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Iceland Nationalizes

From *American Free Press* 12th Nov. 2012

The mass media was completely silent about Iceland's new constitution voted in a referendum by 70 percent of the people. Icelanders voted to nationalize Iceland's natural resources thus further guaranteeing their national sovereignty from the globalist predators. Since Iceland kicked the bankers out last year, it is steadily becoming a model for true national sovereignty and paving the way to what could become a peaceful world revolution by the people.

THE SECOND SEAL:

Revelation 6.3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, "Come and see."

6.4 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.

The rider was given power to "**take peace from the earth**". The peace was that which had existed in the "earth", i.e. the Roman Empire under the previous seal, society in the settled state, which was the Roman Empire. "That they should kill one another" suggests **civil war**. This is exactly what happened with the accession of the next emperor after the "five good emperors"* of secular history. His name,—**Commodus**, son of Marcus Aurelius.

* The "five good emperors" of secular history were: Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius & Marcus Aurelius.

When Commodus began his reign in **AD 180** the checks and balances in the Empire nurtured by the previous emperors kept the Empire in peace and prosperity for three to five more years. Then the misrule of Commodus began to be felt. Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in Chap. 4, Para. 3-7, describes now a **period of weaker Roman emperors with consequent civil wars and bloodshed**. The emperors ruled mainly for much shorter periods. Gibbon tells that Marcus Aurelius, the last of the five good emperors: —

. . . sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy, and that he chose a successor in his own family (his son) rather than from the Republic [as did the other so-called “good emperors” before him]. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he had summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices and to render him worthy of the throne for which he was designed.

But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy, except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favourite; and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this laboured education, by admitting his son, at the age of 14 or 15 years to a full participation of the Imperial power. He lived but four years afterwards; but he lived long enough to repent a rash measure, which raised the impetuous youth above the restraint of reason and authority.

Continuing Gibbon *ibid*,* Chap 4, Para. 5:

Yet Commodus was not as he has been represented, a tiger born with an insatiable thirst for human blood, and capable from his infancy of the most inhuman actions. Nature had formed him of a weak rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind.

* **ibid.** Term used to save space in textual references to a quoted work mentioned in a previous reference.

Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap. 4, Paragraph 7 writes:

During the first three years of his reign the forms and even the spirit of the old administration were maintained by those faithful counsellors to whom Marcus had recommended his son, and for whose wisdom and integrity Commodus still entertained a reluctant esteem. The young prince and his profligate favourites revelled in all the license of sovereign power. A fatal incident decided his fluctuating character.

We see a vacillation of Commodus between these two opposing influences. Gibbon continues in paragraph 8:

One evening, as the emperor was returning to the palace through a dark and narrow portico in the Amphitheatre an assassin, who waited his passage, rushed upon him with a drawn sword loudly exclaiming, *The Senate sends you this!* The menace prevented the deed. The would-be assassin was seized by the guards and immediately revealed the authors of the conspiracy.

Lucilla, the emperor's sister, and widow of Lucius Verus, impatient of the second rank, and jealous of the reigning empress had armed the murderer against her brother's life. She had not communicated her black design to her second husband Claudius Pompeianus, a senator of distinguished merit and unshakable loyalty. The conspirators experienced the rigor of justice, and the abandoned princess was punished, first with exile and afterwards with death.

But the words of the assassin sank deep into the mind of Commodus, and left an indelible impression of **fear and hatred against the whole body of the Senate**. Those whom he had dreaded as importunate ministers, he now suspected as secret enemies. That assembly whom Marcus Aurelius, Commodus' father, had ever considered as the great council of the nation, and was composed of the most distinguished of the Romans; and distinction of every kind soon became criminal.

The possession of wealth stimulated the diligence of the informers. Rigid virtue implied a tacit censure of the irregularities of Commodus. Suspicion was equivalent to proof; trial to condemnation. The execution of a considerable senator was attended with the death of all who might lament or avenge his fate; and when Commodus had once tasted human blood, he became incapable of pity or remorse. (Gibbon Ch. 4, Para 9.)

[Matthew 26.52 states that: "*All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*". History records that in AD 192 Commodus was murdered, ending the Antonine line of emperors which had ruled since 138.]

Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap. 4, Para, 15 continues:

Pestilence and famine* contributed to fill up the measure of the calamities of Rome. The pestilence could only be imputed to the just indignation of the gods; but a monopoly of corn, supported by the riches and power of the minister, was considered as the immediate cause of the famine.

* A foretaste of the opening of the 3rd & 4th seals of the black horse & the pale horse and their riders as we shall see.

The popular discontent, after it had long circulated in whispers broke out in the assembled circus.

Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap 20 continues:

History has preserved a long list of consular senators sacrificed to his wanton suspicion, which sought out with peculiar anxiety, those unfortunate persons connected, however remotely, with the family of the Antonines, without sparing even the ministers of his crimes or pleasures. His cruelty proved at last fatal to himself. He had shed with impunity the noblest blood of Rome: he perished as soon as he was dreaded by his own domestics. Marcia, his favourite concubine, Eclectus, his chamberlain, and Laetus, his Praetorian praefect, alarmed by the fate of their companions and predecessors, resolved to prevent the destruction which every hour hung over their heads, either from the mad caprice of the tyrant, or the sudden indignation of the people.

Marcia seized the occasion of presenting a draught of wine to her lover after he had fatigued himself with hunting some wild beasts. Commodus retired to sleep; but while he was laboring with the effects of poison and drunkenness, a robust youth, by profession a wrestler, entered his chamber, and strangled him without resistance. . . . Such was the fate of the son of Marcus, and so easy was it to destroy a hated tyrant, who, by the artificial powers of government, had oppressed during 13 years many millions of subjects, every one of whom was equal to their master in personal strength and ability.

Gibbon *ibid*, Ch. 4, Para. 21 continues:

The measures of the conspirators were conducted with the deliberate coolness and celerity, which the greatness of the occasion required. They resolved instantly to fill the vacant throne with an emperor whose character would justify and maintain the action that had been committed. They fixed on **Pertinax**, praefect of the city, an ancient senator of consular rank, whose conspicuous merit had broke[n] through the obscurity of his birth, and raised him to the first honours of the state.

He had successively governed most of the provinces of the empire; and in all his great employments, military as well as civil, he had uniformly distinguished himself, by the firmness and prudence, and the integrity of his conduct. He now remained almost alone of the friends and ministers of Marcus [Aurelius]. Convinced at length of the death of Commodus, he accepted the purple with a sincere reluctance, the natural effect of his knowledge both of the duties and of the dangers of the supreme rank.

Laetus [the Praefect of the Praetorians who was in on the plot] conducted without delay his new emperor to the camp of the Praetorians, diffusing at the same time through the city a seasonable report that Commodus died suddenly of an apoplexy; and that the virtuous Pertinax had *already* succeeded to the throne.

Wikipedia, the Internet encyclopedia, has the following to say about Pertinax:

He was Roman Emperor for three months in 193. He is known as the **first emperor of the tumultuous Year of the Five Emperors, [A.D. 193.]** He tried to restore discipline in the **Praetorian Guards**, whereupon they rebelled and killed him. Upon his death he was succeeded by **Didius Julianus**, whose reign was similarly short.

Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Chap. 5 Para. 2 writes:

The Pretorian bands, whose licentious fury was the **first symptom and cause of the decline of the Roman Empire**, scarcely amounted to 10-15,000.

Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* informs us in a footnote on the first page of chapter 5 that the Praetorian Guard **set up by Augustus originally numbered 9,000-10,000. Vitellus increased them to 16,000,** and as far as we can learn from inscriptions, they never afterward sank much below this number.

A century later, **Diocletian greatly reduced their number, and Constantine suppressed the whole body** destroying their camp, depriving their Prefects of military authority and confining them to civil functions.

