectly the consequences of his kingdom. It will not be possible to determine before hand and exactly the dimensions of the repercussions of his rule on the whole world, even if it will be centred in the region of Eastern Mediterranean.

The persecution of Christians during the Antichrist will be the revival of the Roman spirit, as we have said, in the seventh power. This is the reason why many eschatologists identify this period with the revival of the Roman Empire, even if the Little Horn will come from one of the late four kingdoms of Alexander the Great.

The king of the north against the king of the south

Indeed, the description by Daniel of the war conflicts between the king of the north and the king of the south and toward the east and toward the land of the glory for the prevailing of the Little Horn and the establishment of his Empire, do not leave us great margins to doubt about the revival of the spirit of the Roman era. The beginning of the eleventh chapter of Daniel seems to refer to different historic facts of the conflicts between the Seleucid kings of Syria and the kings of Egypt. In the continuation, however, it takes such dimensions that they can be identified with all the rest historical events of that era of the conflicts of the Roman Empire, which succeeds the king of the north (Syria, 64 b.C) and continues the war against the king of the south up to the year 30 b.C. It is then that Egypt is conquered by the Romans so that it constitutes a clear retrospective reference in the history of Rome, which is prophesied by Daniel in the sixth century b.C.

However, opinions are divided on account on the one hand of the fact that one of the states of Alexander the Great and on the other hand on account of the burning down of Rome, which will be done by the ten horns and which will constitute the government of the superpower of the new Empire of the

Antichrist (Rev.17:16-18; 18:9-10). How is it possible that the Roman Empire will be revived and at the same time to come from one of the states of Alexander the Great or that there will be a question of burning down of Rome by the ten horns of the new Empire? Unless we have to deal with a case of similarity and not of her revival.

Similarity for the new Empire with that of Rome

This is also our own opinion that it has to do with a case of similarity for a new Empire. The ten horns, even if they rise from one of the states of Alexander the Great, form an independent and of a particular form and structure empire of the Little Horn, without constituting the succession of a previous empire, even if it takes on flesh or materializes the spirit of the Roman era in the seventh power. Since this new empire is established by Satan himself through the Little Horn and the ten horns which will represent him, this is the reason why they will burn down Rome. They will have no racial feelings and political affinity with anyone. The prophecy concerning the burning down of Rome by the ten horns was uttered about 94-96 a.D., by John in the book of Revelation (18:8-10) and must not be identified and confused with the first burning down of Rome which took place in 64 a. D. by Nero and to which it would be impossible to be referring John's prophecy after 32 years.

Burning down of Rome; Babylon

John gives us analytically the description of the burning down of Rome by the ten horns and identifies it with Babylon as

the **“great harlot”** (chapters 17 and 18). We are of the opinion that it has to do with Rome as it can be seen without any shadow of doubt from the description itself. Let us pay attention to it:

- 1) **“And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.”** (Re.17:18) Which other city, except Rome, has ever governed the kings of the earth?
- 2) **“Then he said to me, The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.”** (Re.17:15). Which other city, except Rome, had ever prevailed militarily and politically before and after John’s era and during centuries on the then whole ancient world of the Mediterranean, of Asia, of Africa and of Europe? And which other city, except Rome, continued to rule politically, doctrinally and economically through Vatican on the whole world, and continues to influence it?
- 3) **“And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”** (Re.18:24). **“I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...”** (Re.17:6). Do we need a historical reminder of the role that Rome has played toward the first Christians, the apostles and the crucifixion of Jesus himself as well as of all the martyrs of the Inquisition?
- 4) **“Here [is] the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.”** (Re.17:9). That is the seven-hill Rome.

The burning down of Rome is done to avenge and retaliate the blood of martyrs of God and according to his counsel: **“...and burn her with fire. ‘For God has put it into their hearts to**

fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.” (Re.17:16-17). So, that God even through the Antichrist himself will avenge his wicked enemies who have preceded the Antichrist’s kingdom. These ten horns will become the executioners of God’s revenge even if they constitute the political government in the Antichrist’s kingdom.

