

*STUDIES IN THE HOLY BIBLE*

*An Introduction  
to  
the Book of  
**Revelation***

*FR. TADROS YACOUB MALATY*

**STUDIES IN THE HOLY BIBLE**

**An Introduction  
to  
the Book of**

**Revelation**

**1993**

**FR. TADROS YACOUB MALATY  
St. George's Coptic Orthodox Church  
Sporting - Alexandria  
Egypt**



**Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and  
Lord of lords**



**THE BEHOLDER OF GOD  
MARK THE EVANGELIST  
SAINT AND MARTYR**



*H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of  
Alexandria and the See of St. Mark*

**In the name of the Father, the Son and  
the Holy Spirit - one God  
Amen**

Translated by:  
**Salaw Youssef**

English Text  
revised by:  
**Suzie Sidhom  
Mary Sayed**

Title: An Introduction to the book of Revelation.  
Author: Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty.  
Edition: First Printed 1991 (in Arabic), 1993 (in English).  
Published by: St. George's Coptic Orthodox Church, Sporting and  
St. Mark and Pope Peter Church, Sidi-Bishr,  
Alexandria.  
Press: Anba Reuis Press, Abassia, Cairo, Egypt.

## THE SWEETNESS OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The First Patristic interpretation I have done is of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." It was in the beginning of the Sixties, when I felt so eager to study it in the light of the early Fathers' writings. Now, I feel it is difficult to rewrite it or make any addition to it. I preferred to present the scripture in a collective picture in Arabic and in English explaining the wide basis of the book of Revelation and its principal ideas.

In fact I feel that this Book has a special sweetness. After writing this booklet, I had a strong desire to write more and more about it... Maybe because the book of Revelation makes the believer feel as if the doors of Heaven opened before him. It gives us hope in the middle of distress, and eagerness and longing for the Heavenly Groom. Besides, we recognize His future plan for the victory of Church that enjoys partnership in His glory.

It is possible to consider this booklet an introduction to the Scripture as a whole.  
August 1991

*Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty*

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION**

Revelation is the only prophetic Scripture in the New Testament. It presents Jesus Christ, the glorified King.

In spite of the difficulty that characterizes this book which contains about 300 symbols, where each symbol has its own meaning, Christians, in all ages, frequently turned to it whenever they experienced disaster, or hardship, or when the church suffered troubles either from the inside or the outside world, as if the soul instinctively finds, in this book, a message of consolation and hope. In it you see the door of heaven opened and realize that Jesus Christ, the Conqueror, is present in His church, as a support in the middle of her pains. Even in the darkest moments and periods, as the time of retrogression and Antichrist, He will not abandon her but will give her His continuous victory against the kingdom of darkness.

### **THE TITLE OF THE BOOK**

The inspired title of the book is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." The Greek word "Apocalypses" is mentioned and it means "unveiling" or "uncovering" or "revealing." As for the phrase "of Jesus Christ, it means that the great historical incidents that reach the top converge in Christ<sup>I</sup> and belong to Him.

The world looks to "time" as a wheel, he who binds himself to it, rolls with it. It raises him and lowers him, once and several times, materially, socially, mentally and spiritually. This makes the soul lose its steadiness and security. The book of Revelation is the unveiling of the future to see it in the hands of the Lord who controls history and is the Master of it. He is a mighty Father, planning for our victory, working with us and for us, so as to carry us to the kingdom of joy and light instead of the kingdom of darkness.

The book of Revelation is the removal of the veil to discover the Lord who worked for our salvation and is still working and will

still work in the future, presenting Himself to us as a safe royal route. With this He sanctifies history: the past, the present and the future to cross with us to what's above history, to a certain eternity and to glories He prepare for us Himself.

## **IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK**

The holy Bible starts with the book of Genesis that shows God's infinite love toward man. He created everything for his sake and granted him authority and such great dignity!...

But quickly the view was changed and the picture disfigured, and man appeared coming out of Paradise, dismissed, humiliated, carrying a bitter crime of disobedience on his shoulders, afraid of meeting the Lord and running away from the face of divine justice...

Thanks to the Lord who didn't leave man living in this picture made by sin for long, but concluded His Bible with the book of Revelation, offering us a delightful picture: an opened door in heaven, eternal Paradise waiting for human beings, a divine Lord eager to embrace, heavenly harps, wedding and heavenly matrimony for the sake of man<sup>2</sup>.

"The Revelation" is the book of God's perfect, infinite love towards man. It is the book of hope, the book of victory, the book of liturgy (communal worship) and heavenly hymns, the book of Heaven!

### **1- The book of God's infinite Love towards Man**

The book of Revelation is a wonderful way to end up the story that began in the book of Genesis:

a) In the book of Genesis, heaven and earth were created so that man may find his pleasure and happiness in work (2:15). In Revelation we see a new heaven and a new earth (21:1) where man will find his eternal happiness in the bosom of the Lord as his beloved Father.

Now, I suppose, we are here in this world, created by God for us, very good and beautiful. Resembling children, we need toys for our education and entertainment. However when we reach maturity we are no longer in need of toys, but rather we participate in our father's work. This will be accomplished when we attain the new heaven and the new earth.

b) In Genesis, the sun and the moon were created to enlighten us (1:14). In Revelation, we are not in need of a sun or a moon (21:23). For Christ is the Light of the new heaven, who shines on our inner man and illuminates our souls with His Holy Spirit.

c) In Genesis, we find the Garden of Eden where man could eat fruits. In Revelation, there is a holy city where man will find his satisfaction in his dwelling with the Lord.

d) Genesis shows us the marriage between our first parents and how it ended by pain and troubles. In Revelation, there is the joyful marriage supper for the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, which will remain forever (21:9).

e) In Genesis, we see the entry of sin into the world. In Revelation we see it condemned and finished.

f) In Genesis, we see the appearance of the great adversary, Satan, as a victorious conqueror. We also see sorrow, pain and tears. While in Revelation, we see the victory of man whereas the devil falls down to his everlasting destiny and his kingdom is ruined. In Genesis, the curse is pronounced. In Revelation, there is eternal blessedness, no curse, no grief, no pain, no tears (21:4).

g) In Genesis, death reigned over man; in Revelation, death is no more (20:14).

h) In Genesis, man became of fugitive, running away from the face of God; in Revelation he comes back to His bosom.

i) Genesis declares the paradise lost and Revelation shows it regained on a greater heavenly scale.

## **2- The Book of Hope**

It is the book of the opened door of Heaven (4:1). As the section of prophetic heavenly visions gives support, comfort and encouragement to believers in all ages, in the midst of their many troubles, even in the midst of their persecution by the Antichrist and his helpers, as if hope is not based on creative imagination or dreaming of a better world but based on God's honest promises of sharing heavenly glories in the midst of daily troubles. Our hearts rise to Heaven through the facing of a painful reality: a continuous struggle against darkness!

## **3- The Book of Victory**

The writer intended to show the continuous struggle between righteousness and evil, which inevitable ends with the victory of righteousness. In this book we see God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the angels and the righteous ones all occupied in their war against the devil, his demons and wickedness...

In the Holy Bible we don't find anything about the devil's final doom as in this book. St. John, in the Revelation, saw the devil's defeat and his fall from heaven. This was followed by great rejoicing.

Victory in the book of Revelation is not a dream experienced by a believer, taking him away from a bitter reality. It is a realistic experience lived in Christ, who went out conquering and to conquer in us and with us (6:2). The book of Revelation concentrates on the person of Jesus Christ who stood against evil, for he is the Lamb appearing as though it had been slain. He gave His blood a price for our victory over sin. He conquered on the Cross and still conquers through His Church by her participation in His Cross. "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" 12:11. The secret of victory is Christ's death and His Blood given with love for our salvation. We bear witness by Him by giving our lives and shar-

ing his Cross, which gives victory. For when we die with Him all day long, we share His victory over Satan, and His victory over our sins!

The battle, in reality, is between the Lord and the devil. We don't take part in it, but with all our free will we join one side at the expense of the other. Our Christ is the conquering Hero inside us.

Origen sees that Christ is the one who summons martyrs to the battle-field. He is the one who gives the crown and He is the one to be crowned in them!

The soul enters the book of Revelation like a bride visiting the paradise of her groom. She sees wonderful paradise and marvelous glory prepared for her. There, she recognizes her Groom, accompanies His servants and wanders through the Heavenly atmosphere in sweetness and beauty... Hence she no longer fears the slyness of her enemy "Satan" and is no longer upset by him. This is because she realizes the power of her Groom and His plans, arrangements and intentions for her.

#### **4- The Book of Praise**

When the heart steals some time away from the outer and inner voices, it enters with the Groom inside the book in silence, voices of praise and chanting are heard! Hence the heart learns the language of Heaven: the language of love and ecstasy... the language of continuous praise.

What's interesting is that no strange hymns are heard, but ones that were previously learnt in the Mother's house "The Church," like the hymn of Moses, the hymn of the Lamb, the hymn of sanctum The church doesn't stop training every heart to repeat these hymns as well as others.

#### **5- The Book of worship by Spirit**

He who constantly reads the book of Revelation discovers the reality of Christian worship. It is not mere duties done or ceremonies performed, or orders and prohibition... but he sees through

all this a divine, invisible hand hurrying to him, to embrace him, to snatch him away raising him to heaven to live and participate in the eternal glory!

For he who tastes the book of Revelation: fasts, no matter how many, prayers, no matter how long, kneeling in prayer, no matter how much, self-denial... asceticism... pain... and daily crucifixion, all these turn to ecstasy, happiness and unspeakable joy. This is because, through this book, he meditates on the love tying the Creator to His creation, and tying the conquerors to the contenders, and tying the heavenly ones to human beings. Hence he forgets all pain and all distress for the sake of the immortal love!

