

The Battle of Armageddon

If you are a true child of God, please give this message serious thought and study it thoroughly; it concerns you.

Revelation 16:12-16 reads: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

I make no attempt, as usually is done under this caption, to picture a horrible scene of warfare with the destruction of mankind in such wholesale lots that blood will run down the streets as deep as the horse's bridle. This was as mentioned in these verses of Scripture is not a literal war, as many suppose, but a spiritual one. It's a war of right against wrong, righteousness against unright-



eousness and spiritual wickedness in high places, and it will be won by the blood of Jesus and not carnal weapons of warfare.

Nature of the Church That Jesus Built

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." *Prevail* means "to gain ascendancy or win mastery over a thing." So Jesus declared He will build a church that the forces of evil will never win mastery over, nor triumph over. Many of its members will fall before the onslaught of evil, but the church marches on to victory. In this verse He declared the indestructibility of the church. Praise God for the privilege of being a member of an indestructible church. In this message when the church is mentioned, I refer to the true Church of God, the bride of Christ, which was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus (Acts 20:28).

The Church of God is indestructible in its very nature. It is built upon an indestructible foundation, which is Jesus. It is not built upon Peter, but upon Christ Jesus, the Son of the Living God. He is the rock upon which the church is built. In 1 Corinthians 10:4,

Paul declared that Christ is the Rock that supplied Israel her spiritual food and drink on their way from Egypt to the promised land. Its head, as well as foundation, is Jesus. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Ephesians 5:23). Its door is Jesus. "I am the door" (John 10:9). Its walls are the walls of salvation (Isaiah 26:1). Its law is the law of Christ; its bond of union is the love of God; its membership is those saved through the blood of Jesus.

To destroy the Church of God is to destroy its foundation which "standeth sure," its head which is "alive forever more," its door which is Jesus, its law which "endureth forever," and its walls which are "eternal." These are all eternal and immovable, hence the gates of hell shall never prevail against them.

The Battles of the Church

Immediately after the inauguration of the church on the Day of Pentecost, she entered into conflict with the enemy, and this con-

flict shall last until the consummation of ages and her reception into the Father's presence in eternity. The first great enemy she met is symbolized as a great red dragon, Revelation 12:3, which is the symbol of paganism. Pagan Rome fought bitterly against Christianity in its infancy and tried to exterminate it from the earth by killing the saints. History tells us that thousands of Christians were martyred by pagan Rome.

As the Christians were martyred, their faithfulness to Christ caused others to accept Him, which weakened Paganism and strengthened Christianity. The church maintained her spiritual fervor and power until paganism had been subdued in this first great battle. The devil, realizing his defeat as he worked through paganism, began changing his tactics. As the result of the faithfulness of the early Christians and the power of pure Christianity, Pagan Rome lost her power and crumbled and fell. The devil did not give up his battle against Christianity but merely changed his methods and continued to fight.

His appearance was made this time as symbolized by the beast of Revelation, Chapter 13, which symbolizes papal Rome. This beast received its power and seat and great authority from the dragon that preceded it. Papal Rome came to her power through the fall of pagan Rome, but, unlike her predecessor, she acknowledged Christianity, but it was an apostate Christianity. The true church maintained her power and glory from A.D. 33 until A.D. 270 at which time she began to apostatize which made possible the development of papal Rome, the

beast in Chapter 13. During the period of time between A.D. 270 and 530 the church was fast falling away from the pure teachings of the Bible and men were seeking pre-eminence, which in time developed into papalism. The church was heading into the long night of apostasy with papal Rome in full power and the edict, "Be a Catholic or die," in full force the world over. From A.D. 530 until A.D. 1530 the Roman Catholic church had full power and, like her predecessor pagan Rome, she martyred thousands of true Christian people. The only remnants of the true Church of God were scattered and were compelled to worship God in catacombs for the safety of their lives.

The End of the Apostasy and Power of Rome Broken

During the 1260 years of the apostasy (A.D. 270–A.D. 1530), the world lay in spiritual darkness with many hungry souls longing for relationship with God and spiritual life. God found a man He could use to break the news to the world that "the just shall live by faith." A Catholic priest named Martin Luther began preaching "the just shall live by faith," and multitudes embraced his message. As a result we have in history the story of the sixteenth century Reformation. At this point of time the Catholic church lost her grip on the world and her power was broken under the preaching of the Gospel, and soon whole nations embraced Christianity again. Note the beast of Revelation, Chapter 13 (papalism), was only to continue in power forty-and-two months or 1260 days, the same time the church was in the apostasy or the wilderness (Chapter

12, verse 6). Computing this time from A.D. 270 when the papacy began deceiving the people, it reaches to A.D. 1530, the date of the first Protestant creed.

Since the devil could no longer deceive the nations through Roman Catholicism, he devised another mode of deception. Revelation 13:11-12 states: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." John saw the first beast (papalism) rise up out of the sea, the *sea* signifying people, multitudes, and nations (Revelation 17:15); but this second or two-horned beast came up out of the earth, the *earth* signifying the earthly institution of Catholicism.

