

CHAPTER 71 : SUPER-POWER ROME

If and when the American superpower and the modern secularist order falls, the question will be: who will take its place? Biblical and empirical evidence suggests it will be the Vatican in a re-energized Rome. Reverend John MacLeod of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland describes the "Growing Vatican Sovereignty", in his review of a brilliant article by a Tory in Britain, whose name is Adrian Hilton. Hilton talks about how the Vatican is seeking to undermine national sovereignties through "regionalisms": the EU, the FTAA, and the African free trade area. The strategy, says Hilton, is to undermine nationalism, and to replace it with "commonality of the religion." The author says the end goal is to make the Pope the "new Caesar." There are many reasons to believe people will fall for it on the ground that any order is better than anarchy. The author points out the extreme differences between English common law and Roman law. Roman law presumes the accused guilty, unless he can prove himself innocent. It also presumes the government agency to be supreme, and to be the delegator of officially recognized rights, which it in turn claims the authority to revoke. Hilton proves that the International Court of Justice claims these prerogatives. Mr. Hilton comments on how Rome considers it "immoral" for the national English Church to encourage patriotism and national sovereignty. Of course, because in so doing, this detracts from what the Vatican considers "due allegiance to the King of Kings--the *Pontifex Maximus*."

America clearly faces competitors that want to take its place, and the Vatican has the resources and experience to do the job, if America falls. It would be the replacement of secularism with Romanism. We read in Revelation 17 about the beast with seven heads (representing the seven hills of Rome) who assumes the superpower status formerly in the hands of the mysterious Babylon of Revelation 17:

"...The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." (Revelation 17:15-18)

This seven-headed beast with ten horns is described in Revelation 17:10-11 as the eighth bestial kingdom in world history:

"And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, [and] the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

This would imply the seventh bestial kingdom, which the seven-headed beast replaced as world superpower, was Revelation 17's mysterious Babylonian whore. (The six

preceding bestial kingdoms in world history are probably ancient Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.) Ominously, Revelation 17:10 portrays the seventh bestial kingdom's reign as world superpower as continuing only "a short space". And even more ominously, it portrays the end of the Babylonian whore's reign as concluding in great violence.

The seven-headed beast which replaces the mysterious Babylonian whore has as his accomplice the Papal False Prophet (see Revelation 19:20). It is quite possible the seven-headed beast, who works with the Papal False Prophet, is the Jesuit Order based in Rome and ruled over by its General, also known as the Black Pope. Or it could be a more fully empowered European Union (EU), which is a re-incarnation of the old Roman empire. Or it could be a future fully empowered United Nations, under the leadership of a Secretary General. In any case, the Roman state that replaces the Babylonian whore is a Papal partnership. This Papal partnership has successfully worked together since the Protestant Reformation to undermine established Protestantism, and replace it with "Babylonian" secularism. It is in fact this seven-headed beast which has carried the Babylonian whore:

"...I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns." (Revelation 17:7)

In our examination of US history in previous chapters, we reviewed the pivotal role played by the Roman Catholic Church (working through such intermediaries as Roman Catholic France and Spain, as well the Church herself) in the formation and political life of the United States. We have also seen in our examination how the United States became the New Rome in world history, so in that sense too has ridden on the back of the Roman beast, setting ancient Rome and Greece as its example. So there is reason to believe the Vatican will replace the United States as the world's next bestial superpower, if the US and the modern secularist order falls.

Having identified the likely superpower successor of the US, we should next ask how the world and the church will fare under Vatican rule. For clues as to what to expect then, we should turn to Revelation chapter 11.

Revelation chapter 11 surely is one of the most curious portions in the book of Revelation. On the one hand, it is part of the account of the sounding of the seven trumpets which begins in Revelation 8:2, and concludes with the sounding of the seventh trumpet as described in Revelation 11:15-19. As I have shown in my book *Let My People Go*, the sounding of the seven trumpets spans a significant stretch of time leading up to and including the Protestant Reformation. Thus, its inclusion in this section of the Apocalyptic account means it is supplying information about the time leading up to and including the Protestant Reformation. Yet on the other hand, Revelation 11 supplies details regarding the days immediately anticipating a restored Protestant Reformation (i.e., "the millennium"), when the beast rules and falls (Revelation 17:17, 19). As the commentator A.J. Faussett notes, in Revelation 11 "we find anticipatory allusions to the subsequent prophecies." Revelation 11 is marked off as special and intended for multiple use by its inclusion in "the little book" (Revelation 10:10). The contents of this "little

book”, which runs from Revelation 11 to 14, have much to say not only about the time leading up to and including the Protestant Reformation, but also about the time leading up to and including the restored Protestant Reformation later in human history.

