

Part II, Chapter II: Of the relation which the Apocalypse of John hath to the Book of the Law of Moses, and to the worship of God in the Temple

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CHAP. II.

Of the relation which the Apocalypse of John hath to the Book of the Law of Moses, and to the worship of God in the Temple.

THE *Apocalypse of John* is written in the same style and language with the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and hath the same relation to them which they have to one another, so that all of them together make but one complete Prophecy; and in like manner it consists of two parts, an introductory Prophecy, and an Interpretation thereof.

The Prophecy is distinguish'd into seven successive parts, by the opening of the seven seals of the book which *Daniel* was commanded to seal up: and hence it is called the *Apocalypse* or *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. The time of the seventh seal is sub-divided into eight successive parts by the silence in heaven for half an hour, and the sounding of seven trumpets successively: and the seventh trumpet sounds to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, whereby *the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of* <255> *the Lord and of his Christ*, and those are destroyed that destroyed the earth.

The Interpretation begins with the words, *And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the Ark of his Testament*: and it continues to the end of the Prophecy. The Temple is the scene of the visions, and the visions in the Temple relate to the feast of the seventh month: for the feasts of the *Jews* were typical of things to come. The Passover related to the first coming of *Christ*, and the feasts of the seventh month to his second coming: his first coming being therefore over before this Prophecy was given, the feasts of the seventh month are here only alluded unto.

On the first day of that month, in the morning, the High-Priest dressed the lamps: and in allusion hereunto, this Prophecy begins with a vision of one like *the Son of man* in the High-Priest's habit, appearing as it were in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or over against the midst of them, dressing the lamps, which appeared like a rod of seven stars in his right hand: and this dressing was perform'd by the sending seven Epistles to the Angels or Bishops of the seven Churches of *Asia*, which in the primitive times illuminated the

Temple or Church Catholick. These Epistles contain ad <256> monitions against the approaching Apostacy, and therefore relate to the times when the Apostacy began to work strongly, and before it prevailed. It began to work in the Apostles days, and was to continue working *till the man of sin should be revealed*. It began to work in the disciples of *Simon, Menander, Carpocrates, Cerinthus*, and such sorts of men as had imbibed the metaphysical philosophy of the *Gentiles* and *Cabalistical Jews*, and were thence called *Gnosticks*. *John* calls them *Antichrists*, saying that in his days there were many *Antichrists*. But these being condemned by the Apostles, and their immediate disciples, put the Churches in no danger during the opening of the first four seals. The visions at the opening of these seals relate only to the civil affairs of the heathen *Roman Empire*. So long the Apostolic traditions prevailed, and preserved the Church in its purity: and therefore the affairs of the Church do not begin to be considered in this Prophecy before the opening of the fifth seal. She began then to decline, and to want admonitions; and therefore is admonished by these Epistles, till the Apostacy prevailed and took place, which was at the opening of the seventh seal. The admonitions therefore in these seven Epistles relate to the state of the Church in the times of the fifth and sixth seals. At the opening of the fifth seal, <257> the Church is purged from hypocrites by a great persecution. At the opening of the sixth, that which letted is taken out of the way, namely the heathen *Roman Empire*. At the opening of the seventh, the man of sin is revealed. And to these times the seven Epistles relate.

The seven Angels, to whom these Epistles were written, answer to the seven *Amarc-holim*, who were Priests and chief Officers of the Temple, and had jointly the keys of the gates of the Temple, with those of the Treasuries, and the direction, appointment and oversight of all things in the Temple.