The Antichrist's kingdom ends, as we have seen, after the seventh plague, which is followed by the most terrible earthquake which precedes and which contributes to Rome’s destruction. **“Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.”** (Re.16:17-19)

This terrible earthquake through which all the cities of the world are going to be levelled down and the burning down of Rome, prophesied specifically as the last event, constitute the greatest mystery of the Antichrist's reign. Though the woman (Rome) is sitting on the beast that has the **“the seven heads and the ten horns”** (Rev.17:3-9), something that means power and kingdom with the beast, the ten horns will burn it down: **“And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”** (Re.17:16).

However, the city of Babylon symbolizes sin. This is the reason why many believe that John, in chapter 18 of Revelation

while he speaks about Babylon, he means sin. This surely coexists as a symbolism in the sense of Babylon because Babylon was the city of sin and symbolizes sin. But in this case of the 18th chapter of Revelation it does not only mean sin. It is identified with a real city, which succeeds it in its fruit of sin, transmits its physical attributes and characteristics as a city of sin and plays the role of Babylon for a later era. And this is Rome, which was identified with authority, power, riches, glory, and excellence and with a religious system, which prevailed and was imposed all over the world. This is the reason why it governed the kings of the earth.

And we put the following questions:

- 1) How is it possible that the 18th chapter of Revelation speaks about Babylon since that city did not exist during the days of John because Babylon had been completely destroyed in 482 b.C. by Xerxes A', of the Persian empire and it would not be rehabilitated (re-established), according to Jeremiah's prophecy, in the year 595 b.C.: **“then you shall say, ‘O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.’ “Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, [that] you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. “Then you shall say, ‘Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.’....”** (Jer.51:62-64).
- 2) How was it ever possible for Babylon to become a dwelling place of demons if it had to do exclusively with sin? Is not sin the dwelling place of demons? **“And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is**

fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.” (Re.18:2-3).

- 3) How can the ten horns burn down Babylon if it is simply sin? Do not the ten horns serve, up to the end of their kingdom, sin in the person of the Little Horn? And finally, chapter 18 of Revelation is written in such a clear and categorical way with its descriptions and with its similarities, so that there could be no doubt that it has to do with a real city and not simply about a symbolism. But which is the city that suits Babylon?

- 4) The only city which seems to correspond to this Biblical description by John in Revelation must be Rome, as we said, or it is the dogmatic Church, and to that description can be listed in the first place Vatican. Let us pay attention to the following description by John: **“... Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing... and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What [is] like this great city?... Rejoice over her, O heaven, and [you] holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her! Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw [it] into the sea, saying, Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore... for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was**

found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.” (Re.18:16-24).

However, even if the city Babylon symbolizes the dogmatic Church and mainly the Vatican, on account of its superiority and its authority in the whole world, nothing changes because the Vatican has its Headquarters in Rome. Whether it means, then, the city of Rome or the dogmatic Church and especially the Vatican, there is no difference. Rome and Vatican coexist both as history and as a city. We have, therefore, the same city with two identical aspects.

CHAPTER 19

THE FOURTH KINGDOM

The burning down of Rome

The question that is again put on this point is: How would it be ever possible that the Roman Empire be revived, according to the opinion of many scholars, and the ten horns burn down Rome? However, we cannot exclude it, since the burning down of Rome by the Roman emperor himself, Nero, had preceded 32 years before Apostle John's prophecy and was rebuilt. It does not constitute a proof but simply an indication. The Antichrist's political power will burn down Rome just because of its religious authority. His self-deification will not tolerate any other religion or authority, since he will be self-promoted as God, but also because it is days of God's vengeance: "... and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants [shed] by her." (Re.19:2).

Therefore, all that are prophesied are so identical, and they have to do with the Roman Empire and its era, that their similarity and identity of cases in their description make us perplexed even though the Antichrist's kingdom will come from one of the late four states of Alexander the Great. The only thing that we can maintain, with some hesitation, of course, because we are not authorized prophets, as Daniel and John were that it has to

do with a sophisticopolitical kingdom, hidden behind supernatural manifestations and presentations.