This two-horned beast symbolizes Protestantism, or denominationalism, which came out of Catholicism, and is the exact image of her.

For only a few years the sixteenth century reformers worked together in the preaching of the Gospel—trouble and differences soon arose. Luther and Zwingli disagreed over the ordinance of the Lord's Supper and separated and created sects of their own. Other reformers soon disagreed on points of doctrine and went out to create sects and divisions of their own. Soon they became hostile toward each other and persecutions arose among them, and thus we have the birthday of denominationalism. The first Protestant creed was written in A.D. 1530, and men have continued to this day building sects (called churches) on their opin-

ions and ideas. The devil has worked and is working through denominationalism as well as he did through Catholicism to hinder the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. He devised the denominational system (in which he caused division among Christians), and they became hostile towards each other and even put armies on the battlefield to fight for their creeds. Protestantism is guilty of bloodshed as well as paganism and papalism. In God's eyes the denominational system is no better than papalism or paganism, though there are many true-hearted saints in her yet. Men have become beast worshipers and love their denominations more than they do Jesus of Nazareth. His precious name can be used in vain and blasphemed and men think nothing of it, but if you say something against or about their denomination, they are ready to fight.

The period from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1880 is called the Protestant Age or, as the prophet termed it, "a dark and cloudy day." During these years the saints were scattered throughout the different sects and there was no local congregation of the one true church. All were subject to and governed by the creeds and doctrines of men. It was during this 350 years as symbolized by the three-and-one-half days (Revelation 11:7-11) that the two witnesses (Word and Spirit) were dead, and it is impossible to have a local Church of God where the two witnesses are dead; only in a universal sense did the church exist.

The Last Reformation

As the saints were scattered in the various denominations and

worshiping as their creeds directed, the Lord spoke to D. S. Warner and revealed to him the Bible teachings of the unity of God's people, that all His people should be one in the body of Christ, governed by the Word of God and the Spirit of God and not the creeds of men. In A.D. 1880 he began preaching this glorious truth, the one church divine, and multitudes heard the call of God and obeyed, leaving their little sectarian pens and taking their stand with the children of God upon the sea of glass (Bible), thus constituting the Church of God, a people governed by the Word and the Spirit. This is the Church of God, "a called-out body of believers"-called out of sin and the babel of confusion that exists in denominationalism into the one body of Christ constituting the Church of God on earth. I do not propose to say that all who worship with us are real saints. We have an example in the Bible of two who worshiped with the early disciples and were not genuine; but I do say that out of this movement God will bring a remnant which will constitute His bride and will sit with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Praise His name forever!

Since the day Jesus built His church and she started her march across the pages of time, she has battled the devil. He has tried every conceivable means whereby he might destroy her, but Jesus said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail [or win mastery over it] against it." Working through the method of wolves in sheep's clothing, he has tried to deceive the very elect with false doctrines of every kind. Men have arisen from the ranks of the church speaking perverse things and

have led many astray, but still the church marches on, guided by the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

The Three Unclean Spirits

Revelation 16:13-14 tells us: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." In these verses the Revelator saw unclean spirits go out of the mouth of the dragon, which symbolizes paganism; out of the mouth of the beast, which symbolizes Romanism; and out of the mouth of the false prophet, which symbolizes Protestantism. Paganism was the first great enemy Christianity met, and with all the power paganism could muster, it tried to destroy Christianity. Then came papalism out of the ruins of paganism, and she, too, tried to exterminate Christianity. After papalism lost her power by the coming of the sixteenth century reformation, the false prophet (the two-horned beast), which symbolizes Protestantism, appeared on the scene.

Protestantism was just another method used by Satan to destroy pure Christianity by dividing the saints into hostile sects. So we see these three symbols: the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, symbolize an enemy of true Christianity back through the ages. These three powers have always been, and always will be, an enemy of the pure church of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. So we are

not surprised that before the end of time they should array themselves together to completely destroy it.

These spirits that John saw went out unto the kings of the earth and the whole world, and their mission was to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. They were to form a confederation of all the defeated factions of paganism, Romanism, and Protestantism along with the forces of wickedness and array themselves against the pure bride of Christ (the Church of God) to destroy her. But we note in verses 15 and 16 that God is gathering His faithful ones into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon for the decisive battle.

In the Old Testament Armageddon is the place where Israel was defeated in Josiah's day, thus symbolizing a field of overthrow. It stands as a symbol of a place of slaughter and defeat. When the confederation of wickedness and false religions are complete, the entire host of God's enemies will be utterly defeated by Jesus' return and the pouring out of God's wrath upon all false religions. It is a spiritual battle, a battle in which these unclean spirits proceeding out of the mouth of paganism, Romanism and Protestantism will deceive the nations and overthrow multitudes spiritually (their profession will remain the same), killing them with their deception; but the true saints (church) will hold on to God's Word and will win the final victory. I do not say this battle will not result in physical persecution, for I believe it will, just as the persecutions of the morning dispensation took the lives of many true children of God.