Gibbon: *ibid*, Chap. 5, Para. 5:

The Praetorians had violated the sanctity of the throne by the atrocious murder of Pertinax; they dishonoured the majesty of it by their subsequent conduct. The camp was without a leader, [at this time] for even the praefect Laetus, who excited the tempest, prudently declined the public indignation. Amidst the wild disorder, Sulpicianus, the emperor's father-in-law, and governor of the city, who had been sent to the camp on the first alarm of mutiny, was endeavouring to calm the fury of the multitude, when he was silenced by the clamorous return of the murderers, bearing on a lance the head of Pertinax.

Though history has accustomed us to observe every principle and every passion yielding to the imperious dictates of ambition, it is scarcely credible that, in these moments of horror, Sulpicianus should have aspired to ascend the throne polluted with the recent blood of so near a relation, and so excellent a prince.

He had already begun to use the only effectual argument, and to treat for the Imperial dignity; but the more prudent of the Praetorians, apprehensive that, in the private contract, they should not obtain a just price for so valuable a commodity, ran out upon the ramparts; and, with a loud voice, proclaimed that the Roman world was to be disposed of to the best bidder by public auction. [Emphasis added]

This infamous offer, the most insolent excess of military licence, diffused a universal grief, shame, and indignation throughout the city. It reached at length the ears of **Didius Julianus**, a wealthy senator [who had made a fortune in shipping, see below].

The vain old man hastened to the Praetorian camp, where **Sulpicianus** was still in treaty with the guards; and began to bid against him from the foot of the rampart. The unworthy negotiation was transacted by faithful emissaries, who passed alternately from one candidate to the other, and acquainted each of them with the offers of his rival.

Sulpicianus had already promised a donative of five thousand drachms (above one hundred and sixty pounds) to each soldier; when Julian, eager for the prize, rose at once to the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms, or upwards of two hundred pounds sterling. The gates of the camp were instantly thrown open to the purchaser; he was declared emperor, and received an oath of allegiance, from the soldiers, who retained humanity enough to stipulate that he should pardon and forget the competition of Sulpicianus.

He had reason to tremble. On the throne of the world, he found himself without a friend, and even without an adherent. The guards themselves were ashamed of the prince whom their avarice had persuaded them to accept; nor was there a citizen who did not consider his elevation with horror, as the last insult on the Roman name.

The nobility, whose conspicuous station and ample possessions exacted the strictest caution, dissembled their sentiments, and met the affected civility of the emperor with smiles and complacency and professional duty. But the people, secure in their numbers and obscurity, gave a free vent to their passions. The enraged multitude affronted the person of Julian, rejected his liberality, and conscious of the impotence of their own resentment, they called aloud on the legions of the frontiers to assert the violated majesty of the Roman empire.

The public discontent was soon diffused from the centre to the frontiers of the empire.

We quote James Trager, *The People's Chronology* for the year 193:

The Empire was auctioned off to the highest bidder, and goes to Rome's wealthiest senator **Didius Julianus**, 61, who has made a fortune in shipping and who outbids the father-in-law of the late Pertinax.

The generals commanding the Roman armies in Britain, Syria and Pannonia challenged **Didius Julianus**, and the Pannonian general, Lucius Septimius Severus, offered his troops on the Danube huge bonuses if they would leave immediately for Rome. He marched them 800 miles in 40 days, entered the capital 1st June 193 in full battle dress. They had Didius Julianus put to death in the palace baths after reigning only 66 days.

Septimius Severus in AD 193 began his reign that was to continue until AD 211. Under Severus the silver content of the Roman denarius fell to 50% from 90% under Trajan.

Later, under the era of the 4th Seal—that of the Pale Horse and Rider—the Roman Denarius had a silver content of only 0.02%. In **AD 196** Byzantium was sacked by the Emperor Septimius Severus and reduced to the status of an open village. Both Niger and Albanus, who were contesting for power with Severus were discovered and put to death in their flight from the field of battle.

It would be possible to go on at great length with the stories of the infighting that went on for this **period of civil war** depicted by the **Red Horse with its Rider**:—*“Taking peace from the earth, that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.”* Even the word **great** applied to the sword is important because it suggests **aggression** rather than simply maintaining law and order.

According to Bryce’s book *The Holy Roman Empire* there were during the 100 years from AD 185-284, **32** different emperors ruling the Roman Empire. This period of **32 different emperors** spanned the time from **Commodus** who ruled **180-192** until **Diocletian 284-305**, whereas during the previous more peaceful **100 years symbolized by the white horse and its rider**, there had been **only four emperors plus Nerva’s two years of rule, 96-98.**

Finally, **Diocletian** (284-305) split the office of the ruler-ship of Rome by quadripartition, that is, into **two Emperors and two Caesars**. As mentioned above, he also greatly reduced the Praetorian Guard, which was suppressed completely by Constantine. (See p. 11 of these notes above.)

There are some important principles to be learned about this civil war period of the Red Horse and its Rider with the Great Sword. **Commodus began the fatal change.**

Previous to this time in the period of the **First Seal**, the **Law was supreme and the sword of the army was its enforcer.** (See E. B. Elliott *Horae Apocalypticæ* Vol. 1, p. 151).

Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Chap. 3, Para. 22, stated that the **emperor was elected by the authority of the Senate and the consent of the Soldiers.**

The **Second Seal** period may be first dated from Commodus' exalting of Perennis, commander of the Praetorian Guard, and then Cleander his successor, to despotic authority at Rome and in the State, as Elliott says in his *Horae* Vol. 1, p. 152.

This seems to answer well to the figure of a **great sword** being put into the hand of the rider of the second Red horse of the Apocalypse.

After the murder of Commodus by the Praetorian Prefect Laertus, and the Praetorians' consequent sale of the Empire after their murder of Pertinax, **sovereignty passed into the hands of the Legions.**

Instead of THE LAW being supreme, supported by the sword, as in the era of the white horse and its rider, the SWORD came to rule. INSTEAD OF THE EMPEROR RULING THROUGH THE ARMY, THE ARMY RULED THROUGH THE EMPEROR. It was with Commodus that came this fatal change.

We repeat the important quote from Elliott's *Horae Apocalypticae* Vol. 1, p. 152.

It may be first dated from the epoch of his exalting Perennis, commander of the Praetorian Guards, and then Cleander his successor, to despotic authority at Rome and in the state; not without military insurrections, civil strife, and bloodshedding, even then as its accompaniments. Indeed this seems well to answer to the figure of a great sword being put into the hand of the rider of the second apocalyptic horse.

We have mentioned above how Pertinax, Praefect of the city, was next put on the throne, to be followed by Didius Julianus, then Septimius Severus.

Elliott continues to write about the policy of Septimius Severus (who ruled from AD 193-211). His policy was directed:

Not as in the age of the Antonines [of the White Horse era], to the curbing of the license of the military, and restoring the Senate and the civil magistracy to their proper station, authority and independence; but to the riveting upon the empire, and strengthening and perpetuating the system of pure military despotism. The licentious Praetorians that overawed Rome were quadrupled [in number].”

Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Chap. 5, Para. 31, tells how Septimius Severus, who came to the throne in AD 193 related to the Praetorians:

By gratitude, by misguided policy, by seeming necessity, Severus was induced to relax the nerves of discipline. The vanity of his soldiers was flattered with the honour of wearing gold rings; their ease was indulged in the permission of living with their wives in the idleness of quarters.

He increased their pay beyond the example of former times, and taught them to expect, and soon to claim, extraordinary donatives on every public occasion of danger or festivity.

Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap. 5, Para. 33, writes:

The command of these favoured and formidable troops soon became the first office of the Empire. As the government degenerated into military despotism, the Praetorian praefect, who originally had been a simple captain of the guards, was placed not only at the **head of the army**, but also of the **finances and even the Law**. (Emphasis added)

In every department of administration he represented the **person, and exercised the authority of the Emperor**. The first praefect who enjoyed and abused this immense power was Plautianus, the **favourite minister of Severus**. His reign lasted about 10 years till the marriage of his daughter with the eldest son of the Emperor. This seemed to assure his fortune, but proved to be his ruin.

