

A Brief Commentary on The Book of Revelation



William A. Hanna, Ph.D.
Deacon: St. Mary & St. Abraam Coptic Orthodox Church
1843 Ross Ave.
St. Louis, Missouri 63146
July, 1994

A Brief Commentary on The Book of Revelation

Introduction:

A Serious student of the Bible has to get interested in the book of Revelation. It is the last Book of the New Testament. A majority of Biblical Scholars attribute the writing of this book to John Ibn Zebedee (Son of Zebedee), but some disagree. It must have been written when John was exiled on the Island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea: " I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was in the isle called Patmos ... " (REV 1: 9:10).

It describes a vision its writer had of Jesus Christ in his glory. In the vision, John sees the Glory of the Lord: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned I saw seven golden candlesticks. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man clothed with a garment down to the foot and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes as flame of fire. And his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength .. " (REV 1:12-16)

John Ibn Zebedee is also referred to as John the Divine, and John the Beloved, the Son of Thunder (Bonargess). Each name is for a reason and meaning:

He was called Ibn Zebedee (Son of Zebedee) because Zebedee was John's Father. Zebedee means death in Hebrew. Zebedee was extremely rich, but according to Jewish customs, he had to have a profession. He choose to be a fisherman and taught that trade to his two sons James and John. The Zebedee's were business partners to Simon Peter and Andrew his brother. John and his older brother James were both disciples of John the Baptist and later became disciples of Jesus Christ. John's mother Salome was a cousin of Mary, the mother of our Lord.

He was called the Divine, because he wrote the fourth Gospel, the Gospel according to St. John, around 95 AD. His Gospel emphasized the divinity of our Lord. He skipped the story of his Birth, because it was covered by the other three Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). He was alarmed by some heretic movements which started already in the years after Jesus was glorified.

He was called the beloved because he was favored by Jesus on more than one occasion: Jesus asked John to accompany him when he raised the Daughter of Jairus from the Dead! He also was with Jesus when the Transfiguration took place. He also was with Jesus in the Garden of Gassemani, at his trial, under the cross, and Jesus entrusted him with his mother: "Woman this is your Son, Man this is your mother"

He was called Bonargess (the Son of Thunder), because he and his brother were faithful, zealous followers of John the Baptist, and when they followed Jesus they were very zealous and protective of their Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Their mother once asked if they can sit on his right and left hand in Paradise. Jesus then asked them if they could carry his cross and bear his afflictions, and they said yes. Jesus answered that they will carry his cross and bear his afflictions but sitting on his right and left hand is not his to give (Matt 20:20-23). They did bear the cross with courage and great distinction (James was martyred following the martyrdom of Stephen, the archdeacon in Jerusalem, and John suffered many tribulations in Jerusalem and in Asia as history reports). At the time of this revelation John was in exile on the Island of Patmos. They were not promised the places of honor, to teach us that we all can have the place of honor with Jesus, but they did not walk away!

John lived longer than most disciples. He wrote the Gospel according to St. John around 95 AD. He also wrote three epistles to the churches in Asia Minor, and was exiled to Patmos by the Emperor, Justin. On that Island he had this beautiful revelation which depicts the signs of the times from Jesus' Glory to his Second Coming to show unto his servants (John and his fellow Christians) things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: "The REVELATION of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him " (REV 1:1)

The first chapter gives the background of the events leading to this revelation. It also assures John of who Jesus is: The Alpha and Omega (REV 1:8), The First and Last (REV 1: 17), He that Liveth and was Dead (REV 1: 18), Alive forever more (REV 1: 18), Has the Keys of Hell and of Death (REV 1:19), The one that can explain the mystery of the seven stars (angels/bishops of seven churches) (REV 1:20), and the seven candlesticks (churches) (REV 1:20)

The second and third chapter of Revelations are messages to the angels (Bishops/heads) of the seven churches as follows:

1. The Bishop of Ephesus:

" I know your works, your labours, and your patience. and how you can't bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. ... Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee because thou left your first love." (REV 2:2:3)

The bishop of Ephesus could be Timothy, the young disciple admired by Paul the Apostle, for his courage, youth and good upbringing through his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois "unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice." (II Timothy 1:5). The bishop of Ephesus could be somebody else as well. Left your first love! is the type of change we ought to avoid. When we are introduced to a new hobby or a new profession, we love it very much. Then this love gets weaker and weaker until it is no longer there! We ought to avoid this situation in our relation with our Lord. He also praised him for not following the teachings of the Nicolaitans. It is believed that Nicholas was one of the Deacons appointed by the Disciples as mentioned in the book of acts. His teachings encouraged performing acts of sin and repentance. The Russian monk Rasputin in the 19th Century, did lead some into Nicolaitan practices, and brought shame on Christianity and his Church. The Church teaches avoiding (escaping) sin, and working hard not to fall into temptation.

2. The Bishop of Smyrna:

Smyrna, now Izmir in Turkey, was a famous city in Asia Minor, a center of Trade Routes. To that Bishop, he writes: "I know your works, tribulations, and poverty (but you are rich) ... and I know the blasphemy of those who claim they are Jews (followers of the teachings of the Old testament), but they are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of the things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (REV 2:8:11)

This bishop seems to be doing alright. However, he and his congregation were to suffer the wrath of Satan for 10 days (a short period), and were pre-warned through prophecy to be strong and not fear tribulations and suffering. In all his messages he uses the word angel for bishop. Our church teaches that as the angels are messengers of God from heaven, bishops are messengers in the flesh. They also have to behave accordingly, in a holy way pleasing to God. It would help many of us if we get a warning about tribulations, sufferings, and difficult time to endure and not lose faith!

3. The Bishop of Pergamos:

To this bishop he writes: "I know your works, and where you dwell, even where satan's seat, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my name, even when my servant Antipas was slain

(martyred) where satan dwelleth." (REV 2:12-13). A good message from Jesus to a faithful servant, but listen to the end: "But I have a few things against you. because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel" (REV 2:14). He is talking about how people can cause evil without even doing it, because that is what Balaam did when he advised Balac (the leader of the Palestines) how to defeat the children of Israel, by sending bad women in their midst to make them sin and displease God and thus lose the Lord's support and be defeated. We know the story of Samson and Delilah. The devil works that way often. He makes us do bad things while he stands and watches! The devil made me do it!

He also had people that followed the Doctrine of the Nicolaitan's mentioned before. The Lord's advice to the bishop and his flock: "Repent, or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth (his Word, the Bible)" (REV 2:16). Good words of teaching, warning, and admonition. We also can fight evil with the word of God.