## **6- The Book of Heaven**

When the heart forgets all the things around it, and retires from the treasures of the world to enter into the book of Revelation, it is amazed with what it sees: treasures, heavenly glories, as much as words can express: noble gems, golden crowns and white clothes... Thus the heart stays there and refuses to stop ones more to earthly matters, selling all its pearls to acquire the pearl of great price<sup>3</sup>.

## **7- The Book of the New Altar**

Before falling into sin, man enjoyed the divine presence of God wherever he was, but when he fell under the burden of sin, he needed to meet the Lord through the altar and the blood of sacrifice, the tabernacle, then the altar was a reconciliation place between the Lord and man in the merit of the Blood. In the heavenly Jerusalem, the Lord dwells with His people and in them. Thus they are truly considered God's holy Altar... That's why St. John did not find an altar there, because all the people are God's altar.

In the book of Revelation, the people are considered an altar and a bride at the same time... Thus it is the book of heavenly worship (the altar) and the supper of eternal marriage (19:9; 21:2).

## **8- The Book of Freedom**

Some people<sup>4</sup> look at Revelation as a revolutionary book, its aim being to save the freedom of man. Not by taking authority, nor by mental provocation towards braveness and endurance of pain and death, but by opening the heart to the Lord Christ who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate (1 Tim 6:13). Thus the believer longs to resemble his Master and follow His Spirit, accepting His pain to enjoy the power of His resurrection and freedom of the soul on an eternal level!

## **9- The Book of Final Redemption**

Some people see that this book includes two main cords, one is purple and the other golden. The first cord is the Blood of Jesus Christ, giver of salvation, where His sacrificial title "the Lamb" is repeated more than 25 times. The second is the advent (second coming of Jesus Christ) to carry His church to His glories, enjoying angelic life and continuous praise... Thus the book gives us a lively picture of the fulfillment of the final redemption where we see, before the throne, a multitude of believers who washed their clothes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (7:14), wearing white robes and carrying palm branches (7:9), enjoying the new city, the inexpressible heavenly Jerusalem (21), as a bride adorned for her husband, in eternal surpassing glory. As if the aim of this book is to encourage the whole church to wait for the coming of Jesus Christ in the clouds to carry all the believers to His glories... This is the seal of the final redemption offered to believers who defeated the Dragon, the serpent of old, Satan, throughout generations.

## **THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK<sup>5</sup>**

1- The book of Revelation had its special consideration in the early Fathers' writings in the East and West; they quoted from it. There was almost unanimity in the early Church that the book of the Revelation was an authentic work of the Evangelist St. John.

a) The book of Hermas "The Shepherd" refers several times to the Great Tribulation coming (Rev. 2:2,5,7; 3:6) which can be an echo of Revelation 2:10, 7:14... Also there are common portrayals in

the two books; showing that the author of the Shepherd had complete knowledge of the book of Revelation. This is shown in portraying the church as a woman, Satan as a beast with fine locusts coming out of his mouth, the Apostles as a part of the spiritual construction of the church, the believers as wearing white clothes and bearing crowns<sup>6</sup>. Other Apostolic Fathers also quoted from the Revelation.

b) Justin, the Martyr, knew the book and ascribed it to John the Apostle<sup>7</sup>. Melito, bishop of Sardis, wrote an essay about "The Revelation to John<sup>8</sup>."

c) The Muratorian canon shows that there was no doubt at all concerning the book of Revelation in the Roman Church close to the end of the second century.

d) Tertullian often quoted from it, considering it a work of John the Apostle<sup>9</sup>. Similarly St. Clement of Alexandria<sup>10</sup>, Origen<sup>11</sup>, St. Irenaeus<sup>12</sup> and St. Hippolytus of Rome accepted the genuineness of the Apostolic work and quoted from it, being one of the books of the Bible. Victorinus - who wrote the earliest interpretation of Revelation that is still in existence - ascribes the book to John, the Apostle.

Perhaps St. Dionysius of Alexandria is the only father who, although accepting the canonicity of the Book, says that the author is another John from the 70 Apostles. The reason for this can be attributed to the difference in the style of writing from that in the Gospel of John and his epistles. The church did not adopt this opinion.

2- He was the Apostle who was known in the churches of Asia Minor mentioned in the book.

3- History<sup>13</sup> confirms that John the Beloved, was banished by Emperor Domitian to Island of Patmos where the Apostle saw the Revelation (1:9).

4- Despite the difference of the subject of the book from that of the Gospel of John, there are some words mentioned which

specify these two books and not others: like "The Word," "The Lamb," "The victory"...The word "Truth" is repeated in both of them.

5- The Apostle mentioned his own name clearly four times in this book and did not hide it. This is because he speaks about prophecies and in order to trust them it is necessary to know the author to whom God revealed these predictions. As for the Gospel and the three Epistles, he did not mention his name in them out of humility. However, the traces of his humility are clear in Revelation, he calls himself Christ's servant (1:1) and "your brother and companion in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (1:9).

### **WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN**

On a small island approximately 25 miles from the coasts of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey) called "Patmos" or "Patom," modern day "Piteno." The Apostle wrote it when he was exiled<sup>14</sup> (1:9).

A few scientists say that he wrote the Revelation revealed to him while in exile when he returned to Ephesus, but this opinion is not based on proof, especially as he was ordered to write what he saw without delay (1:10,11).

There was a cave on this island that the inhabitants say was the dwelling of the Apostle during his exile.

### **WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN**

The majority say that it was written after the ruin of Jerusalem, around 95 or 96 A.D. St. Irenaeus<sup>15</sup> says that this Revelation was revealed at the end of Domitian's reign (81-96 A.D).

### **THE CHURCH'S INTEREST IN REVELATION**

In spite of what some heretics like Marcion stirred up by the canonicity of this book, we find that the Church (since the early centuries) has given it special treatment. Some fathers interpreted it,

others wrote essays about it and others quoted from it: Justin the Martyr, Irenaeus, Hyppolitus<sup>16</sup>, Melito, Victorianus<sup>17</sup>, Dionysius of Alexandria, Methodius, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Alexandria, Genadius...

St. Jerome<sup>18</sup> wrote to Polinius of Nola saying "The secrets of the book of Revelation are as many as its words. Each word carries a secret inside it and this is little compared to the high honor of this book. Even any commendation of it is considered little, because every word in it carries a lot of meanings. I praise what I understand and what I don't."

Pope Dionysius of Alexandria<sup>19</sup> says "Although it carries thoughts that surpass my perception I find it contains strong secret concepts in many matters... And in spite of my inability to understand it, I still believe that there are deep meanings behind its words. I don't measure its sentences or judge it according to my power of perception but I accept it with faith and simplicity. I see it as nice and delicious to my comprehension, so I never refuse what I don't understand but instead I stand amazed before it..."

## **TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN**

The Revelation was addressed to the seven Asian churches that were under the guidance of St. John the Evangelist. There is a special message for each church, but the book of Revelation undoubtedly carries a communal message concerning the life of Church in the whole world in all ages, especially in the days of the Antichrist.

## **SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION<sup>20</sup>**

There are at least four schools of interpretation of the book of Revelation:

1. **The Preterists** (Preteric theory): Who believe that the book was chiefly meant for the people of St. John's days and that it was fulfilled during their time. Christianity suffered from the struggle with Judaism (4-11) and with idolatry or the Roman Empire (12-19)

and the book presented predictions of final victory. They ignored the interpretive key to the book: "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this" 1:19. They attribute arbitrary meanings to the symbols of the book.

We can't consider this interpretation apart from the spiritual and the eschatological ones, because although the Apostle mentioned events that were contemporary to him, the words carry meanings that concern the believer's life in every age. It also predicts the events of the last days.

2. **The Historicists** (Historic theory): who believe that the book of Revelation includes the history of the world concerning its relation with the church, from St. John's days until the end of time. They think that the end of the world is not far away and that history is divided into seven epochs that all appear in the seven messages to the seven churches (2-3) respectively. This interpretation ignores the previous one and ignores the spiritual conception of God's word.

3. **The Spiritualists**: They claim that the symbols mentioned in the book portray spiritual realities for us. They say that the book has no reference to any historical reality or real incidents, but it is rather a mystical imaginary presentation of the life of the sanctified believer.

4. **The Futurists**: They think that the bulk of the book has to do with the future. They consider verse (1:19) as a key to the book.

Many think that each interpretation completes the other ones and that it is impossible to adopt one interpretation whilst neglecting the others... For it is a spiritual prophetic book that takes us to the end of ages, not to recognize periods and times but to get ready for the Lord's final coming and the participation in His glories, not ignoring what the church suffers from troubles and persecutions that reach the summit in the Great Tribulation, in the days of the Anti-christ.

Some people misunderstood the book of Revelation or God's word by converting it into numbers to know times, instead of occupying themselves with the pleasure of redemption and getting spiritually ready to meet the Lord. The Jehovah witnesses predicted the end of this wicked world - according to the numbers of Daniel and Revelation - to be in 1914 and the Adventists in 1843, then in 22 November 1844 etc<sup>21</sup>.

PHEME PERKINS<sup>22</sup> says that the last ten years witnessed an outburst of concern in the book of Revelation among all standards, ranging from those who study the Holy Bible to those who read it accidentally... Certainly most of the questions that took place are based on incomprehension of the Revelation, because it was thought to be a symbolic code predicting about people and incidents that lead to the end of the world. This type of concept has been found among the heretical Christian populations since the second century, to the extent that a group of Monatists ran to Virginia wilderness to see the heavenly Jerusalem coming down from the sky. They were disappointed like many prophets till this day. The church did not conclude the Holy Bible with this book to give glorified prophecies about future incidents. Thus anyone who expects prophecies of that kind loses the spiritual message of Revelation. This spiritual fact is what urges us to be interested in this book.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BOOK**

1. As we have previously said, this book is a symbolic book containing approximately 300 symbols. Each has a definite meaning. Speaking with symbols indicates that the facts mentioned here cannot be expressed or explained in human language.

