

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By

Sydney Watson

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

A GATHERING UP

AT this stage it seems well to the writer to gather together in a brief - but necessarily very fragmentary fashion - some of the chief events of the second half of Antichrist's reign, and those immediately preceding the millennial reign of CHRIST. The object of this little volume, as well as its predecessor - "*In the Twinkling of an Eye*" - being chiefly to incite in the readers of the two books, a desire to look into the wonders of the After Events," we can only touch upon these things in the most disjointed fashion, many events, from necessity of space, being untouched altogether.

The two scenes recorded in previous chapters - the torture and beheading of Isaac Wolferstein and his beautiful fiancée, Miriam Cohen, and the beheading of three at St. Paul's - were duplicated many thousands of times, every town and city of the wide world had its own hideous tale of torturing and of death.

The effect upon the bulk of the people was to deepen "**the strong delusion**," as to Antichrist, under which they laboured, so that they fed upon "**The Lie**," and became abject slaves in their wills and worship of the "**Man of Sin**."

The effect of the persecution and martyrdoms upon most of the believers - kingdom believers - was to stiffen their faith, and to confirm their hope in the near Coming of CHRIST, to take vengeance upon his foes and deliver his people.

The licentiousness and blasphemy of the times was as a veritable atmosphere abroad, so that, affected by it, the love of the many towards GOD waxed colder and colder, until they flung off the last semblance of allegiance to Him, in thought, word, or deed, and wholly given up to "**The Lie**," they ripened rapidly for Judgment.

But amid the almost universal declension, there was ever the remnant - Jew and Gentile - who "**endured, seeing the invisible**," and strengthening their souls in the special tribulation promise "**He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved!**"

And these endurers shall be GOD's witnesses unto all nations. No suffering, privation, no spending or being spent will be counted too much by these tribulation-time witnesses; they will live only to serve GOD in witnessing.

The chief source of temptation and danger to the "Kingdom Believers" will be from the ever multiplying "False Christs." Each new imposter parading some new notion, but each in turn, either publicly slain by order of the "False Prophet," or mysteriously disappearing. The only likeness of imposture in them all, existed in their claim to be the Saviour who should deliver from the awful days of tribulation which the would-be godly were passing through.

A similar thing preceded the first advent of our Lord, only then, the sole trust of these imposters was in their own statements; but before the coming of CHRIST against the earth, when the cry will often be "**Lo here is Christ,**" and "**Lo there is Christ,**" these imposters will buttress their claims with the exhibition of supernatural powers.

The "remnant" of faithful Jews which we saw in our last chapter, escaping to the "wilderness," will be only a remnant. The main body of the Jews of the world will have concentrated themselves in Jerusalem, its neighborhood, and parts of Palestine left to them after the partition of the land by Antichrist. Daniel 11:9.

It would seem as though the "remnant," meanwhile learn of GOD so intimately that they become the Evangelizers of the world, preaching the Gospel of the coming kingdom of CHRIST. Revelation 14:6, 7. Matthew 24:14.

Among those Jews who were unable to escape with the "remnant," there are also others who are loyal to GOD, who would not worship the Beast or his image, many of whom are betrayed by their bigoted Jewish relatives. All these, alike, are delivered up to Antichrist and to his creatures, to be tortured and to be killed.

"Then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." Matthew 24:21, 22. Daniel 12:1. Jeremiah 30:7, 11, 14, 15. Zechariah 13:8, 9.

May it not well be that the imprecatory Psalms, otherwise so difficult to understand, in the virulence of their desires for vengeance, etc., are prophetic of these days of persecution and tribulation? As well, too, must be many of the Prayers of the Psalms, etc. Psalm 25:2. Psalm 74. Psalm 111. Psalm 79. Isaiah 35:3, 4. Isaiah 51:12-15. Micah 7:8, 9. Luke 18:7, 8.

The almost universal return of the Jew to his own land, with all the aims of Zionism, and other kindred movements among the Hebrew people today is, curiously enough, not marked by the religious spirit, but purely national. The comparatively few pious souls (certainly not more than a quarter of a million, if that) who built the Temple, and afterwards flee into the "wilderness," or are beheaded rather than worship the Beast, or who, unable to get away in time, are beheaded for their loyalty to GOD, are now left out of future count in the history of the final fate of Jerusalem.

The city will probably be enormously enlarged and will come to embrace miles of suburbs, as London has absorbed towns as far distant, almost, as Croydon, in Surrey.