4. The Bishop of Thyatira:

One of the seven cities in Asia Minor in this prophecy, to this bishop the Lord said: "I know your charity (love, giving), and service and faith, and patience, and works and the last to be more than the first" (REV 2: 19) which shows how important works are to God. However, "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezabel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (REV 2:20)

The problem this bishop had was not his own doing, but lack of doing. It was his lack of courage to resist a person, group, or sect that teaches against the teachings of the Lord and the teachings of the church. Previously, the church leaders met in Jerusalem and issued a simple decree which admonished the gentiles who entered the faith to abstain from fornication, idol worship, and from eating idol sacrifice (the Book of Acts). This bishop tolerated such acts.

The Lord also indicated to the bishop that He gave the woman a chance to repent, but she repented not. For that reason she was going to be punished with sickness, she and those who are followers of her. As for the bishop, there was no admonition other than "But which you have already, hold fast until I come." (REV 2:25), so he was advised to resist the wrong teachings and speak against it.. We know that leaders are responsible for their flocks. The Lord was very kind with him!

5. The Bishop of Sardis:

This bishop was not found perfect before God, and for that reason he was given advice to change his ways, and repent. As for his congregation, it is a reminder like in the days of Elijah. There are a few who are walking in the light: "a few names even in Sardis, which didn't defile their garments (walk straight)" (REV 3: 1-6).

6. The Bishop of Philadelphia (The City of Brotherly Love in Asia Minor):

"I know your works: behold I have set before you an open door, and no one can close it." (REV 3:8). These words can help the ministers (servants) of the Lord in every generation. Paul also mentioned a similar help to his service when he said that the Lord opened a small door for them in Asia. This was because "thou hast little strength, and did not deny my name" (REV 3: 8)..i.e. the Lord gives strength to those who profess his name.

For those who follow incorrect teachings: "I will make them to come and worship before thy (at your) feet., and to know that I loved thee." (REV 3:9). What a great assurance for God's servants that if they stand fast, the others will follow, and come back! Don't be always ready to compromise your principals, let the lord help you weakness by standing fast on his promises. "Him that overcometh I will

make a pillar in the temple of my God" (REV 3: 12).

7. The Bishop of Laodiceans:

This bishop received the least praise and the most threats from the Lord: "I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot, I wish you were cold or hot, so then because you are lukewarm, I am ready to spit you out of my mouth" (REV 3:14-16).

These words are very troubling to me, because many of us who claim to serve God are lukewarm! It is very sad to be in that situation, occupying a place, but not satisfying the requirements of the position. God certainly does not like this kind, and the Lord continues: " Because you say I am rich, and increased in good , and have need for nothing. and knowest not that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." (REV 3: 17). The Lord advises him "I counsel thee to buy from me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyeslave (mascara like medicine to clear the eyes) that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent." (REV 3: 18-19). This shows how the Lord cares even for those conceited lukewarm ones! He is a zealous God.

The messages to the angels of the churches: bishops, priests, ministers, .. etc. are messages from Jesus Christ to the leaders and to the members of all congregations in all the churches of believers. None was without fault, but some are walking in the way better than others. The lukewarm are the worst because they are hanging in the middle, and usually not aware or have numbed the conscious to be not bothered by their true sad situation.

The last two verses in Chapter 3. are to everyone: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup (have supper) with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (REV 19:22) Here the Lord is giving everyone the choice to either select him, open the door, or reject him. He will not force himself on you or me, because he respects our freedom to choose. St. Augustine once said, man did not have the choice about being born into the world, but man has complete freedom of choice in selecting salvation. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him. If we choose him, he comes as a friend and sets house in our home, if we do not choose him, he peacefully goes away: He does not force himself on us. "You are without excuse, son of man"!

The Seven Seals of Revelation:

Through the help of the Holy Spirit of God, we will try to briefly shed some light on the seven seals of the book of revelation. Complete explanation is beyond our ability or purpose for this humble booklet. The Seven seals are symbolic of seven periods covering the time from Jesus glory (resurrection and ascension) to the time he comes back in his glory (the second coming of Jesus) to judge the living and the dead, every one according to his deeds good, or bad and gives every one his reward. Those who pleased him and followed his commandments will be with him and enjoy the second resurrection. The others will be sent into the pit of fire where satan and his armies in everlasting punishment. The torment is not necessarily a physical thing, more likely a spiritual condemnation with no hope whatsoever!

To set the scene for the vision (Revelation), we quote REV 4:1-10. It is also important to remark that the vision of John although similar in many ways to the visions of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah; has differences in the description of details. The similarity is a proof of correct encounter with the Lord who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The differences are proofs of individual encounter, not a fake retelling of previous events. Also it shows new things which could only be revealed in the fullness of time, when Jesus was born and salvation was accomplished. For example, Daniel and Ezekiel would not have fully comprehended the Son of Man (Jesus), God Incarnate (in the Flesh) as a new testament believer would.

"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty priests sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast like a lion, and the second beast was like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever (God), the four and twenty priests fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him (God) that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (REV 4:1-11) We refer the reader to chapters 4 of Revelation for the complete text: God is on his throne, under (carrying) the throne the four Incorporeal beasts, and in front of the throne 24 priests (representing the new testament priesthood). The whole scene is surrounded with angels (Charubeem and Serapheem) singing continuously without ceasing Holy. Holy. Holy.

The Seven Seals:

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals." (REV 5:1) This book is the revelation of seven periods preceding the second coming of Jesus. The seals are symbolic of withholding of the information from our race, and even from the angels of heaven. No body was worthy to open the book until "The lion from the tribe of Juda (Jesus), the Root of David, hath prevailed (through his death and rising again) to open the book, and to loose (uncover) the seven seals thereof." (REV 5:5). as we explained before, Jesus became worthy through his sacrificial act: "... stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. ... And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation... and the four beasts said Amen. And the four and twenty priests fell down and worshipped him (Jesus) that liveth forever and ever. " (REV 5:6:17). This description fits only our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice also that salvation is for every races, every tongue, every nation! We are responsible to spread that message of salvation everywhere.