After the lamps were dressed, *John* saw *the door* of the Temple opened; and by *the voice as it were of a trumpet*, was called up to the eastern gate of the great court, to see the visions: and *behold a throne was set*, viz. the mercy-seat upon the Ark of the Testament, which the *Jews* respected as *the throne of God between the Cherubims*, *Exod. xxv. 2. Psal. xcix. 1. And he that sat on it was to look upon like Jasper and Sardine stone*, that is, of an olive colour, the people of *Judea* being of that colour. And, the Sun being then in the *East*, a *rainbow was about the throne*, the emblem of glory. And round about the throne were *four and twenty seats*; answering to the chambers of the four and twenty Princes of the Priests, twelve on the <258> south side, and twelve on the north side of the Priests Court. And upon the seats were *four and twenty Elders sitting, clothed in white rayment, with crowns on their heads*; representing the Princes of the four and twenty courses of the Priests clothed in linen. And out of the throne proceeded *lightnings and thunderings, and voices*, viz. the flashes of the fire upon the Altar at the morning-sacrifice, and the thundering voices of those that sounded the trumpets, and sung at the Eastern gate of the Priests Court; for these being between *John* and the throne appeared to him as proceeding from the throne. And there were *seven lamps of fire burning*, in the Temple, before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God, or Angels of the seven Churches, represented in the beginning of this Prophecy by seven stars. And before the throne was a *sea of glass clear as chrystal*; the brazen sea between the porch of the Temple and the Altar, filled with clear water. And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were *four Beasts full of eyes before and behind*: that is, one Beast before the throne and one behind it, appearing to *John* as in the midst of the throne, and one on either side in the circle about it, to represent by the multitude of their eyes the people standing in the four sides of the peoples court. And the first Beast was like a lion, <259> and the second was like a calf, and the third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. The people of *Israel* in the wilderness encamped round about the tabernacle, and on the east side were three tribes under the standard of *Judah*, on the west were three tribes under the standard of *Ephraim*, on the south were three tribes under the standard of *Reuben*, and on the north were three tribes under the standard of *Dan*, *Numb. ii.* And the standard of *Judah* was a Lion, that of *Ephraim* an Ox, that of *Reuben* a Man, and that of *Dan* an Eagle, as the *Jews* affirm. Whence were framed the hieroglyphicks of *Cherubims* and *Seraphims*, to represent the people of *Israel*. A *Cherubim* had one body with four faces, the faces of a Lion, an Ox, a Man and an Eagle, looking to the four winds of heaven, without turning about, as in *Ezekiel's* vision, chap. i. And four *Seraphims* had the same four faces with four bodies, one face to every body. The four Beasts are therefore four *Seraphims* standing in the four sides of the peoples court; the first in the eastern side with the head of a Lion, the second in the western side with the head of an Ox, the third in the southern side with the head of a Man, the fourth in the northern side with the head of an Eagle: and all four signify together the twelve tribes of *Israel*, out of whom <260> the hundred forty and four thousand were sealed, *Apoc. vii. 4. And the four Beasts had each of them six wings*, two to a tribe, in all twenty and four wings, answering to the twenty and four stations of the people. And they were full of eyes within, or under their wings. And they rest not day and night, or at the morning and evening-sacrifices, saying, *holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*. These animals are therefore

the Seraphims, which appeared to *Isaiah*^[1] in a vision like this of the *Apocalypse*. For there also the Lord sat upon a throne in the temple; and the Seraphims each with six wings cried, *Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts. And when those animals give glory and honour and thanks to him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty Elders go into the Temple, and there fall down before him that sitteth on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* At the morning and evening-sacrifices, so soon as the sacrifice was laid upon the Altar, and the drink-offering began to be poured out, the trumpets sounded, and the *Levites* sang by course three <261> times; and every time when the trumpets sounded, the people fell down and worshiped. Three times therefore did the people worship; to express which number, the Beasts cry *Holy, holy, holy*: and the song being ended, the people prayed standing, till the solemnity was finished. In the mean time the Priests went into the Temple, and there fell down before him that sat upon the throne, and worshiped.

And John saw, in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals, viz. the book which Daniel was commanded to seal up, and which is here represented by the prophetic book of the Law laid up on the right side of the Ark, as it were in the right hand of him that sat on the throne: for the festivals and ceremonies of the Law prescribed to the people in this book, adumbrated those things which were predicted in the book of Daniel; and the writing within and on the backside of this book, relates to the synchronal Prophecies. ^[2]*And none was found worthy to open the book but the Lamb of God. And lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four Beasts, and in the midst of the Elders, that is, at the foot of the Altar, stood a lamb as it had been slain, the morning-sacrifice; having seven horns, which are the seven Churches, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of <262> God sent forth into all the earth. And he came, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne: And when he had taken the book, the four Beasts and four and twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us, unto our God, Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* The Beasts and Elders therefore represent the primitive *Christians* of all nations; and the worship of these *Christians* in their Churches is here represented under the form of worshiping God and the Lamb in the Temple: God for his benefaction in creating all things, and the Lamb for his benefaction in redeeming us with his blood: God as sitting upon the throne and living for ever, and the Lamb as exalted above all by the merits of his death. *And I heard, saith John, the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the Beasts and the Elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive <263> power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four Beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty Elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever.* This was the worship of the primitive *Christians*.