2. Some people say that the book carries a kind of duality of life: "I John... was in Patmos... I was in Spirit" (1:9,10). There is earthly, physical, mundane, visible and tangible life in "**Was in Patmos**" as well as spiritual, invisible, intangible and heavenly life in: "**I was in Spirit.**" It is an integral life, because our temporal life is like preparing for an eternal one. What man achieves of inner hidden

glory here through participating with the Lord and adhering to His angels and saints will be strongly announced on the Lord's great day.

Man truly consists of a soul and a body, but without duality in his life. The soul reacts to what the body does, shares in it and is judged for this either to be rewarded or to be eternally punished. Also what the soul does causes a reaction in and has influence on the body, which is also judged for this, as a partner to the soul. Thus man has one human nature, one life, especially if he totally submits his body, soul, hidden abilities and visible conduct to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Revelation confirms the importance of the invisible side of our life: Our living "in Spirit," which is intangible. This is no less importance than the tangible corporal life.

The Evangelist said "I was in Patmos" but when he rushed towards the Lord's day and became "in Spirit," he spoke no more about Patmos but his heart was occupied, his thoughts and feelings absorbed in the spiritual life, waiting for the Lord's coming in the clouds. He spoke about difficulties and troubles that the church suffers on earth. He soon lifts us in Spirit to reveal the presence of a hidden struggle between light and darkness, God and Satan, which inevitably ends with God's victory within His children and with the devil's eternal doom!

3. "Be faithful until death" 2:10. This is the commandment of Jesus Christ to the church at Smyrna. He did not say "be successful," but "faithful." God wants all His children to be successful in everything because success is a quality of those who are with Him and enjoy His abilities... However man is not judged by the extent of his success but by the extent of his faithfulness in all aspects of his temporal and spiritual life.

4. The word "throne" is repeated approximately 40 times in this book, so God assures us that He opens the doors of heaven for us to ascend to Him and sit on His right side... The sight of the

throne takes our minds away from being entangled into temporal troubles. This sight takes us to that which is above troubles as well as granting us comfort. The divine throne rises above all temporal ones... This throne evokes no fear and causes us no embarrassment because we gather around it to enjoy participating in the eternal glories.

5. In this book we see that God started loving us first. Hence He begins by opening His doors for us, saying "See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it" 3:80. He gave us power to trample on serpents, scorpions and all the powers of the enemy, who exerts all efforts to deprive us of the opened divine door! In return for this love He demands our love for Him. He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me" 3:20. In His love He will not break into our souls against our will, and will not steal our hearts, but asks for it as well as giving Himself to us.

In His love He wants to sit with us at our table, dine with us, i.e., share our lives and make us sit with Him at His table and enjoy satisfaction and eternal joy.

6. In the book of Revelation, God's word is completed and His divine promises, mentioned in the two Testaments: the Old and the New, are fulfilled... It is the book of New Exodus and the book of congregational worship in the best way, as we shall see.

## **THE "SEVENS" OF REVELATION**

Number "7" is repeated several times in Revelation, as it is the book that sanctifies the present time (7 days of the week) based on a review of our glorious past when God granted us great salvation. This takes us to a sure future made by His hands.

Number 6 (7-1) is the number of imperfection, that's why the number of the Antichrist is 666, i.e. imperfect, imperfect, imperfect, or totally imperfect.

Number 3 1/2 (half of seven) is collapse and damage. It refers to the time of tribulation stirred up by the Antichrist or the period of the Impostor's kingdom... Time plus double time plus half of time (three years and a half or 1260 days. Rev. 11:2,3; 12:6; 13:5).

As for number 8 (7 +1), it refers - throughout the Holy Bible - to crossing over time and entering the eternal heavenly life.

1- **The Seven churches (1:4,11) or the Seven Lampstands (1:12,20):** The message of this book is to reveal Jesus Christ being the Sun of Righteousness present in His church, illuminating her and preparing her to meet Him face to face on His great day, to dwell with Him in His eternal light.

2- **The Seven Spirits (1:4):** Some think these are the seven archangels, while others think it is the perfect work of the Holy Spirit in the church of Christ.

3- **The Seven Messages to the Seven Churches(2:1; 3:22):** Every message is offered for the advantage and edification of the whole church, without ignoring the personal relationship between Christ and the local church, or every member in it.

4- **The Seven Lamps of burning fire (4:5):** If the Seven churches are lampstands, then their light is not their own but a divine gift from God's Holy Spirit who appears as seven lamps of fire lighting the church and inflaming her with the fire of divine love. Jesus Christ says: "I came to send fire on earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" Luke 12:49

5- **The Seven Seals (5:1; 6:1-8; 8:1):** We need God's Lamb to open the seals of His Holy Bible, granting us His divine wisdom and real knowledge by His Holy Spirit. As Nehemiah says, "you also gave your good spirit to instruct them" Neh 9:20. What did the seven seals reveal? He walks ahead of us as a conqueror and to conquer (seal 1), and we enter into a series of successive pains but He

turns pains into glories (seal 2-6), He makes wonderful things for us and this amazes the whole of heaven who stand as if in silence, astonished at the glory prepared for humans (seal 7).

6- **The Seven Horns** (5:6): The horn refers to strength. The week Lamb declares with His Cross what is greater than strength. "And has raised up a horn of salvation for us. In the house of His servant David" Luke 1:69.

7- **The Seven Eyes** (5:6): Our Christ has seven horns, i.e. has complete power, and seven eyes, i.e. has complete knowledge... He sees all matters with all hidden details. By His redemption He grants us power as well as spiritual knowledge, i.e. power together with wisdom and inner insight.

8- **The Seven Trumpets** (8:2; 11:9): Indicating God's warnings to the wicked ones who persecute His people.

9- **The Seven talking thunders** (10:3,4): Before they talked, a mighty angel cried (perhaps he refers to Jesus Christ) roaring like a lion, holding a little open book in his hand and setting his right foot on the sea and the other on the land, as if thunders here mean the response of saints and heavenly creatures to the words of God in heaven, keeper of His people wherever they are. God, through His love for His people, works in their best interests Himself, saying: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out... I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down says the Lord God" Ezek 34:11,15. However, He does not deprive the heavenly ones and humans of being like thunder responding to His voice and working in the best interest of His children! He makes them like thunder which is the result of friction of clouds together, declaring God's love and His plan! Here, there is a living picture of the church which is working in a congregational spirit and is also uniting with the heavenly creatures so that everyone becomes holy clouds talking in inexpressible words 10:4.

10- **The Seven thousand Slain due to the earthquake** (11:13): In the days of the two prophets witnesses against the oppressor

11- **The Seven Heads** (12:3): The great bloodshedding dragon has seven heads, i.e. is continuously thinking and planning to destroy and exterminate the church... His continuous work is deception (12:9; 13:14; 20:8).

12-**The Seven Crowns on his heads** (12:3): The devil appoints many kings in many countries, thus becoming like a king over kings... He never stops deceiving or using authority as well as violence. It is said that in the days of "the Antichrist," many countries will follow him and fight against God's people.

13- **The Seven Bowls and the Seven Plagues** (15:1; 16:21): The matter does not stop at warnings (the trumpets), but God pours out His firm punishment so that the wicked ones may stop following the Antichrist.

14- **The Seven Mountains** (17:9): On which sits Babylon, the harlot. Perhaps this refers to the kingdom of the Antichrist which includes a number of great leaders, like mountains to lean on.

15- **The Seven Kings** (17:10): Referring to authorities who submit to the kingdom of the wicked one.

16 **The Seven Personages** (12,13): These personages appear in the battle that will take place between the devil (the Dragon) and the Church at the end of time, as mentioned in chapters 12 and 13.

**a) The woman clothed with the sun (12:1-2):** Refers to the Church who enjoys Jesus Christ, the Source of her beauty and hidden glory. As for the moon under her feet, it refers to the members who died as martyrs, thus becoming like the moon, reflecting with the light from the Sun of Righteousness. The twelve stars on her head are the twelve disciples. She is with child, crying out in labor and in pain so that Jesus Christ may be formed in the lives of believ-

ers and those invited to faith. She is a suffering Church, as the devil fights against her in continuous battle until her Groom comes.

**b) The great fiery red Dragon (12:3,4,9):** Refers to Satan, the deceiver serpent of old (Gen. 3:1-5; 13-15), "red" because he is a murderer of people (John 8:44). His horns and crowns refer to his temporal authority and power, also to his arrogance for he wants to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to ascend above the height of the clouds, to be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:13,14). He was a covering cherub from the midst of fiery stones, but his heart was lifted up because of his beauty and he lost his wisdom for the sake of his splendor (Ezek 28:16,17).

This Dragon and the two beasts coming from the sea and the earth are the defiled trinity: Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet. They will exert all their power and abilities to destroy the work of the Holy Trinity in church.

**c) The male child (12:5):** Refers to Jesus Christ in His birth. He rules His people with the rod of His Cross that breaks evil (Ps. 2:9). Here, the writer also tells of His Ascension to His throne.

**d) Michael the Archangel (12:7):** Regarded as the Church protector (Dan. 12:2 etc., 10:13-21). The Word of God destroys the devil through His Cross. However, the Heavenly creatures do not stand and watch, but participate in their God's love for humanity. They are ministers to those who will inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). Michael and his angels will expel Satan and his demons from heaven (Job 11:6; Eph. 2:2; 6:12)

To be like heaven, Satan, his demons and his deeds should have no place in you, whereas the angels will rejoice in you and for you!