1. The First Seal (35 AD),

The White Horse and the Lord Riding in Victory:

Many theologians believe that the first seal was opened when Jesus Christ our Lord was glorified (born, lived like us, suffered, was crucified, died on the cross, rose again on the third day, and ascended to the heavens forty days after his resurrection.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it was noise and thunder, one of the four beasts (angels) saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer." (REV 6:1 - 2). This is a fitting description of our Lord Jesus, on a white horse, sign of peace and, victory. He conquered death when he accepted death (by death He defeated death). He the perfect one, who was without sin was condemned crucified and died.. He conquered death when he brought the seed of Adam and Eve out of Hades (hell) after his sacrificial death on the cross. He conquers death in us who are willing to open the door and super with him to eternal life free from pain and sorrows, free from the

effects of sin and evil.

Jesus was born for our salvation, he conquered for us and gave us free salvation "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

2. The Second Seal (35 -301 AD), The Red Horse (The Age of Martyrs):

When the second seal was opened, it started a period of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ not paralleled. The poor fishermen were endowed with the Holy Spirit and power on the day of Pentecost (fiftieth day following resurrection). The evangelism of the disciples was resisted in Judea, and also when following the instructions of the Lord to go to the whole wide world, they found resistance in Asia, Europe, and Africa (the known world): " Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16)..

Their courageous mission to spread the gospel (Good News) unleashed the powers of satan and his armies represented in the leaders of the synagogue in Jerusalem and Caesar and his armies throughout the world.

The Coptic Calendar is marked by the beginning of the rule of the Roman Emperor, Diocletian (Sept. 12, 281 AD.) This was a difficult time for the Christian people everywhere, because Diocletian savagely tried to erase Christianity from the face of earth. He declared that he will kill and torture until the blood of the Christians reaches the belies of his soldier's horses. Remember, when the faith was persecuted, it became much stronger
"Like Gold Refined and Purified by Fire"

"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword" (REV 6:3,4). That is a period of close to 300 years of persecution the church suffered. However, it became stronger. As a matter of fact persecution always gave strength to the faith! Not that we go looking for persecution, but as Christians, we should accept suffering in the name of Christ with gladness. "Blessed are you if they persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely. Be extremely glad because your names are written in the kingdom of God" (Sermon on the Mount: Matt 5,6,7)

3. The Third Seal (301- 650 AD), The Black Horse (The Age of Heresies):

Around 301 AD, Constantine, one of the Generals of Diocletian became Emperor, when Diocletian was assassinated in Rome. Constantine is considered a Saint by many, but if we look carefully, we find out that although he declared the Empire to be a Christian Empire, and although he venerated the cross (in a vision he heard a voice saying by this sign you shall conquer). He made the cross the emblem (sign) of his empire, and ordered the sign of the cross be placed on his coat of arms and all military uniforms and helmets), the same allowed for a great division in the church by interfering in religious matters and siding with some bishops against others. For one, he exiled Athanasios, the champion of faith, the 20th pope of Alexandria 5 times. Pope Athanasios, continued to defend the true Orthodox faith. Athanasios went as far as dressing as a commoner (he was a Patriarch) to confront the Emperor who refused to discuss the situation face to face. During this time of relative political calm, sprang many heretics, the likes of Arios, Macdonios, Nestor, and Euticha (Otakhy). The church had 3 universal meetings: at Nicea in 325 AD, at Constatinpole in 381 AD, and at Ephesus in 425 AD. The meeting at Chalcedon, 451 AD is considered null and void by our Orthodox Church because it was dictated by the Emperor and the Empress and lacked the spirit of participation. It is called The Unfortunate Council at

Chalcedon.

In 325 AD 318 bishops met in Nicea, where Athanasios, only a deacon, in his twentieth, accompanying pope Alexandrus argued with Arios, a learned priest, and proved to him that his theories which deny the Divinity of Christ were with no Biblical foundation whatsoever. Arios acted as if he was convinced, but as soon as he left the meeting, he continued spreading his wrong teachings, and died a horrible death in Constantinople. Shortly thereafter, Arios' followers turned Constantine against Athanasios who was now pope and patriarch. Some of the bishops reminded Athanasios: The world is against you "contra athanasios", he immediately replied, I am Against the World "contra mundus."

In 381 AD, 150 bishops of the church met in Constantinople, this time to defend the faith against the heresy of Macdonios who denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This was during the Patriarchate of Pope Timothaus (Timothy), 21st Pope of Alexandria. Pope Timothy led the Coptic Bishops delegation. The bishops convened excommunicate Macdonios, and added to the creed (The Nicene creed) of faith " we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord Giver of Life who proceedeth from the Father ... etc.

In 425 AD, 200 bishops met in Ephesus, this time to defend the faith again the heresy of Nestor, who was a follower of the teachings of Arios, and since the Holy, Universal Apostolic Church banned the teachings of Arios as heretic, Nestor came up with another heresy leading to the same teachings. He claimed that the divine can not suffer, and as such, he claimed that Christ had two natures. This was the beginning of the teachings of two natures and two wills. In this meeting, St. Cyril (the great) of Alexandria, 24th pope of Alexandria, defended the faith following the example of his predecessor, our father Athanasios the Apostolic in Nicea.

In 451 AD, the bishops met in Chalcedon, the unfortunate council of Chalcedon took place by the orders of an emperor instead of the will of the bishops of the empire. Pope Descores, the champion of the Orthodox faith was struck on the face, his hair was plucked, and his teeth were broken when he refused to accept the decrees confirming heresies rejected in the Council of Ephesus, which legitimized the two natures two wills teachings. ..

"And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, a measure of wheat for a penny, and a measure of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (REV 6:5,6) Here wheat and barley are symbolic of truth and knowledge. They became very scarce, very expensive, very hard to obtain.

Oil and wine are symbolic of good deeds and the sacraments of the church, those were not to be touched. People became ignorant and followed false teachings, However, they still had the opportunity to do good and participate in the sacraments. The church split in 451 AD into two groups. The "Oriental" Orthodox and the Other group which included some 'Orthodox' and the Roman Catholic. The "Oriental" group consists of the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Indian Churches. Although, many false doctrines were introduced, after 451 AD, both families of churches continued to teach the importance of works (good deeds) and they both kept all the sacraments (baptism, confirmation, penance, unction of the sick, marriage, and priesthood). Later on, these common beliefs symbolized by Oil and Wine were attacked, as we will see after the opening of the fourth seal. The Oriental Church lived a separate Orthodox Christian life, isolated if you will from 451 AD on. The Other Orthodox group had communications with Rome until 1092 when Rome (Church and Government) failed to help the East, and the popular saying "East is East, and West is West" was coined. The Third Seal certainly symbolizes the spread of heresies.