At the same time, it will consist of a group of malefactors irrespective of nationality, but probably with basic supporters from representatives and political volunteers of the Italian nation.

And this because it comes as a conclusion from Daniel's interpretation to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, as the fourth kingdom on earth, which is the Roman one and is the last, while at the same time it is mixed and identified with one of the states of Alexander the Great: **“And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; ... And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”** (Dan.2:40-44).

And indeed during the Roman empire the kingdom of God was established with the birth of Jesus Christ and prevailed above all human kingdoms of the earth in a systematic and irrevocable way and will overthrow even the last kingdom, that of the Antichrist. And it will remain the only kingdom on earth with rulers of all the believers of the earth. No human kingdom before or after Christ remained unmovable and unchangeable. Christ's kingdom is the only one, which will remain unmovable and unchangeable forever and ever! (Re.22:5)

The fourth kingdom... Antiochus Epiphanes...

The fourth kingdom, in spite of the historic retrospective reference to the Roman era, will have, however, a future

importance, since the Antichrist's kingdom is not called as the fifth kingdom, as we have already noticed but appears as if it were identified with the fourth, which is the Roman one: "...**The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces.**" (Dan.7:23). Nevertheless, it is clearly asserted that it will come out of the revival of one of the four late states of Alexander the Great that terminates to the Antichrist's kingdom. And which, as it is known, were: The Macedonian, the Thracian (that is of Asia Minor), the Syrian and that of Egypt. "**And out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious [Land].**" (Israel) (Dan.8:9). That of Egypt, however, is excluded because it is identified with the king of the south who will suffer the conquering mania of the Little Horn.

From the other three, therefore, will come forth "the Little Horn", the most probable of which, according to the opinion of certain commentators, will be the Syrian:

- 1) Because historically it was called the kingdom of the north, in comparison with that of Israel, with which it has common frontiers, and with Egypt which is identified with the kingdom of the south;
- 2) Because the desecration of the temple by Antiochus the Epiphanes; and
- 3) And on account of the reaction of Cyprus, which will resist him efficiently by its fleet and will oblige him to return to his land. It is then that he will come in a covenant with Israel: "**For the ships of Chittim (Cyprus) shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have**

indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.” (Dan.11:30 AV), and then “... **arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily [sacrifice], and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.”** (Dan.11:31 AV).

The verses in question are attributed basically by certain scholars to facts that have taken place during the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, as there are certain points that astoundingly suit facts that took place during his kingdom. And more particularly, because as the books of Maccabees inform us as well as the historian Josephus, that the Ptolemies brothers asked from the Senates in Rome help against Antiochus, who was preparing the siege of Alexandria. Rome then asked Gaius Popilius Laenas, who had a fleet consisting of Greek ships from Macedonia (a region of the offsprings of Chittim), — because the term Chittim does not refer only to Cyprus but also to Macedonians and to Greeks, in general, as descendants of Chittim (1 Mac.1:1 and 8:5 and Numbers 24:24), son of Javan (Gen.10:10 and 1Chr.1:7)--- to deliver an ultimatum to Antiochus to leave immediately Egypt and Cyprus. Surprised and deeply humiliated, Antiochus returned to his headquarters, and he burst out all his anger on the Jews who had rejoiced at his humiliation. He slaughtered brutally the men of Jerusalem, sold women and children as slaves; he desecrated the temple and imposed the cessation of sacrifices.

We, however, have serious doubts as far as the exclusivity of that interpretation is concerned because the verse 11:31 speaks of the establishment of the desolation of abomination to which Christ referred prophetically for the future,

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand),” (Mt.24:15), and not for the days of Antiochus, which had preceded about two centuries.

Also, because Daniel speaks, continuing his narration, with a sequence of interwoven thoughts and more specifically from verse 36 and on, for a king whose acts give us clearly the image of the Antichrist. Anyway, even if we admit that the verses in question 30 to 34 of the eleventh chapter of the book of Daniel refer to the past, during the period of Antiochus Epiphanes, they have in a parallel way and undoubtedly, on the basis of the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and future prophetic extrapolation and application. Consequently, the conclusion does not differ. The verses in question comprise also a strong indication that the Antichrist will have to do with Syria if we take seriously into consideration that in verse 31 is determined that the “arms” which will rise will desecrate the sanctuary of strength and will remove the daily sacrifice and will establish the abomination of desolation and they will be **“from him”** that is from the state of Antiochus.

