

TEXT - Revelation 6

REVIEW

Summary or Theme or Main Idea

Corrupt religion allies itself with corrupt government, and persecutes the saints
Jesus Christ judges and destroys the corrupt religion and government, and
preserves the saints

Corrupt religion allied with corrupt government will be centered in Rome
Rome will be symbolized, and called Babylon

Rome, Perverse and Powerful, Persecutes the Saints
Christ, Pure and Prevailing, Protects the Saints

Four schools of thought - When will these things happen?

Partial Preterist

Futurist

Idealist

Historicist

I am studying and teaching mostly according to the Historicist theory, primarily
because it is the theory held and taught by most of the old pastor-scholars whom
I read all the time, and whose scholarship I respect the most.

The middle section of Revelation contains three sets of seven things, which
communicate to us how Rome will oppose the churches, and how our Lord Jesus
Christ will protect the churches, and bring judgment on Rome during three
periods of time.

Chapter 6 - seven seals - Rome non-Christian pagan

Chapters 8-9 - seven trumpets - Rome Christian or Arian

Chapter 16 - seven vials or bowls - Rome Antichristian or Papal

I read this interpretation in such 17th-century English and American scholars as
John Cotton and Hanserd Knollys, and in several of the scholars that I read from
the 18th and 19th centuries, also.

LESSON

Corrupt religion allied with corrupt government have persecuted the saints many times in many places, and still do today, and will until the Lord Jesus comes back. But Rome has been so much the center of such persecution, that our Lord Jesus showing us in powerful symbols how He will protect us from Rome and bring judgment on Rome gives us all the assurance we need that He will care for us, whether or not our troubles come directly from Rome.

But how can the interpretation of Revelation have so much to do with Rome, when Rome is never mentioned? not Rome, Roman, Romans, Caesar, Latin How can it be right for the pastor to tell you, "Most of the book of Revelation is all about Rome" when none of the words that refer to Rome are even in the book of Revelation?

Rome had ruled over that whole part of the world for generations, and would for generations into the future, so it would be strange for it not to play prominently.

Rome - 500 B.C. to A.D. 500

Republic at first; then an empire from 31 or 27 B.C. on

defeated and unified all the people of Italy

defeated Carthage, the powerful city in north Africa

defeated Greece

went on to rule over all the territory surrounding the Mediterranean Sea

power waned in the 300s and after

split into east and west; west ceased to be ruled as Roman A.D. 476

Powerful cities and countries in the region had been the subject of prophecies in the previous scriptures.

Ezekiel 26:1-4 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first day of the month, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people: she is turned unto me: I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: 3 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. 4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers: I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

Ezekiel 28:20-23 Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 21 Son of man, set thy face against Zidon, and prophesy against it, 22 And say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Zidon; and I will be glorified in the midst of thee: and they shall know that I am the LORD, when I shall have executed judgments in her, and shall be sanctified in her. 23 For I will send into her pestilence, and blood into her streets; and the wounded shall be judged in the midst of her by the sword upon her on every side; and they shall know that I am the LORD.

Jeremiah 49:23-27 Concerning Damascus. Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet. 24 Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. 25 How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy! 26 Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD of hosts. 27 And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Benhadad.

Zephaniah 2:13 And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness.

When our Lord Jesus was born, Rome ruled over so large an area, it was spoken of as “all the world.”

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Matthew 22:17-21 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21 They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

When our Lord Jesus began to preach, rulers appointed by Rome were ruling over the places where He and his disciples lived.

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Rome had the power to destroy the Jews' temple and nation

John 11:48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.

Indeed, that is the very thing they did in A.D. 70

Our Lord Jesus was crucified by the Romans

John 19:1-20

The Roman authorities persecuted the disciples

Acts 16:19-23 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, 20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

Our Lord Jesus said Paul must bear witness at Rome

Acts 19:21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

Acts 22:24-30 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. 30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Daniel 2:27-45 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king; 28 But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall

be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these; 29 As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass. 30 But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that thou mightest know the thoughts of thy heart. 31 Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. 32 This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, 33 His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. 34 Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. 35 Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. 36 This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. 37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. 38 And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. 39 And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. 40 And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. 41 And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. 42 And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. 43 And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. 45 Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Daniel 7:3-8 And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4 The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. 5 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. 6 After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. 7 After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. 8 I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Carroll:

...when the little horn coming up that plucks up three of the ten horns...

...This diversity appears in its latest transformation when the little horn coming up that plucks up three of the ten horns or kingdoms and having the eyes of a man, speaks great swelling things. The nature of the diversity better appears in the Revelation of John, where the same beast is under consideration:

And then he goes on to say to say, "I saw another beast with two horns like a ram, but speaking like a dragon," and he takes charge of this other beast. It is perfectly evident that the diversity which is here spoken of is the change in the nature of the government. We have first the Rome of the Caesars, not diverse in political nature from the three preceding world empires – then the downfall of this mere political government, then a religio-political Roman Empire, a union of church and state, with the church on top, then in the lamb who speaks like a dragon, the papacy which rules this diverse government. Kings of political governments came

to put their necks under the heel of the pope that sat at the head of this holy Roman Empire

In the book of Revelation, which is largely an elaboration of Daniel, we find that this remarkable development of the fourth beast is still at Rome. It still has somewhat universal dominion over men, but it is a religio-political government. It claims to get the two swords, secular and spiritual, and the two keys, the key of this world and the key to the world to come. No wonder that beast was dreadful and powerful, and particularly diverse. We see him come in the Caesars, whose legions conquered the world, trampled under foot everything that opposed it, and with its iron teeth crushed the bones of its enemies. Then in the book of Revelation we see political Rome cast into the sea like a burning volcano, then rise up a new Rome with the death stroke of the beast healed, with a new head, a head that looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon. There is the little horn of this Rome.