**e) The remnant (12:17):** Satan stands against those who remain loyal to their Christ. They refuse to follow or worship the Antichrist, or to receive the mark of his name. They keep the com-

mandments of God and bear witness to their Jesus Christ in the midst of the Great Tribulation.

**f) The beast out of the sea (13:1-10):** Some say that it is the head of the Roman Empire (or something similar to it) who rises out of unsettled political conditions. The sea refers to the multitude of nations. The beast coming out of the sea refers to the Antichrist, while the beast coming out of the earth refers to the false prophet who works for the Antichrist. The former deceives men by taking the shape of Christ the Savior. Thus he will appear like a slain lamb who will be healed.

**g) The beast out of the earth (13:11-18)** Tries to simulate the Holy Spirit by giving testimony to the Antichrist, performing signs and giving life to the image of the beast who came out of the sea.

**17- The Seven judgments:** The judgment and fall of Babylon (17,18), the judgment of the beast (19:20), the judgment of false prophet (19:20), the judgment of the evil nations' leaders (19:21), the ruin of Gog and Magog (20:7-9), the doom of Satan (20:10) and the doom of all wicked ones (20:15).

**18- The Seven "New" things:** New heaven (21:2), new earth (21:1), the new city (21:2), new nations (21:24), new river as crystal (22:1), new market (street) (22:2), new tree of life (22:2). Briefly, Jesus Christ says: "Behold, I make all things new" 21:5. This means that what we will enjoy in eternal life can never occur to our minds... It is all new matters of which we have no experience in this world! It is impossible to compare eternal heavenly glories with our earthly life that we experience.

**19- The Seven Beatitudes:** As long as this book opens the doors of heaven for us, where there is no curse, we find seven beatitudes in a specific arrangement that delights the heart:

a) "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it" 1:3. This is the only scripture which opens with a pronounced blessing to its readers or hearers who keep it through obedience. This denotes the importance of its message.

b) The previous blessing is offered to those who strive to obey the word of God. Now He blesses those who had departed from this world to meet the Word of God Himself, face to face: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on" 14:13.

c) Lest one should think that he should depart from this world to receive the blessing, consequently longing for death and hating his temporal life, the book offers a blessing for those who live on earth watching for the Lord's coming: "Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments" 16:15.

d) Whether we live watching for the Lord's coming (16:15), or die in the Lord (14:13), we enjoy a blessing, for we are invited to the marriage supper: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" 19:9. We will not only meet Him face to face but will also unite with Him, as a bride with her heavenly Groom, and participate in His glorious heritage.

e) We are not waiting for the general resurrection to receive the blessing, but through enjoying His resurrected life, we rise from the death of sin, and receive the first resurrection as a new life, blessed in the Lord: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection" 20:6.

f) "Behold, I am coming quickly; blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" 22:7.

g) "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city" 22:14. In the previous blessing we are encouraged to keep the words of the prophecy by trusting it, and here it

says that keeping the words is confirmed by obeying the commandment. Consequently we enjoy the tree of life and enter the new heavenly Jerusalem.

## **REVELATION AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**

The Holy Bible starts with the book of Genesis to declare God's care and appreciation of man. He offers him everything and leaves him in need of nothing. However, man is soon expelled from Paradise and he is grieved by a feeling of loneliness, even when he is among many people. This is due to his isolation from God, the Source of his life, peace and happiness. The Holy Scripture existed to point to the Savior Messiah who, alone, can carry man to the divine bosom once more and restore his dignity anew etc. We realized in our comparison between Genesis and Revelation how the book of Revelation had fulfilled the integrity of scriptural promises forever. No one could imagine that it was possible to conclude the Holy Bible without this book, which carries us to complete victory and participation in the glories.

On of the scholars tried to make a comparison between what is mentioned in the Old Testament and what is fulfilled in Revelation; it filled about 17 pages. Some people thought that Revelation is a Christian perusal of the Old Testament, aiming at enlightening the history of church in her living present, which is based on an effective past, and at leading the people to the Lord's great day<sup>23</sup>.

Some of those who studied<sup>24</sup> the book offered us an example of this, as mentioned in Rev. 22:1-3, how it fulfills what was mentioned in Gen. 2:9; Ezek. 47:1; Zech. 14:8.

"And he showed me a pure **river** of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the middle of its street (market).

And on either side of the river, was **the tree of life**, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were **for the healing of the nations**.

And **there shall be no more curse**, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him" Rev. 22: 13.

This text carries a wonderful picture that fulfills what is mentioned in the Old Testament.

a) In Gen. 2:9, we see the tree of life in the midst of the garden of Eden. Man was deprived of it after separating himself from God, the Source of his life... Now he regains it on a higher level, enjoyed by nations who have faith, those are healed by its leaves and are forever satisfied by its fruits.

b) And in Ezek. 47:1. The prophet sees water flowing eastwards from the threshold of the new temple of God, eastwards where nations enjoy the new birth in the water of Baptism and gain elimination of the Spirit. In Revelation the believers enjoy the Holy Spirit as a river, brilliant as crystal, reflecting the brightness of divine glory on them or the shining of the Sun of Righteousness within them.

c) And in Zech. 14:8,9. The prophet sees living water flowing from Jerusalem in the day of the Lord's crucifixion when there is "neither day nor night" 14:7... Darkness had fallen, thus the day is no more nor had there been evening! "And the Lord shall be King over all the earth" 14:9. In Revelation we find perfect healing, eternal glory and fulfillment of divine promises for all nations and not for a specific nation!

We also present another example: Ezekiel, the Prophet and the Priest felt the bitterness of being deprived of Jerusalem, the city of the Lord, and of serving the temple, due to bondage. God offered him a delightful revelation, showing specific details of the new city and the new temple (Ezek 40-48). This prophetic revelation was completely fulfilled in the book of Revelation: "Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, Rise and

measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there" Rev. 11:1.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth... saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband..." Rev. 21.

If the book of Revelation declares the fulfillment of the positive side of the divine promises, the positive side being enjoying the new heavenly city of Jerusalem, the new heaven and the new earth. The book also declares the verification of the negative side, i.e. the doom of evil typified in the city of Babylon.

The Old Testament presents two major cities denoting the kingdoms of God and Satan: Babylon: the capital of Satan's kingdom where the languages of Spirit are confused (Gen. 11), and where life is corrupt; and Jerusalem, the capital of God's kingdom where His Holy Temple is.

The talk about Babylon started in the book of Genesis, where man was corrupted and his thoughts were confused because he deviated from the situation in which God created him and from his true vocation. Babylon held a cup that filled with time to make all the earth drunk with her wine (Jer. 51:7)... The Book of Revelation shows us the complete fullness of this cup. St. John saw Babylon as a woman arrayed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth, and she is drunk with the blood of saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," Rev. 17:4,6. Her cup is entirely full and she appointed herself queen in order to steal God's kingdom by converting hearts from holy temples into centers of corruption and abomination. Her fornication did not satisfy her, but she began encouraging everybody to live a life of fornication, thus becoming a mother through her fornication. Together with the flow of corruption and excessive spoiling, she also

possesses a violent heart, which is not calmed except through being drunk with the blood of martyrs. She is a queen, a mother of corruption, full of violence!

With her completely full cup, her pride reached its peak, when she said in her heart: "I sit as a queen and am no widow, and will not see sorrow" Rev. 18:7... Thus she is condemned to perish totally. "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning... saying: Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour your judgment has come... and the cries are repeated several times: Alas, alas..." Rev. 18:10,16,19.

Jesus Christ asks us to drink, with the sons of Zebedee, the cup that he drinks, the cup of practical devoted love, the cup of the narrow way, the cup of His sweet yoke... For he makes us drunk with the wine of His love, thus we rejoice and exalt in His Holy Spirit... The effectiveness of this cup is apparently fulfilled in Revelation, where we enjoy, with our Christ, the splendor of His resurrection in the Lord's great day.

We cannot hold the cup of Babylon, the cup of the wide way, the cup of luxury, spoiling, amusement, and violence that sheds the blood of saints in one hand, and hold the cup of Jesus Christ in the other hand!

## **REVELATION IS A NEW EXODUS<sup>25</sup>**

As long as we are speaking about Revelation as a fulfillment of the divine promises mentioned in the Old Testament in the best light, we need to speak about the Exodus of the people from Pharaoh's bondage to the wilderness, heading for the promised land.

The book of Exodus has a special importance for the Jews because it is the book of freedom from bondage and of heading for liberty in order to enjoy the divine promises. It is also the book of building the first dwelling place for the Lord, where he lived in the tabernacle of meeting as His own tent. The book concentrated on

two facts: salvation through the blood of the Lamb (Exod. 12), and God living among His people (Exod. 25:40).

This is the symbolic Exodus that became reality through the Cross, where Christ was sacrificed as our Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), and we became members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19); God lives within us and we abide in Him.

As for Revelation, it is the book of complete Exodus to the heavenly Jerusalem through a battle that extends across the ages and gets harder with time, until reaching its peak when the Antichrist appears.

The following is a comparison between the book of Revelation and that of Exodus:

1. In Exodus God called Himself: "I AM WHO I AM" (Exod. 3:14), i.e. Jehovah or the Lord who is present among His people to redeem them; in Revelation He calls Himself "He who is and who was and who is to come" 1:4,8; 4:8. He is present among His people, and He is the one who made history. He verified the redemption in the past through the Cross and is still verifying it in the present, and will keep completing the Redemption through His continuous battle with Satan and his demons, until He leads His people to His heaven where they will meet Him, face to face, on His great day.

God assured that by Exodus He bore His people on eagles' wings and brought them to Him (Exod. 19:4). So he had to make them know His name; in Revelation He bore us with His Holy Spirit across the ages to lead us to Him as a heavenly Groom, to an eternal marriage (21:2). In this way does He frequently reveals His identity and His characteristics throughout the whole book.