In books and articles that I have written up to now addressing an interpretation of Revelation (e.g., *Let My People Go, Sabbath Bible Survey Tests and Assignments*, etc.), I have simply addressed how I believe Revelation chapter 11 should be interpreted within the context of the sounding of the seven trumpets. Within that context, I have interpreted the sounding of the seven trumpets as the time from 70 A.D. and leading up to and including the Protestant Reformation, and I have interpreted Revelation 11:1-14 as describing the 1,260 years from 70 A.D. to 1330 A.D. So within the context of that period, the 1260 days referenced in Revelation 11:3 are interpreted according to the year-day principle as 1,260 years. Having covered its interpretation then within the context of the sounding of the seven trumpets, I would like now to focus upon Revelation 11 as also supplying details regarding the time immediately anticipating the millennium when the beast rules and falls (Revelation 17:17, 19).

In terms of supplying details regarding the days immediately anticipating the millennium when the beast rules and falls (Revelation 17:17, 19), Revelation 11 especially focuses upon 1,260 days within that period. These literal 1,260 days are a type of the 1,260 years of Romish oppression the church endured up to the time of the Protestant Reformation; or, rather, the 1,260 years the church endured up to the time of the Protestant Reformation are a type of the 1,260 days of Romish oppression the church must endure in the years preceding the millennium. They compare with the way the 2,300 literal days in which Antiochus Epiphanes oppressed Jerusalem may be a type of 2,300 years in which Satan oppresses the world following the abomination of desolation of 167 B.C. before Christ’s Second Advent. (See chapter seven of my book *Let My People Go* for a fuller discussion of Daniel 8:13-14.) It is also comparable with the 390 days and 40 days which Ezekiel endured hardship, representing 390 years and 40 years in the life of Israel. Of this in Ezekiel 4:5-6 we read: “For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Commenting upon these verses, Matthew Henry writes: “He was ordered to lie upon his side before it, as it were to surround it, representing the Chaldean army lying before it to block it up, to keep the meat from going in and the mouths from going out. He was to lie on his left side 390 *days* (v. 5), about thirteen months; the siege of Jerusalem is computed to last eighteen months (Jer. 52:4-6), but if we deduct from that five months’ interval, when the besiegers withdrew upon the approach of Pharaoh’s army (Jer. 37:5-8), the number of the days of the close siege will be 390. Yet that also had another signification. The 390 days, according to the prophetic dialect, signified 390 years; and, when the prophet lies so many days on his side, he bears the guilt of that iniquity which *the house of Israel*, the ten tribes, had borne 390 years, reckoning from their first apostasy under Jeroboam to the destruction of Jerusalem, which completed the ruin of those small remains of them that had incorporated with Judah. He is then to lie forty days *upon his right side*, and so long to

bear *the iniquity of the house of Judah*, the kingdom of the two tribes, because the measure-filling sins of that people were those which they were guilty of during the last forty years before their captivity, since the thirteenth year of Josiah, when Jeremiah began to prophesy (Jer. 1:1, 2), or, as some reckon it, since the eighteenth, when the book of the law was found and the people renewed their covenant with God.” It is also comparable to the way the 70 years of Israel’s trial in Babylon were a type of the 70 weeks of years of Israel’s trial to the time of Jesus Christ. Thus we read in Daniel 9:2,24: “In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem...Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” And finally it is comparable to how the 40-day trial period of Israel spying Canaan was a type of their 40-year wilderness period. As we read in Numbers 14:34: “After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.”

In many respects the time immediately preceding the millennium serves as an intensified microcosm of the much longer period preceding the Protestant Reformation. In both, a wicked Romish beast rules and oppresses Christ’s true church. And both are followed by a great reformation. If we want to understand the difficulties the church must probably endure and the darkness in the world in a future 1260 day oppression, we must re-collect the conditions during the Middle Ages.

Before Revelation 11 we never read of “the *beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit*” (Revelation 11:7). But we do read of this beast in Revelation 17:7-8: “...I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; *and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” This beast that sits on the city of seven hills (Revelation 17:9) of Rome, with her accompanying false prophet (Revelation 19:20), has according to Revelation 17:7 carried a mysterious “Babylon” for some time. But according to Revelation 17:16, this Romish beast along with many nations destroy the mysterious “Babylon”, that the beast may obtain the full and obvious power (Revelation 17:17). As Anti-Christ, the Romish Beast and False Prophet seek the seat rightfully belonging to Jesus Christ.

As an account of a literal 1,260 day period before the Romish beast and false prophet are overthrown preceding the millennium, Revelation 11’s elements should also be interpreted more literally and less figuratively than the elements are interpreted with reference to the 1,260 years before the Protestant Reformation. Some of these elements of Revelation 11 include: “a thousand two hundred and three-score days”, “two witnesses”, death of two witnesses, resurrection and ascension of two witnesses, and “the

kingdoms of this world” becoming “the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” Let’s consider these elements separately.

We have already addressed the element of the “thousand two hundred and three-score days”. As type, it spans 1,260 years according to the year-day principle of prophetic time interpretation. Again, this is the period between 70 A.D. and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. But as anti-type in describing the period immediately before the millennium, it spans a literal 1,260 days.