In the latter years of the great Tribulation there will appear to be a general rising of the nations against Jerusalem - against the Jews. It may well be, that all the powers will have become so indebted, financially, to the Jews, that there shall be an universal outbreak of Anti-Semitism, the real cause of the outbreak being inability on the part of the nations to pay their debts, when they shall make common cause against the Jew, hoping thus to clear off their debts, by the destruction of their creditors.

Preparatory to this great and final struggle, the great eastern boundary river, the Euphrates, will be dried up. The literal accomplishment of this great physical wonder, is an absolute necessity, if the vast hordes of the Eastern armies are to be marched to Jerusalem. Even as those days of the end draw nearer and nearer GOD's people of that time will suffer more and yet more.

"Happy the dead who in the Lord do die from henceforth. Yea (saith the Spirit) that they may rest from their toils, for their works do follow with them. Ceased only that form of service which brings weariness, and have found perfect happiness in the ability to continue service without weariness." - ROTHERHAM.

While this is true of all the saints of all the ages, it is specifically true of those who, in The Great Tribulation, shall lay down their lives for GOD in faithful, enduring obedience.

And now the end draws ever more rapidly near. North, East, South and West of Palestine the armies of allies against Jerusalem close in upon her. Had the Jewish race been as loyally devoted to their GOD and His Word as they had been to Antichrist the Deceiver, and his vile, promulgated laws, they would have, inevitably, recognized Psalms 83:3, 4, as a prophecy of this time and the approach of their foes: "**They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, 'Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.'**"

But GOD has not forgotten His promises to Israel, and the time of her worst visitation, is to be His opportunity:

"Wait ye upon Me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy." Zephaniah 3:8. **"Now also many nations are gathered against thee (Zion), but they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor."** Micah 4:11, 12. **"In that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will Plead with them there for My people and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land."** Joel 3:1, 2, 9-12, 14. Zechariah 14:1, 2. Zechariah 12:2, 3. Psalm 68:1-3. Joel 2:32.

Against the gathered multitudes of the armed nations - every devilish instrument of war then known, being brought to bear against the doomed city, doomed as the allies consider it - the Jews can bring but a comparatively feeble resistance. With seeming ease, Jerusalem would appear to be taken. **"The city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, AND THE RESIDUE OF THE PEOPLE SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF FROM THE CITY."** Zechariah 14:2.

With great spoil, full of unholy rejoicing, their souls steeped in pride, their hands stained with blood, the victorious armies march to the great plain of Esdraelon to hold a mighty revel, and to prepare for any future event.

* * * *

"How oft after anxious provisions of man
Flashes in with a silence GOD's unforeseen plan!"

"GOD is a tower without a stair
And His perfection loves despair."

The residue of the people of Jerusalem, who were left in the city on the triumphant departure of the allies of Hell, were utterly broken in spirit. Their discomfited hearts will be being prepared for some word or sin. Will they then begin to see their national, as well as their individual folly? Who can say for certain? But the near-to-come events with them, would almost seem to point to something like this. Certainly, GOD's unforeseen plan was about to flash in upon their despairing condition.

The world's peoples were "fully ripe" for the Judgment, and the "sharp sickle" of Judgment was now waiting to fall into the earth.

First come "signs," every sign a warning, yet the peoples, the enemies of CHRIST, will not hear nor see. **"Immediately after the Tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."** Matthew 24:29. Isaiah 13:9-10-13. Joel 2:30, 31. Joel 3:15. Revelation 6:12-14.

"And then" (after the Tribulation, and after these physical signs and disturbances) **"shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven."** Matthew 24:30.

What will this sign be? We cannot actually say. The only Scriptural hint we know of is our Lord's own word that the Manifestation of His Presence will be **"as the lightning which flashes from the one end of heaven to the other."**

It may be that this will occur while men are horrified with the unnatural darkness, and that the "sign" will be a sudden and momentary cleaving of the black heavens, so that the glory of the Lord will break through, and He will, for an instant, be revealed in close proximity to earth. Will it be thus that the Jew will receive his sign from heaven?

"Then shall all the tribes of the land mourn," points to the connection of this verse with Zechariah's prophecy:

"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplications: and they shall look upon ME Whom they have Pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." Zechariah 12:10.