2. God allowed ten plagues to befall Pharaoh, his men, and his facilities so that he might abandon his stubbornness and harshness of heart to let the people go and worship the Lord (Exod. 7); in

Revelation God allowed the bowls that are very similar to the plagues of Pharaoh, except that they are worse (15,16) to aim at punishing the "Antichrist" and his followers so that they could let the Church practice her faith and worship freely.

3. The old people of God were born in the book of Exodus (Exod. 19:3-8); in Revelation the new people are appointed "kings and priests to God His Father" 1:6. In Exodus God chose His people; and in Revelation He confirms His continuous protection for them.

4. Moses received the Law in the middle of thunder and lightning and thick clouds which caused the people in the camp tremble (Exod. 19:16). Mount Sinai was completely surrounded by smoke and the whole mountain shook greatly (Exod. 19:18); in Revelation God revealed His future edification plan to edify His people when lightning, thunders and voices proceeded from the throne (4:5; 8:5,11; 16:18).

5. In Exodus the Passover was established (Exod. 12), when the people gather around the Lamb to enjoy salvation through the blood; in Revelation the Lamb appears, every now and then, sitting on the throne with the heavenly creatures gathered around Him as one rejoicing and praising!

Exodus tells us about the hymn of Moses (15); Revelation also points to it, together with the hymn of the Lamb (15:3).

6. In Exodus, God provided for His people and gave them Manna as bread from heaven (Exod. 16:14), and flowing water from the rock in Horeb (17:6); in Revelation God offers His people the hidden Manna (2:17), and living fountains of water (7:17). He is the secret of their satisfaction and their inner quenched thirst.

7. The journey of Exodus ended for Moses when he saw the promised land from Mount Moab before he died (Deut. 34:4); Revelation is concluded by revealing the heavenly Jerusalem and its

qualities from a distance, as if we were on the mountain of faith eager to enter it and inherit a share in it (21,22).

## **REVELATION AND ECCLESIASTICAL WORSHIP**

Some people call the book of Revelation "The book of liturgical worship" or "The book of congregational ecclesiastic worship." Thus we hear no individual worship, but a strong congregational voice, in which the heavenly choirs take part with the believers or with the Church of the two Testaments, the Old and the New, in one spirit and one thought.

This book offers us "an opened door in heaven" not only so that we can recognize it mentally but so that we long for it and can share the hymns and congregational liturgies with the heavenly creatures in melodious harmony.

The book of Revelation shows us that the church we live in here is an icon of the heavenly one. Inside it we find a temple, an altar, and saints at prayer etc. We find the signs of interest in ecclesiastical liturgy or congregational worship throughout the whole book:

1. The first chapter declares the identity of the announcer "Our Lord Jesus Christ." We see Him in the midst of the seven lampstands, holding the seven stars in His right hand. He is the leader of the whole church and her Groom who is within her, illuminating her and holding her servants in His right hand, making everyone of them a bright star in His heaven.

2. In chapters 2 and 3 He talks about the church in the world; thus the liturgical ecclesiastical side emerges strongly. We see Him speaking not to individuals but to the church as a whole, or to her angel or bishop as representative of the congregation. He also demands communal repentance. He asks for **communal conscious examination**. As for the reward, it carries a liturgical thought:

The reward of the church of Ephesus is to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God (2:4,7), because the Jews, in their congregational ceremonies, anticipated enjoying it after man was deprived of it due to the fall in sin. Christians, in all their worship, long to be satisfied with **Christ, the tree of life**.

The reward of the church of Smyrna is "the crown of life." In the first centuries, the newly **baptized person** used to wear a crown on his head as a sign of union between himself and the eternal Groom, enjoying His victory... It is as if the reward concerns an ecclesiastical act.

The reward of the church of Pergamos is "the hidden Manna," which we enjoy in the mystery of the **Eucharist** (John 6), and the white stone on which a new name is written, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ which is not known except to those who accept Him and experience a partnership with Him. The chosen ones and the one hundred and forty-four thousand are sealed with this name (22:4; 14:1). This may be referring to the seal of the Holy Spirit during the mystery of **Chrism** when all our organs are sanctified on behalf of Christ as His possessions.

The reward of the church of Thyatira is to rule with Christ (2:26,27). Through baptism we become kings and priests to God.

The reward of the church of Sardis is to wear white garments (3:4). This happens in the ceremony of baptism and the service of the Eucharist (Holy communion).

The reward of the church of Philadelphia is that the believer will become a pillar in the temple of the Father (3:12). He becomes a living part of the heavenly church.

The reward of the church of Laodicea is to sit with Christ on His throne (3:21). The church will become a heavenly queen, crowned with the King, the heavenly groom. A wonderful ecclesiastical picture!

3. In Chapter 4 the prophetic visions begin: an open door in heaven appears so that we may see the divine throne (4:2,3), surrounded by the twenty four priests and the four living creatures, all gathered around "the Lamb as though it had been slain" 5:5. While He is opening the seals of the scroll, they praise and glorify Him. It is as if heaven is celebrating the Passover (the slain Lamb) together where those on earth enjoy the eternal covenant through the blood, hence participating with the heavenly creatures. The heavenly creatures offer the prayers of saints (5:8).

Some people believe that the twenty-four incorporeal priests who praise God refer to the twenty-four groups of priests in the temple or to the saints of the Old Testament (12 tribes) and the saints of the New Testament (12 Disciples).

Other people believe that the four living creatures refer to the ecclesiastical congregational church or to the nations of the world which accepted the four Gospel evangelism. They came to praise God in a congregational spirit with the power and appearance of God's chariot of fire. The four living creatures personify the whole creation (Ezek. 1:10), which came to worship God and to fulfill His will. They represent the four Evangelists who raised the believers to the throne through evangelic life.

4. Chapters 6-20 include three series of sevens.

a) **Seven Seals:** The suffering Church from the time of her establishment until the day she meets the Lamb on the clouds.

b) **Seven trumpets:** God's warnings from the time of the establishment of the Church until the day of judgment.

c) **Seven bowls:** of the wrath of God, for the punishment of mankind. They end with the doom of the Antichrist.

5. The book includes congregational hymns like the lamentation song for Babylon the harlot (18), and the hymn of victory and Jubilation (19).

6. As the Antichrist attacks the Church, as a whole, and she escapes to the wilderness (12:6), God sends her the two loyal witnesses (11). Notice that we cannot attribute any deed to one of them and not to the other. The Scripture does not distinguish between their personalities but declares their co-operation in testimony and in work. Refraining from mentioning their names perhaps confirms the congregational spirit of the book.

## THE KEY TO THE BOOK

In this book, the Holy Spirit accompanies the Church on its way to eternity, revealing Himself and His work for her to see, hear, and touch. The Church gets stronger until she reaches eternal marriage where she stays with her Groom as a queen crowned with glory.

1. He starts by **revealing Himself** [1] as the subject of the entire Revelation. He removes the veil for her to see Him within her, guiding her and **leading her to His glory in the midst of troubles and pain**. He is "the Lamb as though it had been slain," her salvation, the one sitting on the throne and waiting to crown her on His right side.

2. We first see Him **amidst the seven churches** [2,3] talking to her through her angels "bishops," in the language of honesty and love. He reveals her human weakness to her, assuring the powerful action of His grace, offering Himself as the real remedy for all of her weakness. He appears to each church according to her needs and offers Himself as her eternal reward if she strives faithfully.

3. He raises her as if by dove's wings towards eternity through the path of the Cross, the way of pain, to see the Lamb, her Groom, opening [4,5] **the seven seals** [6,7] and declaring continu-

ous war between the Lord who cares for His children and Satan who doesn't cease opposing God in His church.

So as not to be disturbed by what is mentioned in the seals, the Lamb announces that He, Himself, takes care of the Church during her struggle (7:1-8), as well as during her ease and eternal glory (7:9-17).

4. The angels come out to sound "**the seven trumpets**" [8-11], announcing God's warning to humans not to accept Satan's deceit throughout the ages, especially at the time of the Antichrist.

The reason for these warnings is the appearance of the dragon [12], the beast from the sea [13], and the beast from the earth [13], and their resistance to the church: **the woman clothed with the Sun**. It is the war of the defiled trinity: Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet against the Holy Trinity. It ends with bliss in heaven and the judgment of evil [14].

5. The Church sees "**the seven bowls**" [15,16], or the seven plagues as a punishment that befalls the evil ones. This is preceded by two preliminary visions: the glorified Church in heaven (15:1-4), and the origin of these bowls (15:5-8) so that the Church is reassured that everything that happens is according to a divine plan for her glory and edification.

6. These three series are concluded by **the fall of the great Babylon** and the victory of heaven [17-19].

7. The book is concluded by revealing the glory of the Church during her struggle [20], as well as during her enjoyment in the new city: "**the heavenly Jerusalem**" [21,22]. Then we see what God has prepared for us. Inexpressible matters! At that time we say with amazing eagerness: "Yes. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" He is coming quickly!

## **DIVISIONS OF THE BOOK**

1. The announcer of the book. [1]
2. The Seven churches (the present). [2-3]
3. The Seven visions (the future). [4-19]
4. The Heavenly Jerusalem (above time). [20-22]



## **THE ANNOUNCER OF THE BOOK REVELATION 1**

1. As long as the book is concluded by the church calling to Jesus Christ: "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" 22:20. Then it was necessary that God reveal Himself as the announcer who unveils His actions across the ages until He takes us to His heavenly Jerusalem. He also clears away the dimness for us to see and enjoy Him as the Groom and Leader of the Church. The bride has the right to get acquainted with her Groom and to understand His secrets so as to walk in His spirit during her struggle.