**The Fourth Seal (650- 1600 AD),
The Pale (Green) Horse (The Age of Spiritual Death):**

This is not necessarily, a universal interpretation. The writer believes that following the spread of

heresies, more and more people lost the true faith which was the beginning of the spiritual death of many nations as symbolized by a Pale (Yellow/Green) horse. Pale color symbolizes decay which follows death. That is the time when even Oil and Wine become scarce. "And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to Kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." (REV 6: 7-9)

We see the Roman Empire harassing the patriarchs of the east. They appointed governors on countries of the East; Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, .. etc. who were also given the power to persecute "Christians on the hands of Christians." Those vicious governors were also made patriarchs by force (Melouky, or patriarchs appointed by the emperor, by decree). We see the patriarch Benjamin (68's pope) go to hiding for 13 years from Al-Moququs, the ruler/patriarch appointed by Hercules. The Arabs invaded the east from Persia to Morocco. Islam was spread by the power of the sword. Then a great stagnation in Europe leading to weak ineffective governments, the middle ages, the failed crusades, selling of indulgences (writs of salvation for the individual and/or his ancestors), prohibiting the reading of the Bible at home, great corruption in the Roman Catholic Church leading to the revolt of Martin Luther, and the Ninety-five Theses posted on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany in 1517.

At this point Oil and Wine became scarce, because the new teachings belittled works, and ignored or taught against sacraments when they called the Eucharist a remembrance neglecting the teachings of Christ "Take ye this is my body, and drink this is my blood" (Matt 26:26-28) which was also confirmed by Paul the Apostle when he wrote to the Corinthians "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. ..." (I Corinth 11:23:25)

We see the sayings my body, my blood, in remembrance all together in the same paragraph. Saying that it is a memory is like the Arabic saying "Don't approach prayer " without saying "when you are drunk /not clean"

5. The Fifth Seal, (The Renaissance: 1600-1900 AD!):

Starting from opening the fifth seal there is no mention of horses being released. Instead of key individuals, we see whole nations acting. Europe started an industrial revolution, The French had a revolution which introduced democracy, collective rule instead of Elitist rule. The British wrote the Magna Carta, a document declaring the freedom of the individual and the rule of law. America is discovered and brought to the world a new look, a new prosperity, and a new power, they even adopted the Eagle, the old symbol of Rome as the emblem of the new nation. The New Roman Empire , if you will.

"and when he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God , and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto everyone of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (REV 6: -11)

This was a very interesting period in the history of the world, because man was starting to learn how to live in harmony with others accepting different beliefs, different rules, and styles. Republics are displacing Imperial form of governing. More religious tolerance, but the souls of those who were sacrificed in all previous generations will always ask the Lord to avenge the world for its bad deeds,

because He is a just God. They were asked to rest? Where is that rest. We believe in a place of rest (paradise) which was opened when Jesus died on the cross. Before his death there was no rest even for the righteous the likes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus descended unto Hades (hell) and brought the souls of Adam and his children (who pleased God) out of Hades because he bought them from death with his precious blood.

As they rest, and we complete our journey, some more will be persecuted, some more will be killed. Persecution of Christians continued through the middle ages, even today! Then after we all complete, He (Jesus) will come to Judge the living and the dead, and gives everyone according to his deeds good or bad. the good will have the heavenly reward, the bad will not.

6. The Sixth Seal, (1900 AD-Present !!):

The sixth seal represents an even more difficult time. Many nations were liberated from colonial rule in this century. One would think that liberation will bring freedom of expression and belief. We see the opposite happening especially in the last twenty years. In the late 70's a fanatic wave engulfed the middle east and its effects were felt in most parts of the world. We see it already in our beloved Egypt among other places where the followers of Jesus are hated, even despised by some fanatics which is not strange to the reader of Revelation: It is also happening in other parts of the world, even here in America. Reverse discrimination is taking place whereas believers are being mocked and ridiculed and being prevented from public expression of faith. Like bans on prayer in schools, and rulings against public displays of Christian symbols, e.g. the banning of Nativity scenes from many municipal places, ..etc. "a time will come when who kills you will think he is doing God a favor!"

World War I (WW I) and World War II (WW II) both happened in this century. Historic predictions of WW III placed it in the 70's or 80's. Thank God it did not take place. According to many political and military experts, WW III would mean the end of life on this planet as we know it. These are predictions which coincide with many of the signs of opening of the sixth seal.

Inventions in this century far exceeds anything man knew before: The Telegraph, Automobile, Telephone, Computer, TV, Airplane, Atomic Energy, Chemical and Biological Weapons, Missiles, Tanks, Jet Fighters, Space Exploration, Satellite Communications, Multimedia (Voice, Video, Information); are inventions of the 20th century, many would be fulfillment of the signs of the sixth seal. Some are predicted after the opening of the sixth seal: "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses (think of jet fighters, they are even bigger than horses), they have feet (landing gear) of iron (steel), Have hair like women, dark, prepared unto battle (usually painted black for thermodynamic reasons); and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron (actually stainless steel and titanium, a metal stronger than steel for reinforcement); and the sounds of their wings was as the sound of chariots (that is exactly how a jet sounds, very loud, noisy, painful)... " (REV 9:1-)... We will explain more later.

Some of the above mentioned happened towards the end of the 19th Century. The majority was discovered and exploited in the 20th Century. At the beginning of the century knowledge was multiplying every 20 years or so, Today knowledge multiplies every two years, even less. The turn of the century, the telegraph and telephone were invented and in use. Locomotives, were in full steam. Automobiles were beginning to become a convenient way of transportation. People could travel in groups on trains powered by steam, but were limited in direction and route (only where rails are laid, one could go). Now we can travel individually hundreds of miles in comfort, using gasoline powered cars, which replaced the old horse driven carts! You can travel farther, faster on Airplanes. Think about space travel for the public, the National Aerospace Plane (NASP) proposed by president Reagan in 1984.

"And I beheld when he opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven

departed as a scroll; when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand" (REV 7:-:17) think of all the great natural disasters we have seen in the last 50 years. A comet crashing to earth, or a multi-megaton level nuclear blast, both became known and probable facts in the second half of the twentieth century.

Another proof of the theory associating our times with the sixth seal is the fall of the stars, figuratively, instead of literally. The sun and the moon are used many times to symbolize kings and princes, e.g. the dream Joseph had about the sun and the moon and 11 stars bowing to him. In this century almost all the kingdom forms of government were eliminated. There is only very few left, even then, they are very much void of the rulers (suns, moon, stars: king, queen, princes) with absolute authority of the past. Where are the Czars of Russia, the Czars of Germany and Austria. Where is the Power of the Emperor of Japan (Son of the Rising Sun) or the Kings of England (the Empire on which thy sun never sat).