The animosities of the palace, by irritating the ambition and alarming the fears of Plautianus, threatened to produce a revolution. The Emperor Severus who still loved him was obliged to consent to his death. After the fall of Plautianus, an eminent lawyer, the celebrated, **Papinian**, was appointed to execute the motley office of Praetorian praefect.

Till the reign of Severus, the virtue, and even the good sense of the emperors had been distinguished by zeal or affected reverence for the senate, and by a tender regard to the nice frame of civil policy instituted by Augustus. But the youth of Severus had been trained in the implicit obedience of camps, and his riper years spent in the despotism of military command. His haughty and inflexible spirit could not discover, or would not acknowledge, the advantage of preserving **an intermediate power, between the emperor and his army.** (Emphasis added)

He distained to profess himself the servant of an assembly that detested his person and trembled at his frown; he issued his commands, where his request would have been as effectual; assumed the conduct and style of a sovereign and a conqueror, and exercised, without disguise, the whole legislative as well as the executive power.

The victory over the senate was easy and inglorious. Every eye and every passion were directed to the supreme magistrate, who possessed the arms and treasure of the state; whilst the senate, neither elected by the people, nor guarded by the military force, nor animated by public spirit, rested its declining authority on the frail and crumbling basis of ancient opinion.

From Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap 6, Para.. 7-10 we summarize:

Septimius Severus reigned from AD 193-211, seventeen years, a long time for this era. His two sons Caracalla and Geta became emperors together. There was then a fruitless attempt to divide the Empire.

It was agreed that Caracalla, as the elder brother, should remain in possession of Europe and Western Africa; and that he should relinquish the sovereignty of Asia and Egypt to Geta who then might fix his residence in Alexandria or Antioch, cities little inferior to Rome in wealth and greatness. This impossible situation was put to an end by Caracalla, who arranged to have the unfortunate Geta murdered together with 20,000 of his "friends". He ruled from 211 until 217.

Gibbon, *ibid*, Chap. 6, Para. 11:

The crime did not go unpunished. Neither business, nor pleasure, nor flattery could defend Caracalla from the stings of a guilty conscience. The repentance of Caracalla only prompted him to remove from the world whatever would remind him of his guilt, or recall the memory of his murdered brother. On his return from the senate to the palace, he found his mother in the company of several noble matrons, weeping over the untimely fate of her younger son. The jealous emperor threatened them with instant death: the sentence was executed against Fadilla, the last remaining daughter of the Emperor Marcus. Even the afflicted Julia was obliged to silence her lamentations.

Elliott in his *Horae Apocalypticæ* Vol. 1, P. 153, mentions that: Plautian [Plautianus] the Praetorian Praefect who had previously “made Rome tremble”, despised and degraded the Senate not allowing any “intermediate power between himself and his army”, had bequeathed to the system the maxim of **ruling by the sword.** **“Enrich the soldiery; despise the people”** was a maxim well remembered and acted on by Caracalla; and which soon issued, as might have been anticipated, in a succession of revolutions, civil wars, and imperial murders, worse even than before.

Says Gibbon, “The dissolute tyranny of Commodus, the civil wars occasioned by his death, and the new maxims too of policy introduced by the house of Severus, *all* contributed to increase the dangerous power of the army.”

Thus commanders of armies contended for imperial office representing and impersonating the military dominancy of the Empire. Such in fact was the case very generally in the Roman civil wars of the century between Commodus and Diocletian, the period of **Red, Black and Pale Horses.**

Elliott *ibid*, Vol. 1, P. 154 states:

Instead of the civil wars arising out of strife between members of previously reigning royal families on questions of disputed succession as is the case in civil wars in modern Europe, e.g. the Wars of the Roses in England, it is the **generals of Roman Armies** contending in the arena of strife, whether as the nominees of the Praetorians, or some other army.

Caracalla is remembered for his **Constitutio Antoniniana** which dates from the first years of his reign, by which Roman citizenship was conferred on all freeborn members of the Empire. The 5% succession duties had now to be paid throughout the Empire. The effect of taxation in addition to the oppressive government will be discussed as causes of the decline of Rome under the **3rd Seal Era**. This era is said to co-exist with the second seal era from 200 AD only to degenerate further in the **4th Seal Era** commencing, as many agree, in AD 250.

Gibbon states that **Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian and Marcus** had visited their extensive dominions in person and their progress was marked by **acts of wisdom and beneficence**. The **tyranny of Tiberius, Nero and Domitian**, who resided almost constantly at Rome, or in the adjacent villas, was confined to the senatorial and equestrian orders.

Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. 6, Para. 13 writes:

But **Caracalla was the common enemy of mankind**. He left the capital, Rome, about a year after the murder of Geta and never returned to it. The rest of his reign was spent in several provinces of the Empire, particularly those of the East and every province was, by turns, the scene of his rapine and cruelty.

The senators, compelled by fear to attend his capricious motions, were obliged to provide daily entertainments at an immense expense, which he abandoned with contempt to his guards; and to erect in every city, magnificent palaces and theatres, which he either distained to visit, or ordered to be immediately thrown down. The most wealthy families were ruined by partial

finances and confiscations, and the great body of his subjects oppressed by ingenious and aggravated taxes.

Caracalla was murdered on March 8, AD 217 and was succeeded by the accessory to his death, **Opilius Macrinus**. **Macrinus** tried to reduce the exorbitant pay received by the Roman troops and was murdered on June 8, AD 218. **Heliogabalus (or Elagabalus)** acceded and the silver content of the denarius fell to 43%. He emptied the treasury with his excesses while his mother Julia Maesa ran the Empire.

In AD 222 Heliogabalus was murdered by the Praetorians and was succeeded by his cousin and adopted son who takes the name **Alexander Severus**. The Emperor was then killed by his own troops on the Rhine.

The troops made **MAXIMINUS** Emperor who ruled for three years, after which time he was murdered by the Praetorian Guard (AD 238), who named **GORDIANUS** Emperor. He ruled for six years until AD 244 when mutinous soldiers murdered the Emperor at the urging of **PHILIPPUS** who, in turn was proclaimed Emperor.

With few exceptions this sort of instability persisted as Rome continued to decline under the **Black and Pale Horses and their Riders of the THIRD AND FOURTH SEALS**, which appears to have ended with the quadripartition of the Empire by Diocletian in **AD 292**. See Elliott, 1, P. 203. We repeat from p. 11 of these Notes **Diocletian greatly reduced the Praetorian guard, and Constantine suppressed the whole body** destroying their camp, depriving their Prefects of military authority and confining them to civil functions.

JACOB AND ESAU

Knowledge of this history of Jacob and Esau explains many of our Lord's statements in John's Gospel, especially from chapters 5 to 8 inclusive.

Also a verse from John's Gospel chapter 10 verse 14 where our Lord says: "I know My sheep and are known of Mine."

If we go back to John chapter 7 we read:

John 7.1 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

7.2 Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.*

7.3 His brethren therefore said unto Him, "Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that Thy disciples also may see Thy works that Thou doest.

7.4 For *there is* no man *that* doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly.

If Thou do these things, shew Thyself to the world."

7.5 (For neither did His brethren believe in Him.)

* Note the expression, "the Jews' feast of tabernacles . . ." Bullinger in his note on John 2,13 where reference is made to "the Jews' Passover", mentions that after the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah corruption proceeded apace. The Lord found the nation as described in Malachi. Hence, what were once "the feasts of Jehovah" are spoken of as what they had then become, "feasts of the Jews" (5.1; 6.4; 7.2; 11.55; 19.42).

So here, in verse 5, we have evidence that even His own brethren were influenced by the general disbelief.

It seems that if he was to be crucified, it must not be obvious to too many of the public, even the true Israelites, Who He was.

Acts 13.27 For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning Him.

13.28 And though they found no cause of death *in Him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

13.29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *Him* in a sepulchre.