2. He is "who is and who was and who is to come" 8. In Exodus He calls Himself: "I AM WHO I AM" Exod. 3:14, i.e. He "is" among His people to free them from bondage. He "was" when He offered His blood for their redemption, He is "to come" i.e. to convey them through the future and to take them to His throne (3:21). In Him, the past, the present and the future are fulfilled.

3. He announces Himself as the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega [8,11]. All divine promises are proclaimed through Him because He is the Alpha and the Omega. He embraces all believers and leads them, since He is the Beginning. He also protects them from behind, as He is the End. He is the complete royal way, through whom everyone enters.

Origen says that if there were a divine language to read heavenly matters, we would find that the Son is its first and last letters. Without Him we can understand nothing about heaven and without Him the mouth can utter no heavenly hymns<sup>26</sup>.

4. When St. John was banished to Patmos and deprived of serving his people in Asia Minor and in the seven churches under his guidance, Jesus Christ appeared to him amidst the seven lampstands to tell him that He is present in the midst of the church to take care of her. It is as if He is assuring St. John and asking him not to worry about God's people. Christ's appearance amidst the seven lampstands

confirms that He is the Christ of the ecumenical church. He has a personal relationship with each believer in His single Church, being the Creator, the Savior and the Judge.

5. In the Song of Songs, Jesus Christ is described as being the Groom who leads His bride with love to His heavenly chamber, but here He is her Groom who leads her through the battle of pain throughout the generations, especially during the last days when she is opposed by the Antichrist and the false prophet. He also takes her into His heavenly chamber as His victorious and conquering queen. He appeared as follows<sup>27</sup>:

a) Like the Son of Man [2]: He became a Man for her, when He is the Most High who can grant her His victory.

b) Clothed with a garment down to the feet [2], as a High-Priest (Exod. 28:4) interceding for her and, as a Judge, defending her.

c) Girdled about the chest with a golden band [2], i.e. keeping His church around His chest throughout the ages to be nourished by the milk of the two Testaments, the Old and the New. So she becomes a spiritual church as if made of gold. The breasts perhaps indicate His love and His justice seen together on the Cross for His church to experience.

d) His head and His hair were white; the hair is the group of saints who unite with the Head through their striving, so they carry His purity, His chastity and His wisdom. He is the Ancient of Days (Dan. 7:9)!

e) His eyes like a flame of fire [14]: The bride sees His eyes as the eyes of a dove, but the wicked ones see them like a flame of fire, awesome, bringing the concealed matters into the light and piercing everything!

f) His feet were like fine brass. Because of this we walk through the path of pain, fearing no obstacles but stepping on all that stands in our spiritual course.

g) His voice as the sound of many waters: Water refers to the groups of nations who accepted God's word, or refers to His voice through the water of Baptism.

h) He had in His right hand seven stars [15]. He manages the matters of His Church through His servants who are like heavenly stars. Caesar has no power over the church (the souls) but Jesus Christ, the King of kings has!

i) Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: The Lord appears as a warrior fighting with His word that works in the speaker and in the listeners as if with two edges. With His Word he punishes and he comforts (Isa. 11:4; Heb. 4:12).

j) His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength [16]; He reflects His light on His church in her agency.

Have you ever seen the Lord, King of kings?

Moses saw Him and his face shone (Exod. 34:29), and he became like an angel of God!

The righteous Job saw Him and he repented in dust and ashes, discovering his weakness before the Mighty God (Job 42:6)!

Isaiah the Prophet saw Him and confessed that he was a man of unclean lips dwelling in the midst of people of unclean lips. He realized the Holy Lord (Isa. 6:5)!

Thomas saw Him and his faith was confirmed, he cried out: "My Lord and my God" John 20:28!

Saul saw Him and fell to the ground and worshipped Him as the Savior. He was altered from a persecutor of the church into an Apostle and a faithful servant (Acts 9).

John the Apostle saw Him in the Lord's great day and realized the extent of His great love that "has made us kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6)!

The aim of Revelation is to discover the Lord by yourself during your agony. You have to see Him by your faith so that He will reflect His splendor on you (Ezek 16:14). Then you could become very beautiful and suitable to be a queen!

✠ ✠ ✠

## **THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

### **REVELATION 2,3**

He writes to the ecumenical church throughout the ages by speaking to the seven churches in Asia Minor through St. John the Evangelist. Offering certain messages, He reveals God's care for each local church as well as His care for each soul.

Each message includes the following:

a) It starts by addressing the angel of the church, because the bishop is responsible for each soul before the Lord.

b) A description of the glorious Jesus Christ who offers the message. He appears in forms that suit the need of each church so that she can find her satisfaction and the solution to her problems in Him.

c) He begins the message by saying: "I know," for He is the one who searches the depth to support, cure and develop. While disclosing the weakness or encouraging the striving, he assures them that the church is in danger not from external stress and hardship but from internal troubles.

d) An invitation for spiritual listening (Hearing): "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

e) He offers a future reward for the victorious church.



## THE SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

<b>CHURCH</b>	<b>WEAKNESS</b>	<b>REMEDY</b>	<b>OUR GAZE TO CHRIST</b>
1.Ephesus:	Tepidness of love.	mediating on the tree of life	holding the stars.
2.Smyrna:	Suffering pain	anticipating the crown.	The First and the Last.
3.Pergamos:	obstacles in the church.	Practicing the sacraments	has the two-edged sword.
4.Thyatira:	evil desires	cutting off evil motives	has eyes like a flame of fire.
5.Sardis:	Hypocrisy	concentrating on heavenly glory	has the seven Spirits of God.
6.Philadelphia:	laxity in work.	discovering our heavenly rank.	has the key of David.
7.Laodicea:	Spiritual tepidness	perseverance with hope.	The Faithful witness

## THE PROPHETIC VISIONS

In these visions God reveals to us His advice to and management of His church in spite of the devil and his demon's opposition to her. These visions include three series revealing the three sides of the period during which the Church is striving on earth until the advent of the Lord. These series resemble drawings on film or on transparent paper when put on top of each other, the picture is then complete:

1. The seven seals [6-7]: the suffering church is the object of the Lamb's attention.

2. The seven trumpets [8-11]: God's warnings to the world which persecutes His church.

3. The seven bowls [15-17]: God's penalty for the evil ones.

Intervening between these series are blissful visions that prompt hope in the church, assuring her that her Groom is alive and working during hardship for her best interest. These visions are:

1. The appearance of the sealed scroll. [4-5]
2. The woman clothed with the sun. [12-14]
3. The fall of Babylon. [17-19]



## **THE APPEARANCE OF THE SEALED SCROLL REVELATION 4,5**

Before opening the seven seals that reveal the pain of the church, her Christ comforts her by a wonderful vision:

1. There is the appearance of an opened door in heaven [4:1], and a heavenly voice which is heard assuring the Church that what is happening is permitted by God Himself (4:2). Nothing happens by chance or without divine providence.

2. The appearance of the heavenly throne (4:2). No matter how many thrones are appointed by the Antichrist to destroy faith, he cannot reach the throne of her Groom who is preparing a place for her!

3. Around the throne the twenty-four heavenly priests and the four living creatures are gathered [4] together with groups of believers and angels (7:9-11). They all praise the Lord together in a harmonious congregational spirit. The Incarnated Word of God appears like a Lamb as though it has been slain (5:6). A heavenly church gathered around Christ our Passover! Let the enemy fight the church with all his power, for she is heavenly, everlasting and shall not be destroyed by the power of darkness!

4. No one shall open the sealed scroll except the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:4). He alone declares the agony of the church and supports her against the devil, the lion, who wants to devour every soul! Jesus Christ confides in no one but Himself to open the seals so that His suffering Church is assured!

5. The view of the throne here is a combination of Solomon's temple as mentioned in 2 Chron. 3-5, and a cherubic throne, a sea of bronze, incense, hymns, an altar, stairs, elders (priests) and a heavenly court for judgment as mentioned in Daniel (7:9-14)<sup>28</sup>. It is as if God appears as a spiritual King and Judge, controlling the matters of His people with His mercy and judging those who insist

on not repenting with His justice! Or perhaps He wanted to confirm that congregational spiritual worship (the temple) is connected with His excellent divine providence (as the Judge).

6. After speaking about Jesus Christ as a lion opening the seals of the scroll (5:5), there appears "a Lamb as though it had been slain" (5:6). This is as if the secret of victory lies in Christ's sacrifice and His resurrection, He is the donor of life. He has chosen a population sanctified by His blood (5:9) as a royal priesthood.



## **THE SEVEN SEALS REVELATION 6,7**

1 : A white horse: The Lord goes out conquering and to conquer in His church.

2 : A red horse: The bloodshed of the martyrs (violence).

3 : A black horse: famines (economical troubles) - the appearance of heretics (spiritual famine).

4 : A pale horse: Death due to an epidemic - the appearance of the Antichrist (the death of souls).

5 : The appearance of the martyrs' souls resting under the altar until their fellows complete their struggle. They ask for no personal vengeance but for the verification of divine justice.

6 : Earthquake, the sun becomes black, the moon becomes like blood and the stars fall (the fall of some of mighty men in faith).

7 : When opened (8:1), there was silence in heaven. Everyone was astonished at the Lord's coming to glorify His suffering Church!

### **THE LAMB'S CARE FOR HIS SUFFERING CHURCH**

As the first six seals declare the Church's troubles, the Lamb reveals His care during her struggle on earth as well as His care for her in eternity:

#### **1. His care for the church during her struggle (7:1-8)**

a) Placing four angels at the four corners of the earth so that the wind of temptation does not blow on His people more than they can endure (7:1), and so that their luminous lamp does not go out.

b) Sealing 144,000 of His people [12 x 12 x 1000]

12 = the church of the Old Testament (the tribes).