- 4) And, finally: on account of the fact of the drying up of Euphrates during the sixth plague for the attack of the armies from the east, since in that region will clearly be concentrated the strength of the Little Horn and that of the ten horns and not the state of Macedonia which has nothing to do with Euphrates... (Re.16:12).

The Macedonian one is the only one from the four, which even if it did not remain, also, to the direct descendants of Alexander the Great, according to Daniel’s prophecy, it still

belongs to his people and differs racially: **“Then a mighty king shall arise.... And when he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.”** (Dan.11:3-4). Both, the fact of the reaction of Cyprus as well as Daniel’s vision, in which the king of Macedonia is called the king of the West and not **“the king of the north”**: **“... suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat [had] a notable horn between his eyes.... And the male goat [is] the kingdom of Greece. The large horn that [is] between its eyes [is] the first king.”** (Dan.8:5, 21), though they plead for the opinion that it will not be the Macedonian one, nevertheless this opinion does not constitute ---in spite of the converging circumstances--- a guarantee. The future will confirm or will cancel this opinion of eschatologists, if it is the Syrian. The only certain thing is that it will come out of the **region** of one of the four states of Alexander the Great and not from the EU or from the UN, and that the spirit of the Roman persecutions will revive at the utmost point.

This passage that speaks about the fourth kingdom is to be found in Daniel 7:23-24: **“Thus he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all [other] kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, trample it and break it in pieces. The ten horns [are] ten kings [Who] shall arise from this kingdom...’** It has to do with the Antichrist era, while in chapter 2:40-45 it speaks of the fourth kingdom which corresponds to the Roman empire, and which is prophesied by Daniel in the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar during the 6th century b.C.: **“And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron...”** (Dan.2:40 AV). So, then,

the fourth kingdom appears in two aspects, and for this reason, commentators identify it and speak about the revival of the same empire.

As far as the burning down of Rome by the ten horns during the Antichrist's era is concerned and which is explained clearly, it cannot refer to the burning down of Rome by Nero. In chapter 11 of Daniel, while the partition of Alexander the Great's empire is mentioned, at the same time and paradoxically, there is a description of the prevailing of the Egyptian power of the Ptolemies. Then, and in sequence, reference is made to the period of conflicts between the kings of Syria, the Seleucides and the kings of Egypt, the Ptolemies. But from verse 18 and following, without clear links and explanations the place of the king of the north seems to change and be succeeded by Rome, which takes the place of a referee and influences from that point on the relations of the conflicting Syria and Egypt. But it does not stop there: He continues the prophetic account concerning the war clashes between north and south up to the last events during the days of the Antichrist, as it had to do with the same kings and the same period. It refers, also, to the re-conquest of Egypt and of Israel, even though there is no Roman Empire. Indeed, in the 11th chapter of Daniel's prophecy and in the verses 29 to 45 of Daniel's prophecy are presented the facts of the war clashes during the last days between north and south as if it were about the same period and the same kings. Because time for God is always "present" even if it speaks about the future. **"... with the Lord one day [is] as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."** (2Pet.3:8). It must be emphasized that from verse 36 and on the description of the Antichrist becomes most clear.

Consequently, everything speaks for a new empire of Roman spirit and leading substance, which will express the

Roman era. This is the reason why in Nebuchadnezzar's dream it is mentioned as a fourth kingdom that is the Roman one, which is the last kingdom, while all Daniel's prophecies, which prophesy and interpret the events of the last days of the Antichrist bridge the gap which separates the Roman era from the last days of the facts of the Antichrist. This is the reason why they appear as identical facts of the same empire and era, though intervene tens of centuries and other leaders. They are historically, symbolically and chronologically mixed with states and events of the Greek empire that preceded the Roman one which is followed by the Roman one in the territories which it occupied, including Syria, from 64 b.C. And that represents, as it is said, the king of the north.