13.30 But God raised Him from the dead:

13.31 And He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses unto the people.

And again we can read the interesting verse in I Corinthians 2.6-8, which read:

I Corinthians 2.8 Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:

2.7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

2.8 Which none of the princes of this world knew: **for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**
(Emphasis added)

So, the High Priest, Sadducees, Scribes and Pharisees were now under the influence of the predominant Edomite rulers who aroused even many of the true Israelites to demand the crucifixion of their Lord. We know some were true Israelites from the shock shown by them on hearing the truth from Peter in Acts 2:

Acts 2.36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

2.37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

2.38 Then Peter said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

2.39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

2.40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

"Untoward" is from Greek *skolios* meaning "crooked". It seems obvious to whom Peter was referring.

Edward Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* chapter 16 paragraph 4 writes more on this untoward generation:

From the reign of Nero to that of Antoninus Pius, the Jews discovered a fierce impatience of the dominion of Rome, which repeatedly broke out in the most furious massacres and insurrections. Humanity is shocked at the recital of the horrid cruelties which they committed in the cities of Egypt,

of Cyprus, and of Cyrene, where they dwelt in treacherous friendship with the unsuspecting natives; and we are tempted to applaud the severe retaliation which was exercised by the arms of the legions against a race of fanatics, whose dire and credulous superstition seemed to render them the implacable enemies of human kind.

The enthusiasm of the Jews was supported by the opinion that it was unlawful for them to pay taxes to an idolatrous master; and by the flattering promise which they derived from their ancient oracles, that a conquering Messiah would soon arise, destined to break their fetters and to invest the favourites of heaven with the empire of the earth. It was by announcing himself as their long-expected deliverer, and by calling on all the descendants of Abraham to assert the hope of Israel, that the famous Barchochebas collected a formidable army, with which to resist, during two years, the power of the emperor Hadrian.

Notwithstanding these repeated provocations, the resentment of the Roman princes expired after the victory; nor were their apprehensions continued beyond the period of war and danger. By the general indulgence of polytheism, and by the mild temper of Antoninus Pius, the Jews were restored to their ancient privileges, and once more obtained the permission of circumcising their children, with the easy restraint that they should never confer on any foreign proselyte that distinguishing mark of the Hebrew race. The numerous remains of that people, though they were still excluded from the precincts of Jerusalem, were permitted to form and to maintain considerable establishments both in Italy and in the provinces, to acquire the freedom of Rome, to enjoy municipal honours, and to obtain, at the same time an exemption from the burdensome and expensive offices of society. The moderation or the contempt of the Romans gave a legal

sanction to the form of ecclesiastical police, which was instituted by the vanquished sect.*

* There is a biblical reference to the ecclesiastical police force, in John 7:

John 7.31 And many of the people believed on Him, and said, "When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these which this *man* hath done?"

7.32 The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning Him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

7.33 Then said Jesus unto them, "Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go unto Him that sent Me.

7.37 In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.

7.38 He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

7.39 (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed

on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

7.40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet."

7.41 Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?"

7.42 Hath not the Scripture said, That **Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was**?"

7.43 So there was a division among the people because of Him.

7.44 And some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him.

7.45 Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, "Why have ye not brought Him?"

7.46 The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man."

So here were the ecclesiastical police of the vanquished sect spoken of by Gibbon and indicative of the moderation of the Romans.

Or did the Romans have a fear of the Edomites in Jewry because of their expertize in subversion?

To call Christ a Jew requires a definition of a Jew. Christ was not an Edomite Jew like many who ruled in His time.

Elizabeth Dilling in her book *The Jewish Religion: its Influence Today* writes on page 1 of her book:

“But,” says the disinterested Christian, “what has that to do with today? What a group of Pharisees did two thousand years ago is over and done with!” However, the missing link in Christian understanding on the subject of “Pharisees” is best supplied by the Universal Jewish Encyclopedia (1943)

The Jewish religion as it is today traces its descent, without a break, through all the centuries, from the Pharisees. Their leading ideas and methods found expression in a literature of enormous extent, of which a very great deal is still in existence. The Talmud is the largest and most important single piece of that literature . . . and the study of it is essential for any real understanding of Pharisaism.

Concerning the Pharisees, the 1905 Jewish Encyclopedia says:

With the destruction of the Temple (70 A.D.) the Sadducees disappeared altogether, leaving the regulation of all Jewish affairs in the hands of the Pharisees. Henceforth, Jewish life was regulated by the Pharisees, the whole history of Judaism was reconstructed from the Pharisaic point of view, and a new aspect was given to the Sanhedrin of the past. A new chain of tradition supplanted the older priestly tradition (Abot 1:1) Pharisaism shaped the character of Judaism and the life and thought of the Jew for all the future.

Rodkinson (M. Levi Frumkin), who made the first English translation of the Babylonian Talmud, asks, in the section on the History of the Talmud:

Is the literature that Jesus was familiar with in His early years yet in existence in the world? Is it possible for us to get at it? To such enquiries the learned class of Jewish rabbis answer by holding up the Talmud , , , . The Talmud then, is the written form of that which, in the time of Jesus, was called the Traditions of the Elders, and to which He makes frequent allusions.

We find that there are three references to these, one in Matthew, and two in Mark. Here they are:

Matthew 15.1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

15.2 "Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread."

15.3 But He answered and said unto them, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

15.4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honour thy father and mother': and, 'He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.'

15.5 But ye say, 'Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *it is* a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

15.6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.*' Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

15.7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

15.8 'This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from Me.

15.9 But in vain they do worship Me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.'

15.10 And He called the multitude, and said unto them, "Hear, and understand:

15.11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”

15.12 But He answered and said, “Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

15.13 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Then there are the first 23 verses of **Mark 7**, which tell much the same story. In **Galatians 1**, Paul tells of his earlier experience where he was “exceedingly zealous of the **traditions of my fathers.**” See verses 13 & 14.

Galatians 1.13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

1.14 And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

In **Paul’s** epistle to the **Colossians** we read:

Colossians 2.8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the **tradition of men**, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

2.9 For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Peter, in his first epistle writes:

I Peter 1.18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by **tradition from your fathers**;

1.19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1.20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

1.21 Who by Him do believe in God, That raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

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THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE TARES.

The **2nd parable** of Matthew 13 continues with more instruction about the concept of the **kingdom of heaven**.

Matthew 13.24-30 instruct the multitude:

13.24 Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

13.25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

13.26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

13.27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, 'Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares?'

13.28 He said unto them, 'An enemy hath done this.' The servants said unto him, 'Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?'

13.29 But he said, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

13.30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, 'Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.'

Verses 31-33 tell the parable of the mustard seed followed by that of the leaven;

Before our Lord returns to the explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares in v. 37 we read the following:

13.34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake He not unto them:

13.35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, **I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."**

13.36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

Here is our Lord's explanation of the parable of the wheat and the tares. Note that in the last verse (36) Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house with His disciples.

It is only then that His disciples asked Him to explain the parable and which He told **ONLY TO HIS DISCIPLES** in: **Matthew 13.37-43:**

13.37 "He that soweth the good seed is the **Son of man**;

13.38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;

13.39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

13.40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

13.41 The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

13.42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13.43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This is so different from current church teaching by the preachers, many of whom say that at the end of this age Christians will be taken away in a "rapture" evidently leaving the earth to the others. The only "others" if the righteous are removed, are the wicked.

But this thankfully is not the teaching of our Lord.

No! We see from vv. 40-43

Matthew 13.40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

13.41 The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

13.42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

13.43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The teaching that the righteous will be “raptured” to heaven is also unlikely in view of Psalm 115.16:

Psalm 115.16 tells us that Heaven is God’s abode, and the earth He has given to the “children of men”.

Psalm 115.16 The heaven, even the heavens, *are* the Lord’s: but the earth hath He given to the children of men.

115.17 The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

The purpose of these parables is to give an understanding of the concept of the “kingdom of heaven” to some people and to withhold this understanding from others.