Before the 20th Century USA, and France were about the only two republics. Today the majority of governments around the world are republics, very few kings (stars) are left, the majority have fallen!

The spiritual side of the interpretation of the sixth seal lags behind the literal side in time. It is believed that on the spiritual level the end of the sixth seal and the beginning of the seventh seal will bring the beast from the sea, the false prophet, the false Christ, The return of Enoch and Elijah, Armageddon, the power of the devil and his sign: 666, the Rapture, the final chapter in the history of our universe, and the Second Coming.

Prophecy is always hidden in mystery, otherwise it changes from prophecy (fore telling of the future) to statement of clear facts. Why God blessed us with prophecy? Because he is concerned about our individual salvation so he blesses us with pre-knowledge about events that will take place in this universe which far exceed commonplace knowledge. The complete universe as a whole is being explained and better understood now more than ever However, because we (you and me) are more important to him than all things he created for our use! we need to understand the personal message much deeper than the messages related to the universe "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." (Psalm 8:3,4). the personal message is to accept the higher calling of glory and honor and be always prepared to meet the one who bestowed his glory and honor on you.

We see here that the sixth seal is either opened or close to being opened. The reasons are many:

1. Many kings (stars) have already fallen in this century.
2. Man came much closer to complete destruction as depicted in the opening of the sixth seal than in any previous generation.
3. No other civilization was capable of complete self destruction than this one. Nuclear Weapons, Chemical Weapons, Missiles, Airplanes, ..etc. annihilating earth many times over than ours in the years following WW II. (The Discovery of Atomic Energy).

WW I killed many people world wide. Also, both WW I and WW II and the rise of communism were prophesied about in the encounter of the Virgin Mary and the children from Fatima, Portugal. WW I was the last of the conventional soldier to soldier combats in the history of major conflicts. WW II used communications (Radio and telephone) to manipulate and move fighters and equipment much faster. Tanks and Airplanes were used as fighting machines, both happened in this century. Tanks, and Airplanes fit the awesome description of locusts and scorpions associated with the opening of the sixth and seventh seal.

7. The Seventh Seal:

Studying Revelation, you can see a mix of events and signs after the opening of the sixth seal, some can be related to current events which makes one think the sixth seal is opened. Others seem like they are yet to come which makes one believe they are not here yet (continuation of the sixth seal period).

The signs of the seventh seal however are all in the future. This future can be the next moment in your life and mine, it could be next week, next month or years away.

For a simple explanation of revelation, we would like to stop at the seventh seal, where not only the seal will be opened but after it is opened seven angels with seven trumpets are going to declare seven tribulations (some are similar to the 10 plagues in Exodus 9, 10 which afflicted Egypt on the hands of Moses, the Arch-prophet and his brother Aaron the head priest). If you believe that the sixth seal is already opened, the period of the seventh seal opening to completion is predicted, by many bible scholars, to be a short period (No more than 33 years) as the life of Jesus (God Incarnate) on earth was short 33 years.

This assumption is supported by the passage: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation (the generation living at the time of opening the seal) shall not pass, till all these things be done." (Mark 13:30) and also in Luke 21:32. A generation is 30 to 40 years by definition.

The tribulations each associated with the blowing of a trumpet are as follows:

First trumpet:

"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, .. and a third part of trees was burnt up, .." (REV 9:7) This is similar to the first plague which affected Egypt on the hands of Moses.

Second Trumpet:

"And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed" (REV 9:8) This also is similar to turning the River Nile water into blood in the plagues. Chemical/Biological pollution or chemical warfare are man made possible ways of causing this tribulation. also, it could be caused by a natural disaster like a large volcanic eruption.

Third Trumpet:

"And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; and the name of the star wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter." This would be visited on earth also. Water not fit to drink in vast areas of the world.

Fourth Trumpet:

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. (REV 8:12). This one can be caused by a nuclear blast, or a comet hitting our atmosphere.

These are nothing compared to the next three "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of

the voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound! (REV 8:13)

Fifth Trumpet:

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (REV 9:1) Is this a natural disaster, Is it a man made disaster God only knows, but the indication is this: the earth atmosphere will be darkened and will become very difficult to live. Most recently (May '94) Astronomists told us about a Comet (a small part of a star which is usually out of control) about to break into a hundred pieces, each is equivalent to a thousand, 1-megaton atomic bombs. This Comet is going to hit Jupiter this year. The headline of TIME magazine: May 23, 1994 "A Shattered Comet is about to hit Jupiter Creating the biggest Explosion Ever Witnessed in the Star System. Could it Happen to Earth, Yes .." The astronomers' explanation is: if one of the pieces hit earth, it can cause massive destruction, the least would be, it would steer dust which can block the sun for six months or more. This alone can end life as we know it!

One day of reading the newspaper produced the following unsettling news for me, I am talking about June 14, 1994: The story about the Cosmic Crash reiterated, the death of Rabbi Menahem Mendel Shneresn, age 94, of Brooklyn who was considered the "Messiah" by many of his followers causes a big steer in New York. Former president Carter goes to North Korea to avert a nuclear conflict by trying to stop the North Koreans from making more atomic bombs and opening their nuclear reactors to international verification. O.J. Simpson, a hall of fame, Heisman trophy winner and famous football player implicated in the brutal knifing murder of his ex-wife, Nicole, and a 25 year old male companion. The famous music composer Henri Mancini dies at age 70 of cancer. Shortly before his death, he was talking about getting into the 21st century, professionally, speaking, to other celebrities. Exxon and captain Hazelwood, the captain of the oil tanker Exxon Valdez were found negligent and guilty in the events in 1989 leading to spilling of 11 million gallons of crude oil off the shores of Alaska which has long term disastrous effects on fishing and wild life in this remote part of the world, ... etc. In other words if God does not allow for a natural disaster, man can do it to himself, his environment, his fellow man, and the world we live in.