“And again, the manner in which Zechariah's prophecy is quoted in the Apocalypse may, perhaps, afford some slight argument in favour of the explanation of the sign suggested above, namely, that it is CHRIST Himself seen for a moment through a rift in the clouds, for John says, **'Behold He cometh with the cloud; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which Pierced Him: and all the TRIBES OF THE LAND shall mourn because of Him.'**

"Thus the Jews, although they may not as yet understand all, will at least know that it was the Messenger of The Lord whom they slew, and that in so doing they pierced Himself. And they will mourn with no feigned lamentation, but as one mourns for his first-born, nay, his only son. All their pride will have broken down; for the word will then have been fulfilled, **'I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of My holy mountain, I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.'** Zephaniah 3:11, 12.

"Then will God look down upon the stiff-necked and rebellious people, whom long centuries of chastisement could not subdue, and lo! a remnant, broken-hearted and contrite, humbly confessing that **'all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags, that they are all fading as a leaf, and that their iniquities, like the wind, have carried them away.'** They long for the personal interposition of GOD their Father, and cry, **'Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down!'**

They are ready at last, for their Messiah. CHRIST has become precious to them: there is no need that He, the true Joseph, should longer refrain Himself. He had indeed said, **'Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."'**

"But that word withholds Him no longer; for now their eyes are waiting for the Lord their GOD, until that He have mercy upon them: their souls are watching for Him more than they that watch for the morning." – Pember's *"Great Prophecies."*

Then shall He suddenly come, **"His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to My valley, when He shall touch the valley of the mountain to the place He separated."** Zechariah 14:4, 5.

In this great valley of His special making it is possible, probable, that our Lord will shelter His people. while He is destroying the hordes of Antichrist.

It is of this that Isaiah speaks: "**Come My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, UNTIL THE INDIGNATION BE OVER PAST. For behold the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.**" And when that awful judgment shall be over - "**which shall burn as an oven,**" they shall come out of their shelter "**skipping as calves of the stall.**" A wondrous figure of the frolicsome calves coming out of the darkness of their stalls into the glorious light, and into the full freshness of the luscious meadows.

All this time Antichrist and his warrior hosts are camped in the plain of Esdraelon, preparing for a fresh attack that is to utterly demolish the Jews as a nation.

To Apleon, The Antichrist, word comes of the appearance of CHRIST, and that He is espousing the cause of Israel.

Satan, and his colleagues, self-blinded, suppose that they can war with and overcome even CHRIST and His hosts of saints; and, determined to do this: "**the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against His Anointed.**" Psalm 2:2.

"**Armageddon**" – "**the valley of Megidda**"; "**The Valley of Jehoshaphat**;" "**Bozrah**," all these names are mentioned as the scene of the great final conflict between Antichrist and CHRIST, between the armies of the earth, and the translated Saints of GOD who return with CHRIST.

It is probable that the line of the encamped hosts of Antichrist will extend from Bozrah, on the southeast, to Megidda, on the North-west. Is it we wonder, merely a coincidence that this should measure exactly 1,600 Stadia, the actual distance named in Revelation 14:16, as that over which the blood of the judgment wine-press flowed.

Surely Habakkuk's wonderful prophetic vision covered this great battle-field. "**God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.**" The march of GOD's indignation would seem to be from Sinai, through Idumea, past Jerusalem, and on to the mighty field of Esdraelon's plain.

Oh, what a scene it will be! The glory, the judgment! our CHRIST on His White Horse; His eyes a flame of fire; on his head many crowns (diamens,) vested and girded with his title "**KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!**" his bride is with Him - for the "**Marriage of the Lamb**" has taken place; the bride is every believer who has been gathered out of the world by the Spirit. You, who read this, he who writes this, if so be we are in CHRIST, "**looking for, and hastening the coming of our Lord,**" yes, we shall be there, we shall be His army.

"**On white horses,**" whether literal horses or not does not matter, the term implies force, power, swift movement, even triumph. CHRIST's army will be a cavalry force. Like our Lord we shall wear no armour, "**clothed in fine linen, white, pure,**" - we shall be immortal, "**no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper.**"

Every enemy, every foe of CHRIST will be there. The earth-armies, the dwellers of the earth, Demon-possessed, will be blinded, deluded by the lie of the Antichrist, and "**The False Prophet.**"

There is no madness or delusion into which the most rational of men will not run when they are demon-possessed.

"Outside the city, the battle takes place, for the city has become Holy by the recent presence of CHRIST. Not even a private soldier of Antichrist's hosts is inside the city, for, it may well be, that CHRIST has already appropriated it.