All planting is done in the field—the world, the good seed by the Son of man (v.37) then the evil seed by the enemy the devil while men slept (v.25). We must:

1. HEAR OR READ THIS PARABLE of the Kingdom of heaven and also:

2. UNDERSTAND THE PARABLE that the **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS IN THIS WORLD RIGHT NOW, AND IN IT ARE THE RIGHTEOUS TOGETHER WITH THE WICKED.** Then we are said to have received the word into good ground as mentioned in Matthew 13.8. This understanding enables us to give this understanding to some other people who are given the power to understand it. Giving this understanding to others is called here "bearing fruit." Without this understanding of the parable, we are unlikely to be able to explain it to others. Verse 23 tells us that he who received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, (all in the parable hear the word) and understand *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The kingdom of heaven is not the heaven of the preachers of today who tell us heaven is the destiny only of the righteous. This kingdom contains both good & evil, wheat and tares.

Who are the children of the kingdom sown here by the Son of man in the earth? This is a very important question.

Is there a clue in Scripture? Yes, but first for a bit of history. When King David died, his son Solomon although very wise, went not fully after the Lord, as *did* David his father.

I Kings 11.4 For it came to pass when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.

11.5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

11.6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as *did* David his father.

Because of this, God rent a large part of his kingdom from his son Rehoboam and from that time the children of Israel were divided into two parts:

The Northern kingdom of Israel, and the **Southern kingdom of Judah**. Both these nations became so idolatrous and despite many warnings, first the Northern Kingdom fell into the hands of their enemy Assyria, and Israel's Capital Samaria finally fell at the end of Hezekiah's 6th year in 717 BC. (See Davidson's dating in Gayer *Old Testament Chronology* p. 83.)

The Southern Kingdom of Judah learned nothing from this tragedy and Judah's disobedience led them also to fall into the hands of their enemies the Babylonians when **Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 584 B.C.**

In the case of the Northern kingdom, they were told that from being God's people, God put them away in divorce and most of the people were put into bondage to Assyria and their people were physically moved out of their own nation. They became what were known as "not a people."

Bullinger tells us in his Companion Bible p. 1208 that **HOSEA was a prophet sent to the Ten Tribes (or Northern Kingdom)**, but he had warnings for Judah also, as well as promises of future blessings.

Now to the question, **who were the children of the kingdom sown by the Son of man in the earth** that we read about in Matthew 13.24?

Matt. 13.37 tells us that He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man.

Verse 38 tells us that the good seed are the children of the kingdom. Who were they?

Hosea 2.23 writes:

Hosea 2.23 I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I **will say to *them which were not My People*, ‘Thou art My People;’** and they shall say, ‘*Thou art My God*’.

I will sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy, i.e. I will call her *Ruhamah*. Her that had not obtained mercy = lo-Ruhamah (not pitied); and I will say unto them which were not My people = Lo-ammi, Thou art My people= Ammi. This reference in Hosea is to the Northern Kingdom, which because of the sin of national adultery, that is idolatry, the worship of other gods, the nation went into captivity to Assyria. Assyria's conquest of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was completed in 717 B.C. when Samaria finally fell to the Assyrians. Israel lost its nationhood and became what Scripture describes as “**not a people**”. This description fits only the Northern Kingdom of Israel!

According to God's law of Deuteronomy 24, we read that a man cannot remarry a woman he has previously put away. Our Lord had to die at Calvary to be able to remarry Israel.

Deuteronomy 24.1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house.

24.2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's *wife*.

24.3 And *if* the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife;

24.4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

24.5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

So re-marriage to the same spouse under God's law is **only legal** after the death of the spouse and **only possible** after the resurrection of that same spouse. So Christ had to die to be free to remarry Israel and rise again for this to be possible.

The remarriage of Israel was only made possible by our Lord's death at Calvary and His resurrection. Christ's remarriage to Israel is strictly according to God's law. (See Deut. 24.1-4)

The Importance Of Jeremiah 18 & 19:

Jeremiah points out the **important differences in the destinies of the House of Israel and the House of Judah**. Jeremiah in chapter 18 prophesies that the **House of Israel** is a vessel of **unbaked** clay in the hands of the potter and marred in his hands. (v. 4) and then he makes it anew.

Jeremiah 18.1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

18.2 "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words."

18.3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

18.4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make *it*.

18.5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

Note well the next verses!!!

18.6 “O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay *is* in the potter’s hand, so *are* ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel

18.7 *At what* instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy *it*;

18.8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

Compare this with Judah in chapter 19!

Jeremiah 19.1 Thus saith the Lord, “Go and get a potter’s earthen bottle, and *take* of the ancients of the People, and of the ancients of the priests;

19.2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

19.3 And say, ‘Hear ye the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

19.4 Because they have forsaken Me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it to other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

19.5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into My mind:

19.6 Therefore, behold, **the** days come, saith the Lord, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

19.7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcases will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

19.8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

19.9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

19.10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee.

19.11 And shalt say unto them, 'Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this People and this city, as *one* breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury *them* in Tophet, till *there be* no place to bury.

Judah's destiny as a nation, is different from that of Israel. "**Broken that cannot be made whole again**" whereas Israel, "**cannot I do with you as this potter?**" Remake you?

If we are concerned for the true Israelitish people in Judah, then remember that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fenced cities of Judah and took them. (See II Kings 18.13.) So these Judahites would have escaped eventually into Europe with Israel.

Returning to our theme, the parable of the wheat and the tares. This parable together with the 7th parable of the net and the fish (see below), show that it is the **unrighteous who will be taken out of the kingdom of God not the righteous**.

It was the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven that was preached by John the Baptist, our Lord, and the apostles including Paul that is made so important in Scripture. It was the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that our Lord spent so much time explaining.

It is the kingdom of God, otherwise called the kingdom of heaven that is the destiny of true believers and God goes to great lengths to give His people an understanding of the concept of His kingdom.

Our preachers should understand such passages as I Corinthians 6 where we read:

I Corinthians 6.9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

6.10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Towards the end of Paul's life he gave this warning to Timothy:

II Timothy 4.3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4.4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

The kingdom of heaven is so important and only certain people are given to understand it. When our Lord was asked by His disciples in Matthew 13.10 "Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?" His reply in the next verse was:

Matthew 13.11 Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Our Lord and the apostles preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, right at the beginning, and to the end of the Book of The Acts of the Apostles as these passages illustrate

Acts 1.1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

1.2 Until the day in which He was taken up, after that He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom He had chosen:

1.3 To whom also He showed Himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

Then right at the end of the Book of Acts we read:

Acts 28.30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

28.31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

(Emphasis added)

How did we ever get away from this teaching of our Lord and the apostles and to which they devoted so much of their time and effort?

Much error and other false teachings appeared in 19th century England. What Christ said will happen at the end of the world, was changed by the preachers who say Christians will be raptured away to heaven at the end of this age, inferring that the wicked will be left inhabiting the earth despite our Lord's promise in Matt. 5.5 that the meek will inherit the earth.

We do not need new doctrines we need the truth as it was taught from the beginning by our Lord, His prophets and Apostles, and communicated to us through Scripture. The people are taught that the Jews of today are Biblical Israel, God's servant people and the Lord's "sheep". They are not taught of the Edomite takeover of the Jewish Nation in 37 BC, or the importance of Jeremiah 19. The Edomites have always been the enemy of the Israelites, God's true servant people, and His "sheep", hence the continual hatred of the rulers of the Jewish nation for Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The leadership in the Jewish nation, after 37 BC, passed into the hands of Edomites. The rulers of the Jewish nation on many occasions tried to stone or otherwise kill Christ but, as we are told, the rulers dared not because the people regarded Him as a good man if not the promised Messiah. On some occasions he escaped from them as in John 8:

John 8.58 Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.

8.59 Then took they up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Eventually they did crucify Him and that was in God's plan, but does not justify their actions as we read in Matt. 18.7.

Matthew 18.7 Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

There would have been adverse propaganda by the rulers about Jesus and His followers, and this would explain how even the true Israelites were deceived, as shown by the utter remorse shown by the Israelites among the Jews when Peter told them (as recorded in Acts 2.36-7) that Jesus was, in fact, the Christ.—Peter said to them:

Acts 2.36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, Whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

2.37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?”

The harm done by ignorance of the meaning of these scriptures is beyond description. The Jews of today rule the world possibly more than they did at the time of our Lord. So-called Christian Zionism in the Church has enabled a voting bloc in the U.S. to elect politicians who want to secure the continuation of Edomite controlled Israel with wars and subjugation of the enemies of today's nation of Israeli.