"And there came out of the smoke locusts (airplanes?) upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power (weapons, missiles, cannons, lasers, ...). And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth (this is possible for weapons like neutron bombs which can be designed to hurt only people), neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months (some chemical and nuclear weapons are capable of delivering this tormenting pain. There are films recorded of such painful situation, surprisingly, people either die instantly, within 2 weeks, or within six months): and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man (soars caused by chemical weapons and/or nuclear radiation could be what is meant here. Nature is also capable of delivering undesirable effects worse than chemical or nuclear radiation if nature is out of control; e.g. failure of the Ozone layer to protect us, or poisonous volcanic eruptions, or oil fields burning out of control through natural or man made disasters, the oil fields of Kuwait put on fire by Saddam Hussein which continued to burn for 11 months is nothing compared to what is depicted here)

"And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle (think of jet fighters, they are even bigger than horses they have feet (landing gear) of steel, and heads usually painted black for thermodynamic reasons); and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold (reflectors), and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women (painted dark), and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron (actually stainless steel and titanium, a metal stronger than steel); and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle (that is exactly how a jet sounds, very loud, noisy, painful).. And they had tails

like unto scorpions

(the jets sting the enemy with guided missiles from the wings and tail end), and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months (some nuclear and chemical weapons can cause long lasting pain). And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon (The nick name apollo is used quite a bit in computers and radar used in jet fighters)." (REV 9:1-8).

The pain these tools will cause will be very difficult to take "And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them" (REV 9:9). We know that these weapons delivered in controlled ways, can cause severe physical harm which could be very painful, but does not necessarily bring the victim to death. Think of effects of chemicals, slow death. Nuclear Radiation can also cause same painful, slow death.

For a locust from the sky to hurt like a scorpion, and looks like a horse, their is this one 20th century explanation, The Apostle is speaking about inventions 1900 years before they became reality, Jet Fighters fit that description. Being in aerospace engineering, I noticed that fighters look like scorpions (heads and tails and wings), they also look like locusts in aerodynamics for fast flying. As a matter of fact Hornet is the name used for one of the Jet Fighter Used in the Gulf war (1990). Airplanes, tanks and steel reinforced combat vehicles fit the description in Chapter 9, and are some of the tools that can bring about the final annihilation of our planet as depicted in Revelation after the opening of the seventh seal.

This description of the locust is the same as under the sixth seal, does that mean that some of the tribulations of the sixth seal continues through the fifth trumpet of the sevenths, the answer is yes. It also means continuation and closeness. You do not talk about steam power in the 20th century, because it was superseded for a long time. Not the case here. Some teachers of the bible are telling us the time is short, the passages in Chapter 9 are a good proof.

Sixth Trumpet:

"One woe is past (The Locust, and scorpions), behold, there come two woes more hereafter" (REV 9:12). The following two are the last two tribulations preceding the second Coming.

"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for they slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them .. " (REV 9:13-17)

This could be the battle of Armageddon which is favorite subject of revelation students. The armies will come from the east, they will be so many, the Apostle mentioned, 200,000,000 (Two hundred million). Never in the history an army that big was assembled.

The largest army the USA had was about 5,000,000 soldiers, 7,000,000 when you include reserves. The Russians never exceeded 10,000,000 including the Eastern Block. Could it be the lands of gog and magog prophesied about in Ezekiel (China, and the new Russia!). If you read on you will find out that they will be killed by weapons similar to what was mentioned before "by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths (weapons of destruction: cannons, missiles, chemical, nuclear, .. etc.)" (REV 9:18).

Also, note that they were killed because of "... yet repented not of the works of the devils, and idols of gold (idol worship and/or love of material things), and silver, and brass and stone (all manners of materialism) ... Neither repented of their murders, nor of their sorceries (witchcraft which is becoming more rampant), nor of their fornication (Aids and other sex related epidemics of this century are much worse than any epidemic before including cholera, typhoid, and the bubonic plague!), nor of their thefts

(everywhere, kings, prime ministers, senators, congressmen being removed from office for violation of rule of ethics usually has to do with money!)"
(REV 9:20-21)

Before the events of the sixth trumpet are complete, there are other more terrible things which are not written "Seal up these things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.. and the earth .. and the sea .. and the things therein that there should be time no longer .." (REV 10:1-6)

The Seventh Trumpet:

This will be the final stage of completing the times of the world as we know it. "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." (REV 10:7). Here the Apostle, is declaring the signs of the last stage, and also acknowledging the prophets (prophecies) that preceded him: David, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Jeramiah, Jouel (Youeel) .. etc.

The seventh trumpet will happen just before Jesus comes back on the clouds. It announces the last tribulation which is followed by the second coming..

Other Events and People In Revelation,
(Jezebel/Ezabel, Babylon and Egypt, the Beasts,
The False Prophet, and the False Christ):

We are going to sum up all these events and characters of Revelation in short brief paragraphs.

Jezebel/Ezabel/Babylon/Egypt:

Revelation speaks about Jezebel in chapter 3 then mentions Ezabel these could be symbolic or referring to specific individuals. It is not meant to insult women, but we know that sometimes temptation comes from women. Females can also be more emotional and easily influenced, and they then influence their husbands, friends, relatives, .. etc. The Book of Genesis mentions that Eve took first and gave Adam. Also, the use of that specific name could be because Jezebel led her husband king Ahab to the ugly incident in which she ordered the murder of a poor man, Naboth, to take his little plot of land adjacent to the large field owned by her and her husband. The poor man's refusal was because it was considered sin for man to sell his inheritance. This incident aggravated the great prophet, Elijah, who pronounced the punishment for both Ahab and Jezebel, they were slaughtered by the sword, and the dogs licked their blood.

Babylon and Egypt are also mentioned as symbolic of evil " Babylon is where people assembled to build a great tower in disbelief of the promise that flood as of the days of Noah will never be visited on earth again (Genesis). "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils for all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication ."(REV 18)

Babylon is symbolic of the Persian Empire also, which enslaved the Israelites twice. First on the hands of king Nabokhaz-Nassar, and the second enslavement on the hands of Emperor Balshasar.

Egypt also is symbolic of the same thing. These symbols are not literal necessarily, but some literal interpretations attribute some evil to a kingdom/kingdoms from the region east of Palestine/Israel.

The Beast/Dragon (First Beast) and
the Beast from the Sea (Second Beast):

There are two beasts symbolic of satan and his armies. The first beast, "a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns" (REV 12:3). The second Beast "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw

a beast rise up out of the sea" (REV 13:1). The dragon is old satan and seven crowns are seven eras (Egyptian, Greek, Persian, Roman, Islamic, Middle Ages, Modern (now)). The ten horns are ten kingdom or ten kings. These could be symbolic of all the evil kingdoms of the world, or ten evil kings which will join forces with the beast during the time of the opening of the seventh seal, last stand of evil.