Are These Spirits Working Today?

The question is immediately asked: When will these three unclean spirits begin their deadly work? They have already begun it and very few of our people have been able to detect them. They are working through one of the most outstanding religious moves of our times. They are working through the "Federal Council of the Churches." I have before me a pamphlet entitled "The Federal Council of Churches," which exposes the infidelistic, modernistic and unpatriotic teachings of this organization that is destroying "the faith that was once delivered to the saints." Oh, may God awaken our ministers to the fact that this infidelistic organization is creeping into our midst, not only destroying the faith of the church, but undermining democracy. It is working through the open doors of the churches of America, thus deceiving millions of people who think anything which comes in the name of religion is all right. I quote from this pamphlet some of the teachings from this organization.* (These statements were made at the Philadelphia conference of Federal Council of Churches.)

"We call upon our people to mobilize the spiritual resources of our church in support of an international system of government ... There are many hateful and un-Christian things in Russian Communism, but there is at least something in a society in which youth is brought up to serve the community rather than to seek success in the form in which we

commonly think of it in America today ... Dr. E. Stanley Jones, a speaker for the Federal Council's Christian mission program, wrote in his book *Christ's Alternative to Communism* on page 224: 'When the Western World was floundering in an unjust and competitive order ... God reached out and put His hand on the Russian Communists to produce a juster order and to show a recumbent church what it has missed in its own gospel ... I am persuaded that the Russian experiment is going to help (and I was about to say force) Christianity to rediscover the meaning of the Kingdom of God on earth.'

"When Dr. Jones makes God reach out and put his hand upon Russian Communism to produce a juster order, he thereby makes Communism a juster affair than Christianity. Thus he puts justice on the side of atheism, and in so doing he denies the Bible. He denies blood redemption. He denies regeneration from above. He places the ministry of the churches below the ministry of the state. In short, he denies every basic truth of Christianity."

This organization is striving through the cooperation of the churches of the land to create a world Religio-Socialistic state. Can we be so deceived as to be led into the trap of the devil? This organization maintains interlocking connections with Communist organizations and is endeavoring to build a socialistic state, both in government and religion. Much is being said today about the reconstruction of the new world, and most certainly we would not deny that our world needs to be reconstructed, not upon the Federal Council of Churches' doctrine, but upon the

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principles and teachings of Jesus. This organization that is being supported by a large majority of denominations will play a great role in the reconstruction of the new world, and religious liberties will not be as they are today. It teaches evangelism through Christian education and not through the teachings of Jesus, thus leaving out the new birth and the simple fundamentals of the Bible. It is endeavoring to bring about church union and not church unity.

The true church of the Bible will never be an amalgamation of all religions in the world. When it becomes affiliated and cooperates with false religions and is yoked with them, it ceases to be God's church. His church will always be a people separated from such, standing on the precious Word of God. May God help every minister of Jesus Christ and every saint to investigate more thoroughly this organization posing under the caption of the "Federal Council of Churches." It is nothing more than a screen from behind which Satan is deceiving the people, and not a few of the Church of God ministers have fallen into the snare and are cooperating and working with it.

Oh, God, anoint our eyes and help us to detect the enemy, regardless of what garb he may wear. The three unclean spirits are surely working through this agency to bring about a confederation of all the factions of false religions in the world. Its ambitious program is to bring about an amalgamation or federal union among all denominations but its ambitions do not end there. Its great objective is to unionize the three great branches of religion, the Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic in

one confederation. The only outcome of such an amalgamation would be the developing of a political and religious hierarchy, depriving us of our religious freedom.

Unity, or perhaps I should say *union*, is the cry of the hour. Outstanding religious leaders see the need of being one, they see the sin of division, but as for the remedy, THEY SEE NOT. Union is not unity. Unity is the state of bring one and is produced only by an indwelling of the Spirit of God. Whereas, union is the act of uniting two or more things. Union will not erase denominational differences; only God in the heart can do that. Our religious controversies will only increase.

This organization is gaining power continually, having now the constituency of twenty-four denominations, the combined membership of which is about twenty-six million. When fully developed it will have the same power the papal beast had during the long night of apostasy when the edict was in force, "Be a Catholic or die." God is still calling his people out of all denominations where they have been scattered by false shepherds, calling them to the one body of Christ predicated upon an experience of salvation which makes us all one in Him and binds us together in love. The true Bride (church) heeds no affiliations with man-made organizations called churches to support her or to direct her. She gets her leadings from the Bridegroom.

The prayer of Jesus, as recorded in John, Chapter 17, "That they all may be one," is as much the desire of his heart as it was when He prayed, but we will be one only as the Spirit of God inducts us into the one body of

Christ through the new birth, and not through the unionizing method. May God help us to be faithful to the Word and the message He has entrusted in our hands and expose the works of the devil and keep ourselves separated from any movement that tends to destroy "the faith."

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

Harold Barber

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