We now turn to:

The **3rd parable:** In vv. 31-32, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a **tiny mustard seed**, which is sown in the field, which is the **world**,* and described in this parable (verse 32) as “the least of all seeds”, and grows, “and becometh a tree so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

* The field is the world: see verse 38, above.

The parable as recorded in Scripture:

Matthew 13.31 Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

13.32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

The interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares tells that in the kingdom of heaven the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one live side by side.

But who are the children of the kingdom who grow from such a small beginning as depicted as a mustard seed?

Deuteronomy 7.7 The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:

The Jerusalem Bible says: "you were the least of all peoples."

Then we read:

Genesis 22.15 And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time,

22.16 And said, by Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son*,

22.17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore;

and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

22.18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice.

So the small seed has become multiplied as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea shore as promised.

In verse 24 the Lord puts forward the 4th parable before sending the multitude away in verse 36 after which He went into the house and explained the parable of the wheat and the tares to the disciples. ("To those who have will more be given.")

The **4th parable** tells that the kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Matthew 13.33 Another parable spake He unto them; "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Leaven in Scripture is always used in a bad sense, and meal is always used in a good sense in Scripture, leaven occurs 18 times in the O.T. and 11 times in the N.T.

Meal is always used in a good sense in Scripture, 11 times in the OT; then once, here in Matthew and once in Luke 13.21.

The evil leaven is unpretentious at first but destined to take over the righteous lump of meal. We are being taught to avoid contamination of good with evil and how evil can spread with such devastating results for the Kingdom.

We can search the Scriptures to find other references to leaven such as Matthew 16, Mark 8 and Luke 12. For instance:

Matthew 16.11 How is it that you do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

16.12 Then understood they how that He bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Also, we read of the kingdom of heaven being taken by force in **Matthew 11.12:**

Matthew 11.12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

But when we read these sad words, we can rejoice in Matthew 21.43 where our Lord informs the chief priests and elders of the people (identified as such in Matt. 21.23 & 45) who had asked the hostile question of Him “by what authority doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority?” (Matt. 21.23) our Lord informs these hostile questioners in Matt. 21.43 that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Note it is to a NATION to whom it is to be given!

Only a few verses before this verse, (v.19) our Lord in the morning as He returned into the city, He was hungry:

Matthew 21.19 And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." And presently the fig tree withered away.

The fig tree as Bullinger points out represents the nation's national privileges.

The wicked are in the kingdom now but are destined to be taken out as we have been told.

There are other references to "leaven" in the New Testament where we are warned of the danger of false doctrine spreading through the righteous. These are to be found in Paul's epistles

I Corinthians 5.6 . . . Know ye not that a little **leaven leaveneth the whole lump?**

5.7 Purge out therefore the old **leaven**, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

5.8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old **leaven**, neither with the **leaven** of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The remaining verses in I Corinthians 5 are very important and tell how that the actions of those outside the church, God will judge, but those within it, and commit sins not repented of, such as in this particular case was fornication, we have to judge and take action to stop the sin from spreading like leaven spreads.

Paul also mentions leaven in Galatians:

Galatians 5.9 A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

The rest of the parables after this 4th one about the leaven, are reserved for the disciples only.

In the **5th parable**, the kingdom of heaven is likened to treasure hidden in a field.

We see the word "again" introducing and linking together the next three parables, which are spoken to the disciples only.

In Matthew 13.38 in the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares, we are given to see that "**The field is the world**".

Matthew 13.44 Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

The "man" in the previous parable about the wheat and the tares is the "Son of man."

We know that the field is the world, so what is the **treasure** hidden in the field (hidden in the world)? The clue is in Exodus:

Exodus 19.5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a **peculiar treasure** unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine:

19.6 And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

So putting together the symbols for this parable: The man, which we now know is the "Son of man" Who found treasure, —His people Israel, hidden in the field, —in the world which having found it, He hid it again (v. 44) and then He gave all that He had — His life, and bought the field, —the world.

Paul in I Corinthians confirms that his Christian followers were "**bought with a price.**"

I Corinthians 6.20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

I Corinthians 7.23 Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

In the next **6th parable** the kingdom of heaven is likened to a **merchant man** seeking goodly pearls, who when he has found one of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Continuing with the parables commencing with "again" hence only for the ears of the disciples we read:

Matthew 13.45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

13.46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Pearl is only mentioned once in the Old Testament where it appears in Job in connection with the price of wisdom. However, in Revelation 21.21 we read a connection between "pearl", "Israel" and the gates of the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 21.21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl:

On these gates of pearl we are told in **Revelation 21.12**, was written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Revelation 21.12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

In the 7th parable the kingdom of heaven is likened to a net that was cast into the sea:

Matthew 13.47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

13.48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

13.49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

13.50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Again we see the wicked are cast away at the end, not the righteous raptured away.

We have mentioned how that the Lord revealed the mystery of the kingdom to His disciples and not to the multitude.

In verse 51 we are given confirmation that the Lord's disciples have understood what He had told them.

Matthew 13.51 Jesus saith unto them, "Have ye understood all these things?" They say unto Him, "Yea, Lord."

Having established this, He can now go on to the 8th parable:

In the **8th parable** every scribe instructed into the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a householder who brings forth out of his treasure, things new and old.

13.52 Then said He unto them, "Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

So in addition to teaching out of Moses and the prophets of old, now that they understand it, there is this new teaching from the Lord about the kingdom of heaven. We can say it is new on the basis of what our Lord said in Matthew 13.35:

Matthew 13.35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "**I will open My mouth in parables: I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.**"

(This was quoted by our Lord from Psalm 49.4 & 78.2)

So from the parables we see the kingdom of heaven is here on earth and there are in it the children of the kingdom and the children of the wicked one.

The kingdom of heaven is not the "heaven" as preached today because we read of it as being like a **seed being planted in the earth**. Also the wicked as well as the righteous are in it at present. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that God has allowed anything wicked in heaven, His own heavenly abode. It is apparently the earth where the kingdom of heaven is planted and where the children of the kingdom have been given to live as a destiny albeit initially with the wicked.

Psalm 115.16 states:

Psalm 115.16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men.

115.17 The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

The only reason verse 17 was also included here is because it destroys another popular but false doctrine.

Isaiah 60.21 Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified.

60.22 A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his (its) time.

The gospel of the kingdom of heaven must be very important because it was the gospel proclaimed by John the Baptist, Our Lord, Peter and Paul.

In first proclaiming it John the Baptist's preaching was, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Matthew 3.1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

3.2 And saying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Then right to the end of the Book of the Acts of the Apostles we also read reference made to the kingdom of God.

Acts 28.23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

28.24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

Here we see how important it is to preach Jesus Christ out of the Law of Moses and out of the prophets, showing how **He was the fulfilment of prophecy.** Also:

Acts 28.28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it."

28.29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

28.30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him.

28.31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

The Sovereignty of the Kingdom of God:

The kingdoms of this world referred to in Daniel 2, which made up the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, were reckoned as those kingdoms, which ruled over Jerusalem in sequence. These were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome etc. These kingdoms came into existence well before the time of their world domination. For instance Rome was said to have been founded around 753 BC, whereas it became the dominant world power after the Battle of Actium in BC 31. So it is with the kingdom of God. We are told in Daniel 2.44:

Daniel 2.44 In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Of course, the kingdom of God has not yet reached its supreme power. However, as the Jewish nation centred in Jerusalem was ruled by a High Priest and his lackeys at the time of our Lord, these could be said to rule over the kingdom of God. This was confirmed by the words of our Lord when he addressed the chief priests and Pharisees in Matthew 21.

Matthew 21.43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

21.44 And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder."

21.45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. The kingdom of God could not be taken from these chief priests and Pharisees had they not already had sovereignty over it.

Also this makes sense when we consider that in Daniel 2.44 it is stated "the kingdom shall not be left to other people."

