

newness of life. Amongst those to be raised will be Abraham, whose name will be great, and King David.

Coming back to Revelation 21, it is clearly with reference to this section of Isaiah's prophecy that John says in verse 5: "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are *true* and *faithful*". Because the words spoken by God are true and faithful, the dead in Christ must rise, and the promises of God must come to fruition.

#### "Him that is athirst"

The tremendous prospect that is held out to those who overcome is emphasised in verses 6 and 7: "And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son".

If we overcome, God says we shall inherit all things. We shall be His sons and daughters, and He will be our God. The connection with the Davidic covenant has already been pointed out. But just consider the extent of the love of God revealed to us in these verses:

- God will give us the water of life
- it is entirely free.

Where else in the Scriptures do we come across similar words to these? It is in Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, *come ye to the waters*, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money and without price*". Here is the appeal of God to each one of us. Come to the waters of life, and drink deep. It is free; no money is required. These waters on offer are living waters, and they will truly satisfy.

On what basis is this water of life offered to us? On the basis of the covenant that we have embraced in Christ: "Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an *everlasting covenant* with you, even the *sure mercies of David*" (v. 3). The word "sure" in Hebrew is again the word *aman*, the root word from which 'amen' is derived: "all the *promises* of God in him are yea, and in him *Amen*" (2 Cor. 1:20). God's covenant is everlasting. God is a God Who keeps covenant and mercy, and His words are faithfulness and truth. He wants to give us life through the covenants of promise. Let us therefore come to the waters and drink. By so doing we shall be admitted into the holy city, the new Jerusalem, that John describes in the second part of the chapter.

(To be continued)

## Understanding Revelation 12

### 4. Important links with other parts of the Bible

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*Many of the details of Revelation 12 are described in terms that echo past Biblical events. This study is brought to a conclusion by examining some of these links between Revelation 12 and other parts of the Bible. First to be dealt with is the comparison between the man child Constantine and Jesus, and, following that, the parallels between the dragon and Egypt.*

**T**HE MAN CHILD mentioned in Revelation 12:5 reminds us of Jesus, but cannot refer to him since the events of this chapter take place many years after his birth and ascension. However, the parallels are seen to be even more striking when we consider that it was the collec-

tive 'daughter of Zion'<sup>1</sup> that gave birth to Jesus, and not just the individual Mary.

The vision in Revelation 12 sets out a series of events that are a parody or travesty (false imitation) of those concerning Jesus, because they relate to Rome instead of Zion. The parallels between the two situations are shown in [Table 1](#) overleaf for ease of comparison.

#### The dragon and Egypt

The details involving the great red dragon (Gk. *drakōn*), representing the power of pagan Rome,

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1. 'Daughter of Zion' probably means 'daughter that is Zion'.

<b>Table 1 Zion and Rome</b>	
<b>Zion and Christ</b>	<b>Rome and Constantine in Revelation 12</b>
The daughter of Zion in travail (Mic. 4:10; 5:3).	The daughter of Rome, apostate Christianity, in travail.
Travail for the nation of Israel at the hands of Herod the Great (Jer. 31:15; Mt. 2:16-18), then the Romans (Lk. 21:22-24), and down through the ages, ending with "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer 30:6,7). See also Isaiah 66:7,8.	Travail of persecution due to pagan opposition to Christianity.
The national virgin of Israel gave birth to Jesus (Jer. 31:4,21,22; Mic. 5:1-4).	Apostate Christianity gave birth to Constantine.
First Herod, then the Jewish powers, sought the destruction of Jesus (Mt. 2:13; Jno. 8:40,44), seeing in him a threat to their positions of authority (11:48).	The pagan emperors, Galerius, Maxentius and Licinius, sought Constantine's destruction, seeing him as a threat to both their positions of rulership and their pagan religion.
Jesus is to rule all nations in the Kingdom of God from Yahweh's throne (Rev 2:26,27; 3:21).	Constantine elevated to rule all nations of the Roman Empire.
The Kingdom of God established worldwide by Jesus.	The apostate Christians considered that "the very image of the kingdom of Christ" had been achieved under the rulership of Constantine.
Spiritual Israel, the bride of Christ, raised to privilege and power: "you will make them [your sons] princes in all the earth" (Ps. 45:16, RSV); "the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Natural Israel also elevated to a position of importance (Isa. 60:1,3,11,12).	Apostate Christianity raised to privilege and power in the Roman heavens. Bishops, the sons of the Church, given the rank of princes in the Roman Empire.
Twelve stars representing the twelve apostles on twelve thrones ruling the house of Israel (Mt. 19:28) or the twelve patriarchs (Gen. 37:9,10).	Twelve stars representing the twelve Caesars from Julius Caesar to Domitian.
All enemies to be trodden under foot (1 Cor. 15:25,26), including apostate Christianity (the Roman Catholic 'moon').	Pagan religions overcome by Christianity. The Pagan Roman 'moon' trodden under foot.