Some interpreters refer specifically to the ten kingdom which sprang out of the empire of Alexander the great which ended with the Roman Empire. Other interpretation talks about the 10 most prosperous countries of Europe (European Common Market) leaders as the 10 kingdoms. They even go farther claiming that America (the USA) is the new Roman Empire, the last kingdom before the coming of Christ, and as the Roman Empire decayed and fell, so "will the USA" at the end.

The red dragon fought the woman (the Church or Mary considered a spiritual mother of the Church of God) and he tried to kill that son, (he tried to prevent the ministry of Jesus, he also tried to kill the church every chance he had) "and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And the woman fled into a wilderness (this temporal state of the believers, fleeing away from temptations of the world, and waiting for our savior to come again)." (REV 12: 5).

As we escape the world "The world will despise you, but be assured I defeated the world." The Lord has a place for us "where she hath a place prepared of god, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days.." (REV 12:6). The number of days is symbolic of the time to the second coming. Some interpreters, use the date of the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem on the hands of Nehemiah as the start date. One interpretation puts the second coming at 2001!

The good news is this: "there was a war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. And the great dragon was cast out (Jesus gave us the power to trample over serpents and scorpions and all the powers of the enemy) and they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. ..." (REV 12:9-17)

When the first dragon was defeated, by Jesus' Resurrection, satan continued to fight the church, he did not give up, the believers also should not give up. This time satan is represented in a second beast: "I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." (REV 13:1).

The same old enemy described again, here we see satan in another form, he continues to fight. The sea is a symbol of the world, in Arabic (Bahr Al-Alam) and the new appearance is the powerless satan, we bring him on ourselves by neglecting the power given to us by the Holy Spirit of God. He comes from another place, but he is the same deceiver, the liar and the father of the liar (Abou Al-kadaab). In his new form, he is "like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon (old satan) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." (REV 13:2). The leopard symbolic of his speed in deceiving us, the bear symbolic of vicious heavy handed power, and the lion is symbolic of his aggressiveness, the king of the jungle behavior, power and deceit.

Another explanation of the second dragon is his being equivalent to the false prophet which is mentioned below. The false prophet is handed the powers of satan and will deceive because he will have the powers expected in a prophet, although he is not. This should not scare us because satan is defeated, if he appears like a leopard (fast and cunning), or a bear (big and savage), or a lion (wild and proud) we should not fear him, but always remind him that he is the same old liar. He can not scare us or rob us of our inheritance because we were saved by the blood of the Lamb.

The real danger is when he appears as a prophet and many people will be deceived by him, this should happen after the opening of the seventh seal "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the

eighth, and is of the seven (seven heads, or kings), and goes into perdition" (rev 17:11). You have to compare with Paul's words to Thessalonians: "And then shall the wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. .. the son of perdition (destruction)" (II Thess 2:8:12).

The False Prophet:

It is prophesied in revelation, and in other places, that many false prophets will come, but in revelation, it talks about one specific who will deceive many because of his powers which will far exceed any powers seen by our race. Could the false prophet be the same as the second beast. It is possible. This author thinks that they are different but will work together to deceive many. ... More and more, I accept the theory that this false prophet to come, will be a leader (fallen star) of one of the Churches professing Christianity. This way he will have a good introduction and a base from which to deceive (operate) his denomination and then many other Christians. His seat could be anywhere knowing the power of television and instant video using satellite links from anywhere you can park a van or a truck. Some assumed places are Rome, Jerusalem, .. etc. But why not New York, Dallas, or Los Angeles!

The False Christ (El-Masseh El-Daggal):

Since our brothers the Jews, whom I love dearly, have not accepted the one that came, they will eventually come up with one whom they are going to call the Messiah. We hear rumors all the time about a child born of a virgin in Israel, or New Jersey, or elsewhere. Is this the Messiah! Rabbi Manachem Shnersen of Brooklyn who died on June 13, 1994 in Brooklyn, NY at the age of 94 was hailed the Messiah by many of his followers. There is a wild story about a child conceived after the June 5, 1967 war and was born in 1968. He should be 26 years of age now. Jesus started his ministry at age 30. Does that mean that the presumed person is going to be declared Messiah in 1998. In such case, we should expect his mission (the False Christ) to be completed in 2001!

Seriously, the Jews will eventually have to declare the Messiah born. He will lead them back into building the temple, if it is not built by then, to reconstitute the animal sacrifice which was stopped after the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed on the hands of Titus the Roman general in 70 AD. This will bring things closer to the end, the second coming!

The Devil and His Sign (666):

Many discussions and many arguments continue about this particular passage: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 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. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (666)." (REV 13: 11-18)

We explained the meaning of the second beast, the one that came from the sea (Bahr Al-Alam) this is the defeated satan because after Jesus suffered , died and rose again, he defeated satan and stripped him from his power. However, the defeated satan still exists and continues to fight the believers and

deceive the unbelievers, criminal actions lacking authority or power. As he continues to terrorize the seed of Adam (the human race), he will take shapes and forms fitting the times.

In our time the second half of the twentieth century, specifically after computers became so accessible, we have technology that can keep track of every single individual on the planet and more. It is conceivable that using this technology, an evil empire or consortium of ungodly states can be formed which can control every transaction, every move, through a card or a bar code, even an electronic dog tag, even an implanted device on the forehead, so no one can buy or sell without approval by that evil authority (God Forbid!)

The number here is interpreted as Evil Evil Evil. Because in our tradition 1, 3, 5, 7, 12 are considered holy numbers. One God, Three manifestations (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), Five Holy Senses, Seven Holy Sacraments, Twelve Blessed Apostles. Six is reserved for evil, six six six (666) is then evil evil evil. Other interpretations do associate the numbers to a name of a person (Numerology) or a date! will leave that to the reader to contemplate (think about it)!

The Two Olive Trees, the Two Candlesticks (Minarets):

This is a reference to two old testament prophets, some claim Moses and Elijah because Moses and Elijah appeared with Jesus in his Transfiguration. Jesus said that the end will not come unless Moses and Elijah return, but they did in Transfiguration. The more accepted explanation is Elijah and Enoch, for a good biblical reason. Enoch (the eighth from Adam) was found good, and he was taken to heaven without seeing death (first death). Elijah also went to heaven in a Chariot of fire. As for Moses, he died like all humans but he choose to die alone, without leaving a trail of where his body is, because he did not want the people, who came out of Egypt, and suffered tremendously because of their sins of disobedience to return to idol worship, to idolize (worship) him. How great he was, we call him the head of the prophets (Raees Al-Anbiaa).

