

The sixth vial and the world today (2)

Geoff Cave

The froglike spirits of Revelation 16:13,14 represent unclean teachings arising from the French Revolution. The effects of this political earthquake are still being felt today, including its shaping of the philosophy of the European Union.

BRETHREN IN the early part of the twentieth century were greatly strengthened and encouraged by the unfolding events which fulfilled the first part of the sixth vial prophecy. They were able to see the hand of God at work amongst the nations, foretold in symbol in the Apocalyptic vision by the drying up of the river Euphrates. They saw the gradual diminishing of the mighty Turkish power in the Middle East and knew that these events were preparing the scene for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The brethren were strengthened and encouraged because they were watching. Sadly, in recent years interest in prophecy has largely vanished, for at least three reasons:

- 1 The 'drying up' process came to an end after the First World War, and there has apparently been no further development for many years. It must be remembered that any human timescale is unlike the Divine plan. With the Almighty Creator a thousand years are as but yesterday.
- 2 Some are confused because of the conflicting interpretations that have emerged in the Brotherhood in recent years.
- 3 The materialism of the Western world has taken its deceitful toll on the thinking of many, and there is little time spent considering the wonders of prophecy. The Master warns against this, both in the book of Revelation and elsewhere.

Unclean spirits

The next event after the drying up of the Euphrates to 'watch' for, according to the prophecy, is the going forth of "unclean spirits like frogs" (16:13). A correct understanding of this symbol is vital if we are to watch for the right thing. Firstly, what is an unclean spirit? John warns in his first letter, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false

prophets are gone out into the world" (4:1). John is warning here about listening to the teaching of false prophets. Paul gives the same warning in 1 Timothy: "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (4:1). The seducing spirit is a teaching or doctrine which has the effect of seducing the hearers into believing something which is not true and which opposes Scripture.

The spirits, or teachings, mentioned in Revelation 16 are "unclean", that is, the very opposite of the teaching of Scripture: "Thy word is very pure: therefore Thy servant loveth it" (Ps. 119:140); and again: "Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him" (Prov. 30:5). The prophecy is warning here of a teaching which goes forth which is in opposition to Scripture. It also warns that those who are not watching, and thus fail to identify this teaching, will not be blessed. In the context of the spirits going forth the Lord warns, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15). The serious nature of this warning and the need to watch for the unclean spirits cannot be emphasised too much.

Frogs

The first symbol given to identify the unclean teaching is the frog (v. 13). The frog is not used as a symbol elsewhere in Scripture. Literal frogs are mentioned in Exodus and Psalms; on both occasions the reference is to the plague of frogs on Egypt. The plague of frogs on Egypt does help in identifying the symbol in Revelation but, before looking at how, it is necessary to point out the danger of linking events in the past (that is, the plague of frogs on Egypt) to what is being described in Revelation. The question to ask is, What does the frog symbolise in the context of Egypt? There are three points to note at this stage:

- 1 The frog was sacred to the Egyptians and therefore it could not be killed. A number of their gods took the form of a frog or had the face of a frog. It will be seen that the 'froglike' teaching is also sacred to today's world, and any attempt to undermine it is vigorously opposed.



Detail from a tapestry in Reims Cathedral, France, depicting the banner of Clovis with three frogs.

- 2 Exodus 8:3 records, "And the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneadingtroughs". The frogs in Egypt went everywhere; it will be seen that the 'froglike' teaching affects every aspect of life today.
- 3 When the plague of frogs came on Egypt, Pharaoh promised liberty to the children of Israel: "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD" (v. 8). This promise of liberty was false; it will be seen that the 'froglike' teaching makes a similar false promise of liberty today.

These clues alone are not enough to identify the nature of the unclean teaching precisely, but when linked with the teaching which controls the thoughts of countless millions today the meaning of the frog symbol becomes very clear. The frog has been associated with France throughout the history of the nation, and it is the unclean teachings which were made so popular by the French Revolution of which the prophecy speaks.