"Outside the city, the wine-press is trodden!" wonderful figure! "Fully ripe," is said to be the condition of the **"grapes of the vine of the earth."** What grape, more so a ripe grape, can stand the weight of a man as his foot crushes down upon it? And the iron heel of **"The Lion of Judah,"** crushes out the life of these gathered hell-led, hell-inspired hosts, **"And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs [stadia]."** A river of blood 160 miles in length, and reaching to the horses' bits in depth! Even if it be taken as a figure only, the figure is never so great as the fact it prefigures! **"The land shall be drunk with blood, and its dust made fat with fatness, for it is the day of The Lord's vengeance, the year of recompenses for the controversy against Zion."** Isaiah 34:7, 8.

As a picture of the absolute triumph of GOD, on this occasion, the Psalmist uses the most awful figure of any in the Bible - THE LAUGHTER OF GOD! **"He that sitteth in the Heavens SHALL LAUGH: the Lord shall have them in derision."** Psalm 2:4. **"God is not mocked!"**

"And the Beast (Antichrist) was taken." The ringleader is first taken, not slain with the others. Taken alive, he is cast into the Lake of Fire. The confidence of the mighty host of Hell-inspired warrior hosts, had been **"Who is like unto the Beast! Who can war with him?"** But they see him taken, taken alive, taken without being able to lift a finger against his captors. Tophet had been prepared for him, and into that awful abyss he sinks to rise no more.

"And with him the False Prophet who wrought the miracles in his presence." Colleagues in evil on earth, the two are hurled into the same Lake of Fire.

"And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, (The Conquering CHRIST), which sword proceeded out of His mouth." He speaks and it is done.

"And an angel standing in the sun," has been placed there ready to call forth the final actors on this hideous battle-field, **"cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the great supper of the great God, That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."** Revelation 19.

At the great and terrible conflict there are lightnings and thunders of unheard of force and might. **"The Lord of Hosts,"** says Isaiah 29:6, **"shall visit with thunder, with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."**

All through GOD's judgments, during the seven years of Antichrist, aerial convulsions will be continual. One reason for this, during the later events will doubtless be to overwhelm and destroy the myriad aerial engines of war used by the senselessly deluded attacking hosts arrayed against Jerusalem and against CHRIST and His Saints.

"And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great." Revelation 16:18.

Jerusalem will be split into three parts, as a result of this earthquake. But the effect upon the nations is utter ruin, - **"the cities of the nations fell."** London, New York, Paris, Berlin, Chicago, every other city, collapses like a rent balloon, and the opened earth swallows up palaces and cots, men and women, and what the overwhelming and the falling shall not slay, shall perish in the awful conflagrations produced.

"And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of His wrath." Babylon, the great, the colossal city of mighty splendor, re-built, as we saw earlier in this book, will have become exclusively a commercial city. All the vice and sin and voluptuousness of all the vilest cities of the whole world, through all the ages, gathered up into one whole foulness, would be as virtue compared with the foulness and vice and voluptuousness of the Great Babylon.

"Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen." May we gather from the twice-repeated word **"Fallen,"** that the collapse comprises the two things **"Babylon, mystery!"** - the foul religious system, the false worship, - and also Babylon the city?

GOD does not settle His accounts every Saturday night as petty tradesmen do. Babylon had been garnering judgment for herself, from the beginning. And the cry of doom goes out against her, from Heaven.

"Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow, Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her."

And never more after this shall the foul city arise. Awful convulsions of the earth will take place all over the world. The whole configuration of the earth shall be changed. Mountains and islands, well known before, will disappear.

With all the other aerial and other convulsions of nature, a hailstorm, covering an enormous area, will be one of the horrors, when, putting the weight of the stones at the lowest average, they will probably be quite a hundred-weight each.

And so event will follow event in such rapid succession as to puzzle the writer how to place them wholly in consecutive order. Satan will be taken and bound for a thousand years.

The living nations will have been judged as regards their treatment of the Jews, and as to their acceptance of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

On, on, on, event upon event, until the glorious millennial reign of CHRIST shall be ushered in.

But before anything of which we have written in these pages can come to pass, our precious, loving Lord must come into the air to take up His own people to Himself. For this every true Christian should be looking, waiting, watching, - and working while they wait, for He has said "**Occupy till I come.**"

"So I am watching quietly
Every day,
Whenever the sun shines brightly
I rise and say,-
"Surely it is the shining of His face,"
And look unto the gates of His high place
Beyond the sea,
For I know He is coming shortly
To summon me.
And when a shadow falls across the window
Of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door, and ask
If He is come?
And the Angel answers sweetly
In my home,-
"Only a few more shadows,
And He will come."
"Even so, Lord JESUS!
Come! Come quickly!"

"FINIS?" No! WAITING!"

~ end of book ~

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