12 = the church of the New Testament (the Lord's disciples)

1000 = Both churches carry the heavenly nature.

c) The arrangement of the sealed tribes carries a spiritual indication:

\* Judah = witness = life is useless without believing and witnessing to the Savior.

\* Reuben = the son of revelation = Faith should be revealed through practical life.

\* Gad = Perseverance in practical faith.

\* Asher = happy = During our perseverance we go on happily, rejoicing in the Lord.

\* Naphtali = wide = when we rejoice in the Lord, our heart is widened towards Him as well as towards everybody.

\* Manasseh = Forgetting = He whose heart is widened towards everybody forgets (disregards) himself.

\* Simeon = Listener (hearer) = He who forgets himself, hears God's voice.

\* Levi = Loaned = He who hears God's voice counts himself as a stranger.

\* Issactar = Reward = The stranger asks for no earthly reward but for the heavenly one.

\* Zebulun = Dwelling = Our reward is to dwell in heaven.

\* Joseph = Increase = He who sits in heaven, experiences nothing but continual increase (development).

\* Benjamin = Son of the right side = The aim of increasing is to sit on the side of God!

[Sealing us with His Holy Spirit means that we become God's possession, God's soldiers, under His guidance and care<sup>29</sup>].

**2. His Care for the church in her heavenly ease (7:9-17):**

- \* Enjoying white robes = Christ's Holiness.
- \* Palm branches = the life of victory.
- \* Continual praise for the salvation we receive.
- \* Participating with the heavenly choirs in their hymns.
- \* Instead of great tribulations, we shall serve the Lord in His heavenly temple.
- \* Comfort, satisfaction and wiping away of tears!



## THE SEVEN TRUMPETS REVELATION 8-11

**Trumpet 1:** hail and fire, mingled with blood, are thrown = the warning affects the resources of living.

**Trumpet 2:** a great mountain burning with fire is thrown = a violent leader appears to punish a rebellious population.

**Trumpet 3:** a great star falls = some leaders fall into heresy as Nestorius did.

**Trumpet 4:** a third of the stars darkens = life darkens in the eyes of people.

**Trumpet 5:** devilish thoughts appear (9:1-12) = preparing for the Antichrist. They carry inner bitterness towards him who adopts and spreads them.

**Trumpet 6:** Wars appear (9:13) at a specific hour, a battle arises at the river Euphrates, the place of the lost Paradise. It is a **decisive battle:** When it is time for the Antichrist to be doomed and for Jesus Christ to come, the battle becomes so severe, and we see the following:

a) A great mighty angel appears, roaring like a lion, and the seven thunders respond to him (10:1-4). Some people believe that this refers to Jesus Christ who protects His people from the Antichrist whether they are on land or at sea.

b) St. John did not write what the thunders uttered, perhaps because it is extremely grievous and he was afraid that the believers would despair.

c) The angel swore (10:5-7), that the days are about to end.

d) St. John swallowed the book and found it sweet while in his mouth because he tasted God's work through the two loyal witnesses [Revelation 11], and found it bitter in his stomach because it tells of an extremely bitter period.

e) Counting the believers (11:1-2), they are preserved and known by the Lord.

f) Sending the two prophet witnesses (11:2-14): They are peace-makers, witnesses to the light, and jealous. They perform miracles and die as martyrs, then rise, and God raises them to heaven. They work together without distinction among them.

**Trumpet 7:** After Enoch and Elijah are raised, God's coming for judgment is announced and eternal happiness is verified (11:15-18).



## **THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN REVELATION 12-14**

This section is considered the core of Revelation; because in it war is clearly declared between the defiled trinity (the dragon, the beast out of the sea and the beast out of the earth) and Jesus Christ, symbolized in His church. In spite of the bitterness and severity of the war the Church, "the woman clothed with the Sun" remains preserved in her Groom's hand.

1. **The dragon resists the church:** The woman clothed with the Sun is the Church, who is lit by the Sun of Righteousness. The moon under her feet is the group of saints who, although are physically dead, are luminous like the moon. The twelve stars around her head are the Lord's disciples. She gives birth to faith in Christ and forms this faith in the lives of many people.

This woman is also Saint Mary who gave birth to Jesus Christ. She is also a symbol of each believing soul, she who is serious in her worship and her testimony to Christ so that He may take residence in many souls.

The dragon resists the Church, wanting to devour the child, i.e. wanting to destroy faith in Jesus Christ.

This dragon is fiery red because he is a murderer of people (John 8:44). He has 7 heads i.e. is continuously thinking of fighting. He has 10 horns, i.e. many authorities will submit to him and work for his kingdom. His tail draws a third of the stars of heaven; similarly the Antichrist will mislead a third of the believers. Perhaps here this refers to the angels who were deceived by Satan, and this shows how dangerous he is! He destroyed angels and wants to destroy faith in Jesus Christ in the life of the whole church.

Heaven does not stand silently watching the war of the Anti-Christ, where Satan acts, but the Archangel and his angels fight Satan and his demons and throw them out of heaven. They shall

have no right to accuse the believers before God. This is how the heavenly creatures participate with the Lord, the Savior, in His love for humanity.

Let us sing happily for there is no place for Satan and his demons in our hearts as long as hearts are heaven. Woe to those who made their hearts dust and earth, to which the devil is cast!

The woman was given two wings of a great eagle to fly into the wilderness where God shall support her three times and a half [14], i.e. during the time of the Antichrist. The two wings are the two prophet witnesses who are sent to her by the Lord, or they are faith and love for each believer, or loving God and loving our neighbour, or eagerness for heavenly things and indifference towards temporal things.

The serpent spewed a flood out of his mouth to drown the woman; this flood is the blasphemy coming out of the mouth of the Antichrist.

**2. The appearance of the beast out of the sea** (13:1-10): Satan is incarnated in the Antichrist (Dan. 12:11; Matt. 24:15; 2 Thess. 2:3). The dragon tries to simulate the Father who sent the Son. The beast also tries to seize the glory and dignity of Jesus Christ. This beast shall mostly have temporal political authority, depriving those who do not carry his mark or their forehead or their right hands of dealing or practicing any daily work, or buying or selling etc. The crown of this beast is blasphemy and descriptions of him are metaphors showing his severe hostility towards and violence against the truth and the Church. He is a deceiver, and appears as though he has been wounded [3], similar to how Christ was wounded for our sake. He forces people to worship the Dragon and worship him. Similar to how Christ came asking for worshipers in spirit and truth.

**3. The appearance of the beast out of the earth** (13:11-13): i.e. the false prophet who precedes the Antichrist or accompa-

nies him. His work is to encourage people to worship the beast coming out of the sea, using the signs to mislead them, and to carry the mark of the beast on their right hands or their foreheads. It is as if he simulates the Holy Spirit who encourages Christ's faith and gives Christ's mark.

The number of the beast is 666 and it is the number of the Greek statement that means: "I deny."

### **BLISS IN HEAVEN [14]**

The defiled trinity opposes the Lord, His Christ and His Holy Spirit through the striving Church. However, God's plan for salvation is fulfilled inspite of the severe opposition:

1. By the appearance of the Lamb surrounded by 144,000 pure people with the work of the Father on their faces (14:1-5), because they refused the mark of the beast.

2. By the appearance of three angels (14:6-13), announcing that the hour of judgment has come and announcing the fall of Babylon together with all who worshipped the beast and carried his mark.

3. The appearance of Jesus Christ as a King and a reaper with a sickle amidst the cries of the angels: "Trust your sickle to reap" 14:14-20. The angels desire to enjoy the Lord's great day and to see the victorious glorious church of Christ.

## THE SEVEN BOWLS REVELATION 15, 16

In this section, "pouring out the seven bowls of the wrath of God." God announces His wrath to the obstinate humanity, especially those of the days of the Antichrist. This penalty proceeds from a loving God towards cruel human hearts. It aims for man's repentance, so He gradually increases the severity but does not pour it all at the one time.

Chapter 15 reveals two visions assuring the believers of God's love for them during His punishment of the evil ones.

### TWO PRELIMINARY VISIONS

1. The glorified church in heaven (15:1-4): Those who defeated the beast sing, with harps of love, the song of the Lamb and the song of Moses.

2. The source of the seven bowls (15:5-8): Out of the heavenly temple came seven angels, carrying seven plagues. The place which makes the believers' hearts happy is the same place from which proceeds the severe penalties for the obstinate ones.

3. Revelation is the book of Exodus to eternity. So the bowls here correspond, to some extent, to the plagues that happened to Pharaoh and his people so that the believers could rush to the promised land.

**Bowl 1 = plague 6 = Sores (16:2) = Showing the foolishness of the thoughts of the Antichrist.**

**Bowl 2 = plague 1 = The sea became blood (16:3) = The world (the sea) becomes full of murdered people.**

**Bowl 3 = plague 5 = Rivers became blood (16:4) = The sources of life turns into sources of death.**

**Bowl 4 = plague 9 = The sun scorches people (16:8) = The Antichrist becomes like a destructive sun.**

**Bowl 5 = plague 2** = Darkness on the kingdom of the beast (16:10) = Spiritual darkness and loss of insight.

**Bowl 6 = plague 7** = Dryness of river Euphrates (16:12) = The collapse of the stubborn Babylon, the capital of the beast's kingdom.

**Bowl 7 = plague 7** = Affects the air (16:17) then noises, thunder, lightning and an earthquake happen. These are signs related to the Lord's coming on the last day when there is no longer a chance to repent.



## THE FALL OF BABYLON AND VICTORY OF HEAVEN REVELATION 17, 18

Babylon is a symbol of disobedience and opposition towards God, thus some people believe that Babylon is the civil capital of the kingdom of the Antichrist. She is:

Characterized by corruption, "the mother of harlots."