The origin of the Antichrist's empire

The Antichrist's empire, therefore, which will be limited, as it is clearly prophesied, in the states of the east Mediterranean basin will have again the label of the Roman era in his territory and not all over the world, even if it is stated in the book of Revelation: “... **And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.**” (Re.13:7). Because the verse in question, as it has been said, has purely spiritual and symbolic meaning and not literal, as it is believed, but it is a way of expression, as it is also the verse Dan.2:39, which refers to the reign of Alexander the Great and says that “... **shall rule over all the earth**” (Dan.2:39). When has Alexander the Great ruled on the whole earth? The verse in question about Alexander the Great, is here again a way of expression, and it is stated in an absolute way, on account of his superiority and rule in certain regions of the then ancient world of his days and not literally. In a similar way in

John's prophecy (Re.13:7) about the Antichrist, it is so expressed in an absolute and general spirit, as if it concerned the whole world, while it is clearly referred to the East Mediterranean region with its headquarters Israel (Dan.11:30, 40-43). Because, how Daniel's prophecy could be justified: **“But news from the east and the north shall trouble him....”**? (Dan.11:44). Which are the reports from the north and from the east that will alarm him if he will have prevailed politically and militarily all over the world? Neither America nor Australia nor the north nor the west, nor Asia, nor Africa (except Egypt) is commented by Daniel that will be conquered by the Antichrist.

The above-mentioned events have been commented so that it may stop the impression that has been given all over the world that his kingdom is the EU or the UN or that it has to do with an absolute ruler all over the world, since it is not going to be confirmed by letter even if he achieves to **“destroy the mighty, and [also] the holy people.”** (Dan.8:24). The impression concerning his kingdom has taken exaggerated dimensions, as if it were about a Superman, while we have to do with a common dictator, even if he does miracles as the Magi men of Egypt and even if he puts to death Christians as the Romans did.

Some consider the prophecy in question as a tale and others, on account of fears do not examine it. But we should neither reject it nor ignore it, because it will be a repetition of representatives that have preceded Satan on our earth of a short time duration but of greater intensity but not of greater area since there will be many that will be saved through God's hands (Dan.11:41).

One more page of horror and hell

We wonder whether the visible presence of Satan through the Little Horn will add more evil than what has added man's sin in man's history and have been lost millions of lives through conquering wars, religious persecutions, tribal racism, social racism, political persecutions as well as through all kinds of Cannibalism done by peoples and tribes. The Devil is "murderer", as Christ has called him! And he remains the same whether visible or invisible inspiring men hatred and apostasy!

His visible kingdom, however, though it will not add something newer to the evil he has already done, it will give him nevertheless the possibility to add one more page of horror and hell at this last occasion, which will be given him during the kingdom of the Little Horn. He will manifest and satisfy all the depth of the hatred that he harbours in himself against God and man whom he hates on account of God's love for man. Christ's sacrifice has removed all weapons of his power, saved man from his hands and abolished death (Heb.2:14 and 2Ti.1:10). For this same reason, he will try with hysterical burstings of anger through the Little Horn during that period of his kingdom to put forth himself as a supreme power killing pious men that will not worship him as God. But the Great Tribulation will not be a Great Tribulation for all those that hope and believe in God!

CHAPTER 20

GOD'S FAVOUR AND PROTECTION

Antichrist's reign, cause of indirect spiritual awakening

The Antichrist's reign, even if it constitutes the most tragic period of humanity, will contribute, to the contrary, to wake her up from the sleep of sin and will bring her to true knowledge of the coming judgement of God and of the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ on the earth, Whom she neglected to believe. The Antichrist's kingdom constitutes the last hint of God for man to repent. This is the reason why it is written: **“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands...”** (Re.7:9), and **“Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes— who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”** (Re.7:13-14 NIV).