The early kings of the Franks used the symbol of the frog on their banners and heraldry. When Clovis converted to Christianity, the symbol changed to that of the *fleur-de-lis*. This change can be seen on the shield of Clovis, which can be seen at a Franciscan church in Innsbruck. The shield has three frogs on one side and three *fleur-de-lis* on the other.

The French Revolution

The French Revolution occurred long before the events described in the sixth vial. However, it is necessary to consider it here due to the far-reaching effect it has on life today. The *Encyclopedia of Modern Revolutions* describes it thus:

"The social and political upheavals in France, spreading subsequently to most of Europe over the generation after 1789, constitute the classic revolution of modern times . . . The French Revolution was the founding episode of modern political culture, setting the agenda for public life throughout the 19th century over much of the world populated and controlled by Europe".¹

This quotation is describing a political earthquake, which is exactly how the prophecy describes it in chapter 11, but in chapter 16 it is not the event but the effect of the revolution which is being described as unclean spirits or teachings. The encyclopaedia quoted above also has a section describing the "Legacy" of the revolution. The next quotation is taken from this section:

"Apart from the initial liberation program of liberty and equality (fraternity was added to the famous slogan only in 1793), the history of the revolution bequeathed a pattern that has been endlessly studied for lessons since by revolutionaries and conservatives alike . . . The revolution pointed the way toward building states and armed forces of unprecedented

1. Doyle, W. (1982) in Goldstone, J. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Modern Revolutions*, Chicago, Dearborn Publications, p. 180.

power and its conduct of warfare transformed military practice. With the French Revolution the people, as a self-conscious political entity, made its modern debut, as did the nation state pursuing non-negotiable sovereign claims. The revolution lies at the root of both nationalism and international socialism. Unprecedented in scale, impact and ramifications, the French Revolution changed the very meaning of the word revolution and provided the touchstone against which the significance of all political upheavals, before it and after, must be judged.²

The cry of the revolution was, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". On the surface this sounds quite plausible, but looking at the details which emerge, the teaching is indeed unclean and in direct opposition to Scripture.

'Liberty' in effect means liberty of man from the laws of God. 'Equality' teaches that all men are equal, and no authority is accepted that is not in harmony with human feelings. 'Fraternity' means that all barriers of race and religion are to be removed. The *Longman Chronicle of the World* has this to say:

"The French Revolution is always with us, not simply in the sense that it created the forms and categories of our own political culture but also in the way that every generation of historians and thinkers has to engage with and argue over this 'mythic' event. The myth from which all others flow is that the revolution saw the birth of a new order, that 1789 was the year zero of a new world founded on equality . . . The declaration of the rights of man clearly defined liberty—the right to

death; and it will ultimately be the same for this latter-day generation.

The revolution was a product of the so-called 'age of enlightenment'. Regarding this, the *Chronicle* states:

"The great intellectual and cultural awakening of the 18th century is known as the Enlightenment—but what was this light which was illuminating Europe? It was 'reason'. All the various intellectuals, men of letters, scientists and administrators—both Catholic and Protestant, pious and atheistical—who saw themselves as 'enlightened' shared this faith in the power of human reason—nothing was beyond improvement and nothing which did not advance human happiness was justifiable".⁴

Was anything ever more in opposition to the Scripture of truth? The *Chronicle* continues:

"Humanity guided by reason had an innate desire to do good and be happy: the apostles of the enlightenment had little time for schemes where people spent their lives fulfilling the arbitrary commands of a stern God or for barbaric notions like original sin. Virtue was now to be its own reward".⁵

It is interesting to compare the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* made during the French Revolution with the *European Union (EU) Charter of Fundamental Rights* made in 2000.⁶ As the chart below shows, the EU charter is based on the teachings put forward in 1789. Both charters state that it is impossible to separate man from his 'rights'; Scripture teaches the very opposite, that rebellion against God leaves man with no rights except to die.

