

Revelation Study (Part 5)

SARDIS (A.D. 1730 - 1880) the fifth time period of the Gospel Day (also called the Wesleyan era)

- 5th letter = Revelation 3:1-6
- 28 miles southeast of Thyatira

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SARDIS

- built on a mountain (thought to be impossible to capture)
 - "to capture the acropolis of Sardis" had become proverbial for "doing the impossible" ¹
 - yet, it was captured (twice)
 - parallels the lack of keeping pace with the light
- known for their dyeing of wool (different colors)
 - verse 5 of the letter to Sardis speaks of ones who are "clothed in **white** raiment"
- old city was literally destroyed by an earthquake
 - Revelation 6:12 *"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake."* (end of this fifth-seal era)

HOW DID CHRIST APPEAR TO THIS FIFTH-SEAL ERA?

- **Ephesus** - stars (ministry) in Christ's right hand (control)
- **Smyrna** - first and last (unchanging Christ)
- **Pergamos** - sharp sword with two edges (the Word was what they needed to overcome)
- **Thyatira** - eyes like unto a flame of fire (the sword—the Word—would come through the eyes, the ministry; Hebrews 1:7)
- **Sardis** - "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God"
 - "seven Spirits" = Holy Spirit in each church era; that which gives spiritual life
 - message was give to people who had "a name" (profession) but really were "dead"
 - they had the Word without the Spirit
 - using the Word with another spirit, a "seducing spirit," will produce "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1)

THE FOURTH TRUMPET SOUNDS

"And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."

(Revelation 8:12)

- Third trumpet = message on justification (just shall live by faith)
 - light is progressive, but people failed to move with the light
 - thus the necessity for the fourth trumpet
- "fourth trumpet angel" = ministry declaring the message on holiness
 - this message had been lost from the morning-time apostasy to A.D. 1730, holiness was completely lost sight of in the sense of being a publicly declared message.

¹ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/revelation/revelation-3/revelation-3-1.html>

- **Letter to Sardis** (Rev. 3:4-5): "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment."
- **Fifth Seal** (Rev. 6:11): "And white robes were given unto every one of them."
- What are the garments of the saints?
 - Job 29:14 – "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me"
 - Isaiah 61:10 – "garment of salvation"
 - Revelation 19:8 – "righteousness of the saints"
- God was bringing about a gradual restoration of the truths that were lost through the morning apostasy and the ensuing Dark Ages.
- The message of holiness was lost sight of until John and Charles Wesley began to herald it in A.D. 1730. It was such an unpopular message that, even though they were Church of England ministers, they were not allowed in the Church of England pulpits. They had to preach in cornfields; they had to preach anywhere they could form a pulpit. The Church of England would not lend them a pulpit.
- luminary agents = sun (New Testament), moon (Old Testament), stars (ministry); all agents of light
- this era had light on justification & on sanctification (2/3) but was lacking the third part of light (unity)
- truth comes in three parts.

TRUTH COMES IN THREE PARTS

"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark 4:26-28).

- "kingdom of God" = Church of God (Hebrews 12:22-23)
- "seed" = Word (Luke 8:11)
- "into the ground" = morning time when the seed was first sown
- "should sleep" = spiritual apostasy
- "night" = papal night
- "and day" = cloudy day
- "first the blade" = message on justification in the Lutheran era
- "then the ear" = message on holiness in Wesleyan era
- "the full corn in the ear" = unity of God's people, oneness of the faith; ear of corn is singular (one church) with many kernels (many members)
- "one faith, one body, one Lord"; Jesus prayed that we all be "one"
- this is the third part that "shone not"

JOHN & CHARLES WESLEY

- 2 of 19 children born to Samuel (minister) & Susanna Wesley
- John attended Oxford and was soon ordained into the ministry.
- Charles created a society (which John was a part of) whose members took vows to lead holy lives, take Communion once a week, pray daily, and visit prisons regularly. In addition, they spent three hours every afternoon studying the Bible and other devotional material.

- Note: John was a minister & Charles a hymn writer
- Fellow students mockingly called this the "holy club" (later called the "Methodists")
- Discuss meeting between John & the Moravians (ship - storms - extreme calm - singing)
- Conversation between John & a Moravian minister at the end of the trip:

His first inquiry, "Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God" surprised Wesley so that he did not know what to answer. The German observing this, asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "He paused, and said, "I know He is the Savior of the world." "True," was the reply; "but do you know He has saved you?" Wesley answered, "I hope He has died to save me." Spangenberg only added, "Do you know yourself?" Wesley replied, "I do." But he later commented "I fear they were vain words." ²

- This led to deep soul-searching and he realized he had been trusting in his works.