Also, in the Antichrist's days, doctrine, in the sense of denomination, will stop to preoccupy humanity. His reign will

turn in an indirect way man's spirit to God and to God alone. The Antichrist's kingdom will create such a reaction in the world that all men will seek Christ for salvation, in a state of panic, and will get out of sin and of doctrinal differences that separate them from and deprive them of the simplicity of their fellowship and unity. Then, willingly or unwillingly, they will forget everything. The need for salvation and for survival will have the first priority over all other needs. This is the reason why God will permit this last test of humanity in order to wake her up from the sleep of doctrinal error, of sin, of indifference and of materialism in order to save her.

The Antichrist's kingdom, therefore, will have indirectly a good result to wake up the world from the error of sin and of an apostasy in which it is. Never in the past has the world seen such a crisis that is going to see. For this reason, it is written: **"...will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it."** (Dan.7:23). Not surely because he will prevail politically and militarily all over the earth, as we saw Daniel informing us in other passages, but in order to emphasize the results of his kingdom all over the world morally and spiritually. At the same time, we have the consolation of God for all pious believers: **"Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."** (Re.3:10)

This word agrees in spirit with Christ's prayer who asked the Father not to take them out of the world but to protect them from the Evil One: **"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."** (Joh.17:15). This constitutes God's guarantee for our protection during this present life, and during the period of the Great

Tribulation, as well as for our final salvation from the fire of God's Judgement that will devour the whole earth... *"There is no evil which is not mixed with good!"*

God will protect His own from the hour of temptation

It is for that Great Tribulation that God proclaims his protection. Let us have, therefore, consolation and hope on God for this last period of humanity. Those who from now will bend the knee of repentance and trust in Christ will be the object of that so blessed preference and protection from the part of God: **"...I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth."** Many will probably ask themselves: How will that favourable treatment be done and that protection of believers vis-à-vis the wicked who will be hit from the plagues of God? The answer is simple: In a similar way, God made a favourable treatment of the Israelites against the Egyptians. Is there anything impossible to God? And how was it ever possible not to make a preferential treatment of believers in relation to unbelievers? The Lord, as it is written, **"For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cry of the afflicted."** (Ps.9:12 NIV).

May all humanity wake up from the lethargy of sin and its bad choices that destroys it! Or is it not the disease of "AIDS" of our days that is continually spreading and has taken terrible dimensions, is not the result of man's sin? Only repentance and faith in Christ who **"was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification"** (Rom.4:25) will save him.

Need of repentance and turning back to Christ

If man turns back to God in sincere repentance, then the judgement of God's plagues against him will cease. Since "AIDS" is the judgement of God mainly against homosexuals, it is them that will be hit with spiritual blindness because of lack of knowledge of God! **"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion."** (Rom.1:26-27). So homosexuals exist from the beginning. It is not, therefore, fruit of our era. But in our days this sin of perversion, mainly of men, has taken such astonishing dimensions that the disease of "AIDS", on account of the apostasy that is taking place in our days, strikes everywhere even at little children. According to relatively recent statistics, more than thirty-five million people have died of that epidemic disease alone. In Africa alone, more than thirty million people have been attacked by that disease!

And what should we say for that *"par excellence"* abominable sin of sexual child abuse, which has taken terrible dimensions in our days so that man abhors human kind? Or is it not drugs that constitute a plague in our days, both for the spreading of criminality as well as of "AIDS"? Here is the plight of man: But let not **"When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire**

has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” (Jas.1:13-17).

May God have mercy on us! Sin spreads and increases nowadays on account also of the apostasy that is taking place as an introduction for the Antichrist’s coming according to Daniel’s prophecy: **“In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise.”** (Dan.8:23). The presence, therefore, of evil and sin that abounds in our days and spreads more and more is Antichrist’s forerunner. And it is the result of the sinful desire to which man succumbs from the beginning of his existence. The obligation of respecting and obeying God’s will weakens and man succumbs to the power of his sinful desire. For this reason, the Antichrist’s kingdom will contribute to the separation of *"tares from wheat"* as John tells us in his Revelation (22:10-13): **“...because the time is near. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy.”** **"Behold, I am coming soon!... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” AMEN!**

THE END

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