Violent, she sits as a crowned queen on a murderous beast.

Sitting on many waters, many populations submit to her authority.

Adorned as a bride for the Dragon and the Beast.

Insolent, writing on her forehead: "Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth" (17:5).

Heaven declares her fall under the curse many times [18], and asks the believers to avoid her (18:4-8), whereas she is lamented by the kings of the earth, who submitted to her and shared in her corruption (18:9-10), and the merchants of the earth, who temporarily benefited from her trade (18:11-16), as well as the middlemen (18:17-20).

Heaven confirms her fall (18:12-24): [Some people believe that Rev. 17 talks about the fall of the ecclesiastical Babylon while Rev. 18 talks about the fall of the commercial or civil Babylon.]

1. The removal of people of amusement.
2. Her loss of craftsmen.
3. Her loss of even the essential things needed for life: "the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore" 22.
4. Total darkness: "the light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore."
5. Cessation of happiness and childbirth.

## THE ETERNAL VICTORY OF HEAVEN [19].

After announcing the fall of Babylon and her lamentation, he presents heaven's **congregational** song of victory.

1. With a congregational spirit, everyone sings the hymn "Alleluia" which is repeated four times, sung by the great multitude in heaven [1], with the twenty-four priests and the four living creatures [4].

2. The secret of joy of the heavenly and earthly creatures is that the time of the eternal marriage has come [7], which was frequently anticipated by the psalmist (Ps. 45), and the prophets (Isa. 54:4; Ezek. 16:7-14; Hos. 2:16). Besides it was spoken about by St. John the Baptist (John 3:29), and even the Groom Himself (Matt. 9:15; 22:2-10), as well as His Apostles (2 Cor. 11:2).

4. The bride's adornment is God's righteousness [8], and His splendor (Ezek. 16:14).

5. The Bridegroom is a King [6], a warrior [11], and a conqueror [15]... He is King of kings and Lord of lord's [16].

6. On the other hand, instead of the eternal marriage supper, we find a dirty supper for ravenous birds prepared from the flesh of kings, of captains, of mighty men, of horses, of free men and of slaves who worshipped the beast [17,18].

7. The view is concluded by an eternal doom for the beast and for the false prophet in the lake of fire [19,21].



## **GLORY OF THE STRIVING CHURCH REVELATION 20**

The book is concluded by announcing the glory of the church during her struggle [20], then the glory of the heavenly church in heavenly Jerusalem. The former reigns for a thousand years and the latter reigns for eternity.

### **THE MILLENNIUM**

Several western people estimate the glory of the Church during her struggle as a thousand-year reign (millennium) when Jesus Christ rules over His church on earth. They are quick to interpret the whole book symbolically but they interpret this chapter literally, why?!

1. Binding the devil for a thousand years was verified by the Cross. So the true believer understands that: by the Cross, Jesus Christ disarmed principalities and powers and made a public spectacle to them (Col 2:14,15). Similarly St. Anthony said to the devil: "Christ has truly come and has weakened you, flung you and denuded you," and the Lord Christ says: "The ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11).

2. Jesus Christ rules for a thousand years i.e. He shall rule spiritually.

3. The millennium of Christ is called "the first resurrection," because it is when good believers rise from the death of sin, consequently the second death has no power over them but they anticipate the second resurrection when the body will also rise after its death with the resurrection soul in Christ. This is what the Apostle confirms by saying: "raised us up together" (Eph. 2:4-6).

4. John the Apostle speaks about souls that reign with Christ (20:4), and not about man as a whole.

5. We never read about any resurrection in the Bible except for the General Resurrection for judgment.

6. How could the saints return to the earth to reign with Christ after enjoying the sweetness of Paradise, especially if the Lord Jesus Christ assured Pontius Pilate that His kingdom is not from this world?!

7. What is the fate of those who are born during the millennium in complete comfort? How would they be redeemed without going through the narrow way and participating in Christ's pain and crucifixion?

**The release of the devil at the end of time [7-10]**

He is released in the days of the Antichrist to work and as the Lord Christ says: "to deceive, if possible, even the elect." He shall stir up a universal war by name of "Gog and Magog." These may be tribes or perhaps all the violent opposers of the truth who accept the Antichrist and work for him.

The matter ends with the general judgment [11-15], when the Antichrist and all his followers are eternally doomed.



## **THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM REVELATION 21,22**

The Holy Bible had to be concluded by speaking about our eternal destiny, the city of heavenly Jerusalem prepared by the Savior for us. As Moses saw the Promised Land from above the summits of the mountains of Moab, similarly God shows us the new Canaan, our eternal dwelling, so that we can get out of Pharaoh's bondage and go to the heavenly Promised Land.

1. **A new Church** (21:1-8) "I saw a new heaven and a new earth... the Holy City, New Jerusalem" [1,2]. Then He who sat on the throne said: "Behold, I make all things new" [5]. The newness here lies in our inability to attain or describe or expect what's in it, for it is new and has never occurred to the thought of man.

2. **A temple and a marriage at the same time.** It is the tabernacle of God with man, a matrimonial union between Jesus Christ and His Church [9].

3. **The group of conquering believers** [7]. They inherit the Lord being their share and they His share. He will be their God and they His children.

4. **Holy Church** [2]. There shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie [27].

5. **Peace-filled church**, where God shall wipe away every tear. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain (21:4), there shall be no more curse (22:3).

6. **God is its great high wall** (Zech. 2:5), and He is its light.

7. **It has three gates** in all directions [12,13]. No one can enter it except through belief in the Holy Trinity. Each gate is one pearl of great price. We sell everything to acquire it.

8. **A luminous City** (22:3) which does not know darkness and which no night comes into it because the Sun of Righteousness shines in it.

The book is concluded by the bride and Groom communing together, where the Spirit and the bride say: "Come" and the Groom answers: "Surely I am coming quickly."

- 
1. *Merrill F. Unger: Unger's survey of the Bible, 1987, P. 402.*
  2. *Fr. T. Y. Malaty: Revelation, Alexandria, 1988, p. 5 (in Arabic).*
  3. *Cf. St. Jerome: Epistle 108.*
  4. *Dar el Mashrek, Beirut: Revelation of St. John, 1988, p 19.*
  5. *Fr. Malaty, p. 6,7; Unger's survey... p. 403-404; Donald Guthrie: New Testament Introduction, 1975, p. 931 ff., N.B. Stone house: Apocalypse in the Ancient church, 1920.*
  6. *Compare: Hermas' vision 2:4 with Rev. 12:1 etc.; Hermas' vision 9:6-10 with Rev. 13; Hermes' vision 4:1 with Rev. 9:3; Hermes' vision 8:2,1,3 with Rev. 6:11 etc..*
  7. *Dial. 81*
  8. *Eusebius: H.E 4:26.*
  9. *Adv. Marcion 3:14.*
  10. *Paedagogius 2:119; Quis dives 42; strom. 4:106; 107.*
  11. *In Johann 5:3.*
  12. *Adv. Haer. 4:4:2; 4:17:6; 4:16:16; 4:21:3; 5:28:2; 5:34:2.*
  13. *St. Clement of Alex. in his book "Who is the rich man who is saved?" referred to his banishing in Patmos island. Origen also referred to this in interpreting Matt. 2:22.*
  14. *In Roman days, this island was the exile of criminals and Christians who refused idolatry.*
  15. *Eusebius 3:18.*
  16. *There are some inscriptions of his interpretation in the monastery "El-Soryan."*
  17. *The A. N. group of fathers published it in English.*
  18. *Epistle 53.*
  19. *Cf. Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible, N.Y 1967, p. 424.*

20. *Boyd's Bible Handbook*, 1983, p. 674; *Unger's Survey of the Bible*, 1987, p. 405; *Baker's Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, 1967, p. 424, 425.
21. *Dar el Mashrek Beirut: Revelation to St. John*, p. 11.
22. *The Collegeville Bible commentary*, 1988, p. 1265. 23. *Dar el Mashrek Beirut: Revelation to St. John*, p. 13,14.
24. *Ibid* 13.
25. *Ibid* 14 etc.
26. *A. N. Frs*, vol. 10, p. 314-316.
27. *The Author: Revelation to John the Evangelist, Chapter 1 (in Arabic)*.
28. *The Collegeville comm, Bible*, p. 1277.
29. *For detailed study turn to our book: The Holy Spirit between new birth and continuous renovation*, 31981, p. 62 etc.

## Comprehension and Study Questions

1. Compare the book of Genesis and that of Revelation, being the first Scripture and the last one.
2. Why do Christians enjoy reading this book in days of distress?
3. Make broad basis for the book so as to be able to study it.
4. Compare the characteristics of Jesus Christ of a Groom in the Song of Songs and His characteristics of King and Judge who supports and takes care of His church in Revelation.
5. What are the seven seals [6,7]?
6. Compare God's concern for His Church people in their struggle and His concern about them in their eternal ease [7].
7. What are the scenes of rejoicing that God has offered the church in the midst of troubles.
  - a) Before the seven seals [4,5]?
  - b) After the first six Seals [7]?
  - c) After the seven trumpets [10,11]?
  - d) Before the seven bowls [12,14]?
8. What is the role of angels in the life of the church according to the book of Revelation, especially chapter 12?
9. Speak about the battle of the defiled trinity with the Holy Jesus Christ [12,13].
10. Compare Babylon and Jerusalem in the Holy Bible, especially in the Book of Revelation [17,18,21,22].
11. What are the characteristics of heavenly worship as shown in the book of Revelation?
12. Does our Christ want to reign with His saints on Earth? [20]
13. What are the characteristics of the heavenly Jerusalem? [21,22]
14. How does Jerusalem bear the characteristics of God's altar and bride, simultaneously?