Recalling this time, he wrote, "In this refined way of trusting to my own works, and my own righteousness...I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or heal therein till the time of my leaving England. On shipboard, however, I was again active in outward works; where it pleased God, of his free mercy, to give me twenty-six of the Moravian brethren for companions, who endeavored to show me a more excellent way. But I understood it not at first. I was too learned and too wise: so that it seemed foolishness unto me. And I continued preaching and following after and trusting in that righteousness whereby no flesh can be justified." ³

- God used a reading written by Martin Luther to completely open Wesley's eyes. He had been trusting in his own righteousness.
- John then devoted his life to evangelism. He once said, "I look on all the world as my parish." ⁴
- In the 1700s, when land travel was by walking, horseback or carriage, Wesley logged more than 4,000 miles a year. During his lifetime he preached about 40,000 sermons, rode about 250,000 miles, and gave away 30,000 pounds (\$60,000). Never one to waste time, he discovered that he could read while walking, on horseback, or in a carriage. (Efficient) ⁵
- John was a pastor in Georgia for two years
- John stressed the idea of a personal relationship with God and sanctification
 - This emphasis on sanctification became the hallmark of Wesley's movement. He often said that the mission of Methodism was to "spread scriptural holiness throughout the land."
- Methodists helped pioneer the original "focus on the family," making the Victorian era the heyday of home-based religious instruction. ⁶

² <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesley-the-methodist/chapter-vi-to-america-and-back/>

³ http://www.forthegospel.org/articles/the_conversion_of_john_wesley

⁴ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wesley/journal.vi.iii.v.html>

⁵ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ch/news/2003/jun20.html?start=3>

⁶ Ibid

FIFTH TRUMPET:

"And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:1).

- When John Wesley passed off the stage of action in 1791, a ministry followed him that claimed to be his followers, but they took John Wesley's name and did a terrible work. This is why we must consider both the fourth and fifth trumpets together to see the complete picture.
- Not only did the third part (unity) not shine, but what light they did have began to be darkened.
- "key of the bottomless pit" – Jesus promised to give us the keys (plural) of the kingdom. These keys are the Word & the Spirit. Also, spoken of as the key and a chain (Rev. 20:1)
- But this ministry had only the key (the Word; Luke 11:52)
- When the morning-time ministry had the key and a chain, they shut up the dragon (paganism) in a pit for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2). In other words, they revealed paganism to be without a Bible foundation.
- The fifth trumpet ministry used only the key, so they opened the bottomless pit.
- Revelation 11:7 says a beast came up out of this bottomless pit. It looked like Christianity, but its true self was reveal when it began to speak (preach) as the dragon (Revelation 13:11).

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit" (Revelation 9:2).

- when the pit was opened, "smoke" came out
- "smoke out of the pit" – smoke is symbolic of the glory, or the presence of God (Exodus 19:16-18; Revelation 15:8).
- "pillar of cloud by day" (Exodus 13:21) – God's presence leading Israel through the wilderness
- "pillar of cloud descended on the tabernacle" (Exodus 33:9-10) – God's presence coming down and talking with Moses
- "the cloud filled the house of the LORD" – God's presence entered Solomon's temple at the dedication
- however, this smoke was produced by a fallen ministry, so it was a "false glory"
- this glory obscured the "sun" and the "air"
 - sun = Word, New Testament; air = Holy Spirit; John 3:8.
 - *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*
- the Word & the Spirit could not shine (have right of way) because of false glory
- what came out of the smoke?

LOCUSTS

"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth . . . And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months . . . And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men"

(Revelation 9:3, 5, 7).

- where in the Old Testament have we read of locusts? (Exodus 10—ten plagues)
- where did they come from? up out of the smoke (false glory)
- just as the locusts were so thick in the plagues in Exodus that they darkened the sky, these locusts prevented people from seeing the light on the third part – unity
- locusts are described in Nahum 3:17 as captains (mighty men, leaders)
 - Amplified Bible: *"Your princes are like the grasshoppers and your marshals like the swarms of locusts which encamp in the hedges on a cold day--but when the sun rises, they fly away, and no one knows where they are."*
- locusts had "breastplates of iron" (Revelation 9:9).
 - we should have "breastplates of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14)
 - the message of that era was holiness/righteousness
- locusts had power like the power of a scorpion (poisonous)
 - these ministers will be as scorpions to their people (spiritual death)
- locusts had "faces of men" but "hair as women" = they were out of divine order
- locusts had "crowns like gold" – imitation, fool's gold

(2) "fifth trumpet angel" = ministry that has compromised, producing many, many sects (described as locusts in Rev. 9:7)

- religious sects: subdivisions of a larger religious group (separates because of dissension)
- "tormented five months" – use prophetic time symbols on pg. 10 to convert this to years
- 30 days x 5 months = 150 days (a year for a day = 150 years)
- A.D. 1730-1880 – this era was 150 years

"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon" (Revelation 9:11).

- king = angel (ministry)
- Abaddon & Apollyon mean "destruction" and "destroyer"
- What are they trying to destroy?
- Revelation 11:7 – ". . . the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them [verse 3 – two witnesses; Word & Spirit], and shall overcome them, and kill them [kill their influence]."
- What started out as Methodism, ended as Welsh-Calvinist Methodist, the Nazarene, and the Salvation Army. Since then the Wesleyans and many other sects have split off.
- This Protestant beast has a deceptive spirit, making people think it is Christianity. However, it is only truly paganism with a deceptive garb on.

(3) church building = manmade organizations on the low earthly level