Also this concept seems to be supported when we read the kingdom parables which tell as in the parable of Matthew 21.33-41 that the vineyard is let out to husbandmen, and the householder went into a far country.

The story of how these hireling governors usurped control of the Jewish nation in 37 A.D. is told in Josephus' *Antiquities of the Jews* Book XIV, chapter XII. Here we are told that Herod bribed the Roman leader Antony, who made Herod king of the Jewish nation. Herod marched on Jerusalem with the help of the Roman army and had Antigonus, the last of the Maccabean High Priest rulers of the Jewish nation murdered. Herod, who was an Edomite (a descendant of Esau), now apparently set about putting in place rulers who would serve his interests.

So sovereignty over Jerusalem and Judea at this time passed out of the hands of the Israelites to their enemies the Edomites. This explains their hatred of Jesus the Christ.

F W Farrar in his book *The Herods* p.81 writes:

It was now necessary for Herod to appoint a High Priest Hananeel of Babylon on whom Herod's choice fell, is identified by Derenbourg with the Annas of the Gospels, whose name acquired so sombre a pre-eminence in the Gospel narrative of Christ's condemnation . . . (his) son-in law was Joseph Caiaphas.

The Stone, which is referred to in Daniel 2.44 evidently, is our Lord. He is the Stone That will strike the image on the feet bringing it down and ushering in the kingdom of God on earth.

Daniel 2.44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Revelation 11.15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms [sovereignty] of this world are become *the kingdoms* [sovereignty] of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever

THE FOURTH SEAL

Of Revelation 6

E. B. Elliott's magnificent *Horae Apocalypticae* first published in 1844 provides an interpretation of the Book of Revelation. Events, which had not as yet occurred, were presented for us to search out. We are told in Proverbs 25.2,

Proverbs 25.2 It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.

We are living in a time when we find that much of the Book of Revelation is fulfilled. Elliott's interpretation of the Book of Revelation is not only interesting from the point of view of increasing our knowledge of history but also to show that because it was written around A.D. 69, **before** any of these events occurred, **only the Divine hand could have written it.** No other history has been written in such detail **before** the events occurred. Because God's hand is undeniable in fulfilled prophecy and God's enemies have made every effort to ridicule and suppress any knowledge of fulfillment of prophecy. Meanwhile, we can rejoice in the knowledge of the words of our Lord that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed (**Matthew 10.26 and Luke 12.2**)

Elliott gives us the reason why he embarked on the mammoth task of writing his *Horae Apocalypticae*. See pages v & vi of its Preface for this. He says:

“It was the increasing prevalence among Christian men in our country of the *futurist system of Apocalyptic interpretation*,—a system which involved the abandonment of the opinion held by all the chief fathers and doctors of our Church respecting the Roman Popes and Popedom as the great intended anti-Christian power of Scripture prophecy,—that suggested to me the desirableness, and indeed necessity, of a more thoroughly carefully investigation of the whole subject than had been made previously.

Elliott next lays down the important strict criteria for the acceptance of prophetic writings on page vii of the Preface of his book. Here he says:

“I am perfectly willing to accept the criteria laid down by Mr. Greg “*Creed of Christendom*”. At the beginning of his 4th chapter on “The Prophecies” he expresses himself thus: “In order to establish the claim of any anticipatory statement, promise or denunciation, to the rank and title of a *prophecy*, four points must be ascertained with precision:

1. What the event was to which the alleged prediction was intended to refer.
2. That the prediction was uttered, in specific not vague language, before the event.

3. That the event took place specifically, not loosely, as predicted.
4. That it could not have been foreseen by human sagacity.

Now with these points clarified, we return to our theme with the opening of the 4th Seal.

Revelation 6.7 And when He had opened the fourth seal I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, "Come and see."

6.8 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.

Elliott mentions: *Horae Apoc.* Vol. 1, p. 194

There is just one of the four destroying agencies mentioned in the vision that is passed over without notice by the historian;—that of *the wild beasts* of the earth. But though unnoticed by him, it is not unillustrated. For it is a well-known law of nature that where the reign of man fails that of the wild beasts begins; and that they quickly occupy the scenes of waste and depopulation.

The Book of **Exodus 23.29** mentions a similar situation, which existed as Israel proceeded to occupy the Promised Land:

Exodus 23.29 I will not drive out the inhabitants from before thee, said God to Israel, "in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee.

Continuing this quote of Elliott; *ibid* Vol. 1, p. 194:

In fact we have it on record, that at an epoch some twenty or thirty years after the death of Gallienus [who died in 268], their multiplication had risen to an extent, in parts of the empire, that made it a crying evil.

"Quando cum feris bella," said Arnobius* about the year 296, "et proelia cum leonibus gesta sunt? Non ante nos?"

So does he specify *wild beasts* as one of the plagues with which the land was then afflicted, and of which Christians (as if such evils had never happened before) were upbraided as the guilty cause.

***Arnobius** was a Christian writer at the time of the Diocletian persecution from 303 to the Edict of Milan 313. (The 10 days for years persecution of Rev. 2.10.)

After the emperor Valerian's disastrous capture in the 6th year of his reign, [A.D. 260] by the Persian king Sapor, leaving Gallienus his son and associate on the throne, sole emperor, Gallienus' wretched character induced insurrections and rebellions so frequent and universal, that the rival assumers of the purple during the next twelve or fourteen years are designated by Pollio and other historians as *the 30 tyrants*.

Of these the larger number were mere ephemeral emperors.

But three stand out prominently, as having for several years severed three great divisions of the empire from the central empire under Gallienus in Rome and Italy;—viz. *Odenathus* and *Zenobia*, from A.D. 260 to 273, in Syria and the East; *Aureolus*, from A.D. 260 or 261 to 268, in Illyricum; and *Pothumus* and then *Tetricus*, from 258 to 274, in Gaul, Spain, and Britain.

Elliott p. 195-6

Such was the empire's mutilated internal state, (of the barbarian invasions, synchronically, from without,) at the time of Gallienus' death in March, 268; and on the election of Claudius, the first of the five restoring emperors, as his successor.

On his election the cry of the Roman people and senate to him was, **"Save the empire!"** Aureolus' own soldiers opened the way to this by assassinating him at Milan.—Then came the news of a terrible Gothic invasion. Claudius wrote thus, on his road to the senate:—"320,000 Goths have invaded the Roman territory . . . The whole republic is fatigued and exhausted . . .

The strength of the empire, Gaul and Spain, [with Britain too,] are usurped by Tetricus: . . and the archers of the East serve under the banners of Zenobia." In a great battle fought near Naissus in Dardania, the legions at first gave way, "oppressed by numbers, and dismayed by misfortunes;" till Claudius' generalship decided the victory in his favour.

Still the Gothic war continued, and was diffused for a while over the provinces of Moesia, Thrace, and Macedon; then at length repelled within the mountain tracts of Haemus. There the *pestilence* made havoc among both Goths and Romans, as *the sword* had done before it; and, among the Roman victims, A.D. 270 cut down Claudius himself.

Had the destroyer DEATH yet resigned his commission to kill with the sword and with pestilence on the Roman earth?

The armies chose *Aurelian* for his successor; the second of the restoring emperors. A bloody and doubtful conflict" with the Goths, was the first act of his reign: followed by a peace, of which the most memorable and important condition was Aurelian's final *abandonment to the Goths of the great province of Dacia*.

great province with impunity:" then a successful inroad into Germany: and a peace, of which one of the conditions, to which Gibbon calls attention, was that the barbarians should supply the Roman army with 16,000 recruits. For, says he, "the infrequency of marriage, and ruin of agriculture, had affected the principles of population; and not only destroyed the strength of the present, but intercepted the hope of future generations."

