

Egypt, and outlines the plagues in verses 28-36, perhaps giving the most important one first. It is a strange statement: "He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against His word". Does this not indicate that Yahweh provided the circumstances for circumcision to take place so that they could keep His Passover according to His law?

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Interpreting the seals

I am deeply disappointed, though not surprised, in Brother Tony Benson's comments on the interpretation of the sixth seal ([Nov. 2001, p. 435](#)). Everybody agrees that there is much symbolic language in the Apocalypse. The real question is, How are the symbols to be interpreted—fancifully, or according to some well-recognised principle or group of principles? The one great principle to which I hold is that if one part of Scripture plainly refers or alludes to another part, then as a conscientious student I must take this into serious consideration in shaping my own interpretation.

The six seals are particularly rich in quotations and allusions to earlier Scripture, but so is every chapter in the book of Revelation. Brother Benson dismisses the force of the existence of these quotations and allusions by saying that Brother Thomas spends some fourteen pages on it in *Eureka*. The correct conclusion from the fact that there is a minimum of ten allusions to the Olivet Prophecy in Revelation 6 (see below) must surely be that the Lord is giving us his own personally expanded view of this prophecy. Oth-

erwise, why are those allusions there? I would appreciate a direct answer to this point. With any other book of the Bible, we would leap gleefully on the allusions and thankfully use them to help us interpret the passage in question. This does not happen here; instead the Continuous Historic view generates any number of fanciful and subjective interpretations regarding the Roman Empire. With sufficient imagination and determination, I am sure one could do the same with the Inca or the Chinese Empires.

Brother Benson also makes the point that there is no common conclusion among those who have abandoned the Continuous Historic view, and implies that this is a reason for *not* abandoning it. A poor theory remains a poor theory whether or not there is a better alternative in sight. There is a better methodology in sight, letting Scripture interpret Scripture, one he describes as "clearly the right thing to do".

For the benefit of those who may not know about the ten allusions mentioned above and may like to check whether or not they do exist, they are shown in the table below.

The most remarkable proof that the seals really do refer to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 comes from the mouth of the Lord himself. Revelation 6: 15,16 says: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us* from the face of Him That sitteth on the throne". This is an allusion to Hosea 10:8, which the Lord himself uses on the way to the cross, referring to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me,

Revelation 6		Olivet Prophecy in Matthew 24	
v. 4	take peace from the earth	v. 6	wars and rumours of wars
vv. 5-7	famine prices	v. 7	famines, pestilences
v. 9	those slain for the word of God	v. 9	deliver you up to be slain
vv. 12,13	sun black moon as blood stars fall	v. 29	sun black moon as blood stars fall
v. 14	heaven removed as a scroll	v. 35	heaven and earth shall pass away
v. 15	kings, princes, chief captains (being the ones whose pastime is eating and drinking)	v. 38	eating and drinking
v. 17	the great day of His wrath is come	v. 51	and shall cut him asunder

but weep for yourselves, and for your children . . . Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, *Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us*" (Lk. 23:28,30). That this last passage refers to A.D. 70 surely cannot be denied. Therefore, it inexorably follows that Revelation 6 *must* refer to the same thing.

We could develop this argument in much greater detail, but I trust that this will at least open the eyes of those who have never seen the existence of this group of very plain allusions before now. I can well recall my own amazement when my attention was first drawn to them.

Wilfred Alleyne
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Reply

I presume Brother Alleyne's ten allusions are made up by counting as three separate allusions the ones given in separate lines from Revelation 6:12,13, and also the one to Luke 23 given outside the table. The wording in the table is as given by Brother Alleyne, and it should be noted that the wording of Matthew 24:29 is not as close to Revelation 6:12,13 as indicated in the table, though there are certainly similarities. I do not find the final two in the table very convincing, but nevertheless it is undoubtedly true that the seals prophecy contains a number of allusions to the Mount Olivet Prophecy.

However, Brother Alleyne does not in his letter take any account of the allusions to many other prophecies contained particularly in the sixth seal. As pointed out in my article, Brother Thomas does so to a considerable extent in his interpretation of the sixth seal as applying to the overthrow of paganism. (Brother Alleyne seems to have thought that I was saying that Brother Thomas spends fourteen pages on allusions to other scriptures in the whole of *Eureka*; what I was saying was that he does so regarding the sixth seal alone.) Similar language is used in Isaiah 34 (which is actually quoted) about Edom, and in Ezekiel 32 about the overthrow of Egypt, for example. Surely this use of language taken from scriptures referring to a number of different events at a number of different times indicates an event like these earlier events; we are not intended to pick on just one of the parts of Scripture referred to and use that to determine the application.

Regarding the quotation from Hosea 8, regarded by Brother Alleyne as conclusive evidence for applying the seals to A.D. 70, I do not

believe that it is. If we look at the verse in its context, we see that it was not originally a prophecy of A.D. 70 but of the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians. Our Lord must therefore have been referring his listeners to it on the basis of a similar situation to occur in A.D. 70. Furthermore, he applies it to the mothers of Jerusalem and what they would experience in the Roman siege and conquest, whereas in Revelation 6 it is applied much more generally to the civil and military leaders.

Brother Alleyne alleges that "the Continuous Historic view generates any number of fanciful and subjective interpretations regarding the Roman Empire". This is not so; there is only one Historic interpretation of the seals regarding the Roman Empire, that they relate to pagan Rome, culminating in the fall of paganism from power at the hand of Constantine in the early fourth century A.D. Those who have come along and said that the Historic interpretation is not one guided by other scriptures, and that if we only let Scripture interpret Scripture we shall get the right answer, have interpreted the seals in three different ways: of A.D. 70; of the fall of human kingdoms at the return of Christ; and in more general terms of the affairs of the kingdoms of men from the first century to the return of Christ. Brother Alleyne is quite right when he says that a poor theory is still a poor theory even if a better one has not emerged, but I submit that the commonly held Historic interpretation of the seals is in accordance with the scriptures alluded to in the text, and that the failure of its opponents to come up with any commonly agreed alternative does help to reinforce this.

Tony Benson

The river of Egypt

I am glad that Brother Geoff Cave, in "Ezekiel's visions of the Millennium", points out that "the river" (of Egypt) in Ezekiel 47:19 is not the Nile (Dec. 2001, p. 470). The Promised Land does not include Egyptian territory because, as Brother Cave says, if it did, then the children of Israel would not have had to leave Egypt to gain their inheritance!

It is not only this which proves the point, however; our concordances confirm it too. With one exception, the Hebrew word used in the phrase "river of Egypt" in Scripture is *nachal*, denoting a seasonal river—one which flows in