echo a number of Old Testament passages relating to Egypt. In fact a direct link has already been provided in the previous chapter of the Apocalypse, where it speaks of "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (11:8). By the edict of Caracalla the city of Rome was decreed to be co-extensive with the empire.<sup>2</sup> A Roman governor, Pilate, crucified Jesus in the Roman province of Judea. Consequently spiritual Egypt must refer to Rome.

In the Old Testament, Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, is pictured as a great scaly dragon lying in the Nile (Ezek. 29:3; cf. Isa. 51:9; Ezek. 32:2,

mg.). The AV translation "dragon" comes from the Greek word *drakōn*, used in the Septuagint version of Ezekiel 29:3.<sup>3</sup> This gives us a link with the *drakōn* of Revelation 12:3. Clearly, the reference in Ezekiel 29 is to the Nile crocodile, a fierce creature that very fittingly represented the powers of Egypt and Rome.

Israel escaped the persecution of this Egyptian dragon or crocodile by fleeing into the wilderness

2. *Notes on the Apocalypse*, C. C. Walker. p. 31, fourth edition.

3. The same word *drakōn* is also used in the Septuagint of Exodus 7:9,10,12 (AV "serpent").

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**The Nile Crocodile, origin of the dragon symbol.**

after escaping the ‘flood’ of Pharaoh’s army that spewed out after them at his command. Following that, God cared for His people, “the church [ecclesia] in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), and carried them on eagle’s wings (Ex. 19:4). [Table 2](#) sets out a fuller comparison between Egypt and Rome, which represent roughly parallel situations.

(Concluded)

4. See “The Exodus” , Mark Vincent, Jul. 2002, p. 252.
5. See Table 1 in Part 2 (Jan. 2006, p. 27).

<b>Table 2 Egypt and Revelation 12</b>	
<b>Egypt and Israel</b>	<b>Rome and Christians in Revelation 12</b>
Egypt symbolised by dragon (Isa. 51:9; Ezek. 29:3).	Roman power symbolised by the dragon (v. 3).
Pagan society with many gods.	Roman society had many gods, some of which were derived from Egypt. Later these gods were replaced by their apostate Christian equivalent, which were the ‘saints’.
Enslaved and persecuted the Israelites (Ex. 1:11-14).	Travail of persecution for the Christians (v. 2).
Drowned the male children in the Nile (1:22), but the attempt on the man child Moses failed. There was a further failed attempt on his life after Moses killed the Egyptian (2:15).	Tried to devour the man child, Constantine, but failed (vv. 4,5).
Moses, raised by God to a position of great authority, executes judgement on pagan Egypt and its gods (12:12; Num. 33:4). <sup>4</sup>	Constantine, elevated to the Roman heavens, throws down paganism (vv. 5-9).
Pharaoh commands his army to pursue the Israelites (Ex. 14:5-9).	The Roman power at the instigation of the Catholic Church issues commands to persecute and destroy the Dissenters (v. 13). <sup>5</sup>
Pharaoh’s army swallowed up by the Red Sea (14:26-28;15:4). This is described poetically by the words, “the earth swallowed them” (v. 12).	The earth swallows up the flood spewed out of the serpent’s mouth (vv. 15,16).
God cared for His people by carrying them on eagle’s wings (19:4).	God provided the two wings of the empire as wilderness areas where the protesters would be protected from persecution (vv. 6,14).
The nation of Israel, “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38), finds security from the power of Egypt.	The protesters were protected from severe persecution in the less populated areas of the empire for 1,260 years (v. 6).
Israel’s twelve stars represent the twelve patriarchs (Gen. 37:9,10). These have an Egyptian context through Joseph.	Apostate Christianity crowned with twelve stars representing the twelve Caesars (v. 1).