Declaration of the Rights of Man, 1789	EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, 2000
<p>"Representatives of the French people, believing that ignorance, neglect or contempt of the rights of man are the sole cause of public calamities . . . have determined to set forth in a solemn declaration the natural, inalienable and sacred rights of man".</p>	<p>"Conscious of its spiritual and moral heritage, the union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and rule of law. It places the individual at the heart of its activities".</p>

do anything that did not harm others or conflict with their liberty—The revolution has provided an inspiration for democracy and a model for totalitarianism".³

No wonder the writer describes the event as a myth! Scripture teaches that every man doing that which is right in his own eyes does not create liberty, but the very opposite. For Israel it resulted in Divine judgement, captivity and

2. *Ibid.* p. 184.
 3. Mercer, D. (ed.) (1989), *Chronicle of the World*, London, Longman Communications, p. 776.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 776.
 5. *Op cit.*, p. 762.
 6. For a fuller treatment see the series, "[The three frog spirits](#)", Richard Mellowes, *The Testimony*, Jul.-Sept. 2003.

Note how the individual is placed at the centre. God is effectively shown the door. Scripture is very clear: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good" (Ps. 14:1).

Subsequent articles will show what a profound effect this teaching is having on every stratum of society today. As it is heard from the mouths of the dragon, the beast and the false prophet, it will prepare the nations for "the battle of that great day of God Almighty".

[\(To be continued\)](#)

Out of the earth

A review of recent articles on archaeology

Tony Benson

A Philistine city uncovered

THE MOST NORTHERLY of the five Philistine cities mentioned together on several occasions in the Bible is Ekron, best known as the place from which the Philistines sent the ark back to Israel on a new cart (1 Sam. 6). Excavations took place here from 1983 to 1996, and one of the joint leaders of the excavation, Seymour Gittin, has reviewed the discoveries made in an article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

According to the article, it used to be thought that the Philistines disappeared from history after about 1000 B.C., being absorbed by the Israelites and the Phoenicians. This was the time of King David's reign, and we know from 2 Samuel 5:17-25 and 8:1 that David inflicted severe defeats on them in the process of establishing his kingdom as dominant in the area. However, they do not disappear from Scripture at this time; both Uzziah and Hezekiah fought successfully against them in the eighth century B.C. (2 Chron. 26:6; 2 Kgs. 18:8), and about 600 B.C. both Jeremiah (ch. 47) and Ezekiel (25:15-17) prophesied judgement upon them.

The excavations at Ekron have forced scholars to revise their views and admit that the Philistines did continue to exist as a people. What happened was that after the time of David they lost their distinctive culture and adopted the culture of their neighbours, the Israelites to the east, the Phoenicians to the north, and then, following the Assyrian invasions of the seventh and sixth centuries, that of the Assyrians. It was this lack of evidence for the distinctive culture of the Philistines after about 1000 B.C. that caused scholars to say that the Philistines themselves

faded from history, despite the Biblical evidence to the contrary.

Evidence was discovered that Ekron was destroyed about 1000 B.C., either by David or by Egyptians invading from the south. After the destruction a much smaller city was built, which lasted for about three centuries. Although there is evidence of Israelite and Phoenician culture being imported during this period, there is also evidence of continuing Philistine occupation in the form of the remains of the Philistines' distinctive pottery.

At about 700 B.C. the city expanded to its old size, apparently under the protection of the Assyrians, who at this time dominated the Middle East. 2 Kings 18:13 records that "in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them". It is thought that this enabled Ekron to establish itself as a city state under the protection of Assyria. Assyrian records refer to Sennacherib giving some of the towns taken from Judah to Padi king of Ekron. An inscription on the wall of a ruined temple in Ekron refers to "Achish, son of Padi . . . ruler of Ekron", thus providing incontrovertible proof that the site being excavated was indeed Biblical Ekron.

The name Achish is an interesting one, for it occurs in the Bible as the name of the king of Gath in David's time (1 Sam. 21:10). This name, and the name of the goddess to whom this temple was dedicated (Ptgyh), are both thought to be Greek, the area from which the Philistines originally came, another point establishing that Ekron was still a Philistine city.

Source: "Excavating Ekron", Seymour Gittin, *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Nov./Dec. 2005.