Elliott ibid p. 198:

Next came the revolt, and successful marauding expedition round the whole maritime coast of the empire, of a colony of Franks settled by Probus in Pontus: then the revolt and defeat of Saturninus, one of the most distinguished of the Roman generals in Egypt; then the rebellion and defeat of Bonosus and Proculus in Gaul. So at length in the year 281, all enemies seeming to be vanquished, Probus, like Aurelian before him, triumphed at Rome; and like Aurelian, was immediately after assassinated. —A poet's idyll, written on *Carus'* election thereupon to the imperial throne, expresses his ardent hope that this new emperor might be the heaven-sent instrument for putting an end to the then aera of affliction and mourning, banish war to Its proper abode in Tartarus, and bring back white-robed Peace and Justice.

Next came an Allemannic invasion of Italy; one as alarming as that of the Goths before it. Three great battles ensued: in the first of which, fought near Placentia, the Romans suffered so terrible a defeat that "the immediate dissolution of the empire was apprehended.

Elliott ibid p. 197

"Then the Sibylline books were consulted at Rome by Aurelian's order. But "all too late," cried a voice from the Senate-house, "for the salvation of the republic. It is like sick men, who only consult eminent physicians when in absolute despair of recovery."

At the same time those walls of larger circuit were traced out round Rome, which still arrest the stranger's eye by their solemn grandeur: in order to the temporary defence, if so it might be, of the otherwise "defenceless mistress of the world. In the two subsequent battles, however, Aurelian conquered. The actual dissolution of the empire was prevented: and Aurelian proceeded to reunite to the empire those vast separated members that Claudius's Letter made illusion to, of Gaul and Spain in the West, Syria in the East.

He effected each and either object: but only through the means of two bloody civil wars:

(for such the Eastern was, in fact, as well as the Western:) and having done so, and triumphed at Rome, he set out to repel the Persian invasion A.D. 275, and on the march, near Byzantium, was by one of his generals assassinated.— In the course of Aurelian's sad, though splendid reign, let me ask again, had DEATH ceased to kill with the sword on the Roman earth, or the empire cast aside its hue of threatening dissolution?— But what next? Says Gibbon: "The strength of Aurelian had crushed on every side the enemies of Rome: but, after his death, they seemed to revive with an increase in fury and numbers."

In the year next following we read of hosts of the Alani, that spread themselves over Pontus, Cappadocia, Cilicia, and Galacia, traced their course by the flames of cities and villagers, but who were at length repulsed by the aged emperor *Tacitus*: and then of that emperor's sudden death, (by assassination probably,) and also the assassination of his brother and successor *Florian*: and then of the election of *Probus*, the *third* of the restoring emperors; who "set himself" says Niebuhr, "to rescue the empire."

First came the deliverance of Gaul, oppressed by invading armies of Franks, Batavi, Burgundians, and other barbarians; "who, since Aurelian's death, had ravaged the

Had DEATH, in his view, ceased to destroy on the Roman earth even under Probus, or the empire assumed a healthful or joyous hue?—The shorter reign of *Carus* was marked by the repulse of the Sarmatian invaders of Illyricum; and an invasion of Persia, successful probably, but of which the details are uncertain. What is, however, certain is, that Carus, in some mysterious manner there met his death, whether lighting-struck or by assassination; and that the Roman army then returned homeward.

This was near the end of 283. Then civil strife ensued between three several candidates for the empire. Numerian was murdered by Aper, Aper by Diocletian: which last in a great battle fought in 285, near Margus in Moesia, defeated and slew Carinus, and secured the empire for himself.

And now began a new a memorable aera in Roman imperial history. Judging the weight of the whole empire too great for any one emperor, Diocletian formed the plan of dividing it. **So in 286 he began by its bipartition between himself and Maximian; and in 292 completed his plan by a quadripartition: Galerius and Constantius being added in the East and West, respectively as the two Caesars; in association with the two senior emperors, or Augusti.**

Just previous to this quadripartition Maximian, had had success in some battles with barbarian invaders of Gaul; but been unsuccessful in a war with Carausius, the usurper of Britain; whom, in fact, he and Diocletian were forced to acknowledge. So Eutropius:— "It was while Carausius was in rebellion in Britain, and Achillaeus in Egypt, while the Quinquegentiani were harassing the African provinces, and Narses [the Persian king] making war on the eastern frontier, that Diocletian made Maximian *Herculius Augustus*, Constantius and Galerius *Caesars*."

Nor does Eumenius in his Panegyric address in the year 297 to Constantius, give a different picture of things as that which in 292 existed in the Western Provinces. In fact, he compares it with the disgraceful state of the Republic under Gallienus. Mamertinus, in his previous Panegyric of 289, had declared the reign of *famine* and *pestilence* to have continued down to Maximian's accession in 286.—After this, however, (perhaps we may say from 292,) a real and more effective restoration of the empire began, only in its new form.

I brought down my historic sketch, as proposed from Gallienus's death in A.D. 268 to Diocletian's quadripartition of the empire in 292.

And now let me once more repeat my question. Had DEATH as yet vacated his seat of power; or given up his commission of killing over the Roman earth with the four several agencies of *sword, famine, pestilence, and wild beasts*?—It is precisely at this closing epoch of the period under review that Arnobius gives us his very illustrative testimony, already in part cited to the truth of the 4th Apocalyptic Seal.

“Men complain, There are now sent us from the gods *pestilence, drought, wars, scarcities, locusts, hail*, and other things noxious to man:” and then he asks,—“But was it no so in ancient times also?” Again; “If every species of corn be now devoured by *locusts*, or if floods destroy the human race, was it not so before? Were there not wars with *wild beasts*, and battles with *lions*, and destruction from *venomous snakes*, before our time?”

Very striking seems to me this picture of the empire in 296; with its distinct and particular specification of all the four evils mentioned in this Seal: and very striking its contrast with Tertullian’s picture of the empire’s cultivation, populousness, and prosperity about a century before, shortly after the ending of the prosperous period of my first Seal. Indeed could there be a more direct contrast?

Elliott continues, Vol.1, p. 201 of his *Horae*:

I must now advert to one point of marked apparent *difference* between the prophecy and the history: viz. that in the *prophecy* Death's destroying commission might seem to be expressly limited to *the fourth part* of the Roman earth; whereas in the *history* of the period just reviewed, A.D. 248-292, devastations **extended over it all**.

But let my readers well mark that if the prophecy differs here from the history, it differs from, and is inconsistent with itself also: seeing that ***the whole horse is depicted with the livid death-like hue, not its fourth part only***. Besides that the whole tenor of the prophecy seems to mar this Seal's evil as the climax to the evils of the two preceding Seals, to which no limitation is attached. —What then [is] the solution of this difficulty? And can we find one probable in itself, and that shall reconcile the prophecy alike with itself, and with the facts of our historic era? After much consideration, my mind has turned more and more to that very remarkable reading in Jerome's Latin Vulgate, to which Mede long since called attention, and Daubuz after him, *super quatuor partes terrae*; "over *the four parts* instead of *the fourth part* of the earth." [A cardinal four and not an ordinal number fourth]

Elliott goes on to explain that if this be accepted, **it makes the prophecy agree with itself and with history.**

Elliott makes a very interesting concluding remark:

“I have cited *Gibbon* the testimonies of three of our most eminent modern historiographers of Roman history, *Sismondi*, *Schlegel*, *Niebuhr*, with reference to the state of the empire at that precise epoch of its legitimized quadripartition that I have brought my historic sketch down to.

Says *Sismondi*: “Diocletian put an end to this long period of anarchy . . . but such a succession of invasions and civil wars, and so much suffering, disorder, and crime, had brought the empire into a state of *mortal languor*, from which it never recovered.” Says *Niebuhr*, speaking of the state of things after Diocletian’s accession: “After the cessation of the plague, [which *began* to decrease in the time of Probus,] the empire was suffering from general distress: and its condition was very much like that which followed after the **BLACK DEATH** in the middle ages.”

Says *Schlegel*: “The division of the empire among several sovereigns appeared then [under Diocletian], as afterwards, an unavoidable and necessary evil.

In other words, the several parts and members of the vast body of the Roman empire, *which approached nearer and nearer to a dissolution*, began to fall to pieces." —How long, we may think, would its utter and total dissolution have been delayed, but for the infusion, not very long after, of *Christianity* into its political system, as a new principle of life?