So, Elijah and Enoch will come back, and they will be very harsh in their disapproval of society when they come. For that reason, they will be hated by the inhabitants (bad people) of the world and will be killed and their bodies will not be buried for three days. Their return place is Jerusalem. according to Revelation. After they die the people of the world will send each other congratulations, because they got them out of the way, to do more of their ungodly deeds. Their death will complete their human life, and grant them the salvation you and I have received.

The Rapture:

The common concept is, in the latter days, the Lord Christ will take the believers who are left on earth to heaven alive to save them from the sufferings mentioned in the book of revelation (sixth and seventh seal!). Our church does not accept that concept, because it conflicts with the basic tenant, in our faith, that suffering and martyrdom is the highest rank a believer can achieve.

Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome. Stephen and James in Jerusalem. Mark the Evangelist and Apostle, in Alexandria. Then millions on the hands of the Romans, the likes of St. George on the hands of seventy kings (rulers), and St. Menas of Biad (Mena Al-biady or Al-Mariooty) on the hands of Diocletian, St. Markorios Philopateer, St. Rifkah, St. Demiana and her companions, the 40 virgins, ..etc. We then should ask: If the Lord allowed all these honored champions (saints) to suffer, why should he save other people from tribulation, and sufferings which leads to great honor on the ranks of the apostles, martyrs and cross bearers.

One explanation of the rapture would be that when Jesus Comes back, he will raise all the believers from death to be with him in Heavenly Jerusalem, but those who are alive at his second coming will be raptured, not see death.

Armageddon:

Armageddon, is a place in Palestine, a hill where the Israelites were defeated. Could be the place where Samson was captured by the Philistines, because he did not keep the promise of an elder child, chosen of God (masseh lil-raab). He told Delila his secret and was robbed of his source of strength. The second Armageddon war, will reverse the fortunes. This time the people of God (the believers) will win against the armies of the east. As we mentioned before, the revealer counted the armies, and they were two hundred thousand thousand.

The Thousand Years Reign:

The Coptic Orthodox as well as most Orthodox Churches do not accept a literal translation for the verses related to this part of revelation (REV 20:6), because if we accept the literal meaning, we then fall in the same trap (earthly kingdom) which prevented our brothers the Jews from accepting Jesus because he was no earthly king! However, we consider the time from resurrection to a time close to the second coming to be the thousand years. We are living the Thousand years Reign Now. So, now satan is bound because we have the power of the Holy Spirit in us. Satan will be loosened, and I feel he is getting more and more aggressive with our race, and this will be a difficult time " And (he) shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog (every one including the nations we mentioned before) to gather them together to battle ... "(REV 20:7:10)

The Second Coming:

We go back to the four gospels, and we learn from all four gospels that Jesus ascended into heaven on the fortieth day following resurrection. He promised the disciple a power from on high on the day of Pentecost (fiftieth day) which they received as described in the book of acts.

Also, in acts, we read: " .. It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. ... And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld (the witness of 11 people), he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold two men (angels) stood by them in white apparel: which also said, ye men of Galilee (poor fishermen!), why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."(Acts 1:7:11). Many truths are revealed in these verses from the book of Acts.

First, although we tried to put dates on many of the events of revelation, it is not for us to know the times or the seasons. It is more important to know that our life is but a little vapor that appears for a while and then vanishes (James);

Second, we were promised the power of the Holy Spirit the third person of the one God head. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate (Lawyer, Attorney), our Councilor (Advisor), our Comforter (Helper), and Also our Judge, because He not only helps our weaknesses but convicts our sins which we do consciously and unconsciously.

Third, As Jesus went up to heaven He will come back in like manner. This is the Second Coming.

When He Comes back, He will come back on the clouds, in glory: Now from revelation chapters 19 through 21 we learn more about the second coming: "And I saw heaven open and behold a white horse (in heaven): and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True (Jesus) And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. ..And I saw the dead , small (normal people) and great (important people, VIPs), stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened , which is the book of life (book of Jesus saving power): and the dead were

judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works (deeds) ... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life (i.e. not redeemed by the blood of the lamb) was cast out into the lake of fire." (REV 19, 20).

More important is to know the required qualifications to have our names in the book of life: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I (Jesus) will be his God and he will be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire (the torment of mind, soul and spirits) and brimstone, which is the second death." (REV 21:6-8).

So in order to enjoy the second resurrection, second coming, and escape the second death we have to be prepared every moment of the day because we do not know what hour he will come.

Heavenly Jerusalem:

Depicted in the last two chapters of the book of revelation, chapters 21, 22. It is a symbol of life with God after judgment. We leave it to the reader to review the beautiful bro., but, we shall concentrate on a conclusive remark that: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (REV 21:1-4)

It is beautiful to think about these truths: that in heaven there is no hunger, thirst, sickness, or death. The sun and moon and the stars are no longer needed. And a full eternity of full knowledge of everything, there is, is what the Lord promised for us. Glory be to You O Lord, Glory be to You O Lord.

When:

This is a question on all our minds. We always have to advise: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." (Acts 1:7) He is close at the doors. We feel the urgency because the signs of the sixth seal and the beginnings of the seventh seal are happening already. The period for the seventh seal is less than a generation (33 years). How about your own eternity? It is important to think that life is short. I need to make peace with myself and peace with my Lord.

Where:

My beloved Middle East is where most prophecies have been fulfilled, so most likely it will all end there. However, with today's technology, it can happen anywhere on Earth and be followed instantly, from New York to Peking, everywhere. May God have mercy and compassion on us all and include you and me in the Book of Life.

How Much:

In the world we live in, this is a common question. The price is much higher than you and I can pay. However, it was paid in full, already in a moment of extreme love. So accept, act accordingly, and enjoy.

References:

1. Holy Bible, King James Version (English Translation)
2. The Revelation of John the divine, Father Tadros Y. Malaty, St. George church, Sporting, Alexandria (Arabic)
3. The Return of Jesus .. and Signs of the End, Dr. Shouhdy Shaker, Dar Nubar Printing Press, Cairo, Egypt, 1991 (Arabic).
4. Bible Studies, St. Mary and St. Abraam Coptic Church, St. Louis, MO, 1994
5. The Great Planet Earth, Hal Lindsey, Dallas, Texas, 1972.
A Brief Commentary on The Book of Revelation