Yet during the difficult periods- both before the Protestant Reformation and before the millennium- it seems God will provide “two witnesses” to testify the truth. The "two witnesses are described in this wise:

"These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Revelation 11:4)

This identification of the "two witnesses" clearly hearkens back to Zechariah 4:11-12:

"Then answered I, and said unto him, What [are] these two olive trees upon the right [side] of the candlestick and upon the left [side] thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, What [be these] two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden [oil] out of themselves?"

The two olive trees and candlesticks of Zechariah 4:11-12 refer to Zerubbabel (the governor of the Jewish state) and Joshua (the leader of the Jewish church). In other words, they represent the godly state and its established church in a day when there was only one such godly state in the whole world: Judah. Notice the similarity of description between Zechariah 4:14 and Revelation 11:4:

"Then said he, These [are] the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." (Zechariah 4:14)

"These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Revelation 11:4)

The civil government under Zerubbabel was to protect and defend the established church under Joshua. In fact, Zerubbabel was to see to the re-building of the temple for the church. In other words, the state was to be a nursing mother to the church. And the state and church were to work together for the good of the people of Judah as well as the honor of God. Judah was to be the refuge for the people of God at that time, and Judah was to worship the true God rightly, even though the other nations of the world were amiss.

We noted in our review of the 1,260 year period preceding the Protestant Reformation that the “two witnesses” most likely represent the pre-Reformation Protestant Waldensian state and church. Proto-Protestantism was protected during the 1,260 wilderness years in the Waldensian refuge. Clearly, no two people lived the entire span of 1,260 years, and

so it must be interpreted more figuratively, even as the 1260 years is a figurative rendering of 1260 days. But in the 1260 day wilderness period before the millennium, it may well be that one man is the governor of that state which will prove a refuge for the people of God, while one man is especially notable in the leadership of the established Protestant church in that state (similar to the manner John Calvin led the church in Geneva and Knox led the church in Scotland, even though both had presbyterian church government). So during these difficult days it may be that God will mark out two men, even as Moses and Aaron were marked out in their day, or Zerubbabel and Joshua in their day. But, most importantly, God will provide a refuge in the "wilderness" at a time when the condition in the world as a whole is as follows:

"And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
(Revelation 13:15-17)

The primary correction I would make to A.R. Faussett's observation in the quote above is that THE RECAPITULATION will *not* be "just before Christ's advent", but rather it will be just before the millennium. There are various reasons we know this, but the most obvious one is that the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit (Revelation 11:7, 17:8) does so before the millennium. And once this beast is cast into a lake of fire before the millennium (Revelation 19:20), he is never afterwards released, even though Satan is released for a short season after the millennium (Revelation 20:10). Since THE RECAPITULATION occurs during the beast's reign, it must be situated before the millennium and not immediately before Christ's advent.

At the conclusion of the 1,260 days we read in Revelation 11 how the two witnesses are killed but rise again. Taken more figuratively as a type, this speaks to how the Romish beast persecuted and killed many of God's faithful remnant (especially among the Waldensians) before the Protestant Reformation, but they spiritually rose in power during the Protestant Reformation. Taken as an anti-type, we should probably interpret it more literally. It is quite likely that the Romish Beast will destroy the godly state and church at the end of the 1260-days. Most people in the world will rejoice at the death of the two witnesses in the period before the millennium (Revelation 11:10). But as a great sign to the world, God may well literally raise them from the dead before the people of the earth (Revelation 11:11). This resurrection may be like that of Lazarus, as well as that of various people at the time of Jesus' own crucifixion and resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53). And they may ascend to heaven (Revelation 11:12), as Elijah and Jesus ascended. By this means mankind may know they must repent, which church to join (that of the two witnesses) and that they must remove the beast and false prophet. So the preaching of the gospel will go forth with power. The Jews and then the Gentiles will be converted (Romans 11:25-27). And the beast and false prophet will eventually be removed (Revelation 19:20).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER 71 : SUPER-POWER ROME

This second volume in a two-part series on church history is primarily an edited version of the following works on church history and Biblical interpretation:

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Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Logos Research Systems, Inc.: Oak Harbor, WA, 1997). (see electronic version at <http://www.ccel.org/s/schaff/history/About.htm>)

J. Parnell McCarter, *Sabbath Bible Survey Tests and Assignments* (PHSC: Grand Rapids, MI, 2003). (see electronic version at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>)

J. Parnell McCarter, *Let My People Go* (PHSC: Grand Rapids, MI, 2003). (see electronic version at <http://www.puritans.net/curriculum/>)

The on-line resources of Historicism Research Foundation at <http://www.historicism.net/> also proved invaluable for my understanding of Biblical prophecy. Biblical prophecy concerning Christian church history, especially as revealed in the book of Revelation, serves as the foundation upon which all church histories should be based.