It was the custom for the High-Priest, seven days before the fast of the seventh month, to continue constantly in the Temple, and study the book of the Law, that he might be perfect in it against the day of expiation; wherein the service, which was various and intricate, was wholly to be performed by himself; part of which service was reading the Law to the people: and to promote his studying it, there were certain Priests appointed by the *Sanhedrim* to be with him those seven days in one of his chambers in the Temple, and there to discourse with him about the Law, and read it to him, and put him in mind of reading and studying it himself. This his opening and reading the Law those seven days, is alluded unto in the Lamb's opening the seals. We are to conceive that those <264> seven days begin in the evening before each day; for the *Jews* began their day in the evening, and that the solemnity of the fast begins in the morning of the seventh day.

The seventh seal was therefore opened on the day of expiation, and then *there was silence in heaven for half an hour. And an Angel, the High-Priest, stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer; and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints, upon the golden Altar which was before the throne.* The custom was on other days, for one of the Priests to take fire from the great Altar in a silver Censer; but on this day, for the High-Priest to take fire from the great Altar in a golden Censer: and when he was come down from the great Altar, he took incense from one of the Priests who brought it to him, and went

with it to the golden Altar: and while he offered the incense, the people prayed without in silence, which is the silence in heaven for half an hour. When the High-Priest had laid the incense on the Altar, he carried a Censer of it burning in his hand, into the most holy place before the Ark. *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand.* On other days there was a certain measure of incense for the golden Altar: on this day there <265> was a greater quantity for both the Altar and the most holy Place, and therefore it is called *much incense*. After this *the Angel took the Censer, and filled it with fire from the great Altar, and cast it into the earth*; that is, by the hands of the Priests who belong to his mystical body, he cast it to the earth without the Temple, for burning the Goat which was the Lord's lot. *And at this and other concomitant sacrifices, until the evening-sacrifice was ended, there were voices, and thundrings, and lightnings, and an earthquake*; that is, the voice of the High-Priest reading the Law to the people, and other voices and thundrings from the trumpets and temple-musick at the sacrifices, and lightnings from the fire of the Altar.

The solemnity of the day of expiation being finished, the seven Angels sound their trumpets at the great sacrifices of the seven days of the feast of tabernacles; and at the same sacrifices, the seven thunders utter their voices, which are the musick of the Temple, and singing of the *Levites*, intermixed with the soundings of the trumpets: and the seven Angels pour out their vials of wrath, which are the drink-offerings of those sacrifices.

When six of the seals were opened, *John* said: ^[3]*And after these things*, that is, after the visions of the sixth seal, *I saw four Angels standing on <266> the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And I saw another Angel ascending from the East, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four Angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* This sealing alludes to a tradition of the Jews, that upon the day of expiation all the people of *Israel* are sealed up in the books of life and death. For the Jews in their *Talmud* tell us,^[4] that in the beginning of every new year, or first day of the month *Tisri*, the seventh month of the sacred year, three books are opened in judgment; the book of life, in which the names of those are written who are perfectly just; the book of death, in which the names of those are written who are Atheists or very wicked; and a third book, of those whose judgment is suspended till the day of expiation, and whose names are not written in the book of life or death before that day. The first ten days of this month they call the penitential days; and all these days they fast and pray very much, and are very devout, that on the tenth day their sins may be remitted, and their names may be written in the book of <267> life; which day is therefore called the day of expiation. And upon this tenth day, in returning home from the Synagogues, they say to one another, *God the creator seal you to a good year*. For they conceive that the books are now sealed up, and that the sentence of God remains unchanged henceforward to the end of the year. The same thing is signified by the two Goats, upon whose foreheads the High-Priest yearly, on the day of expiation, lays the two lots inscribed, *For God* and *For Azazel*; God's lot signifying the people who are sealed with the name of God in their foreheads; and the lot *Azazel*, which was sent into the wilderness, representing those who receive the mark and name of the Beast, and go into the wilderness with the great Whore.

The servants of God being therefore sealed in the day of expiation, we may conceive that this sealing is synchronal to the visions which appear upon opening the seventh seal; and that when the Lamb had opened six of the seals and seen the visions relating to the inside of the sixth, he looked on the backside of the seventh leaf, and then saw *the four Angels holding the four winds of heaven, and another Angel ascending from the East with the seal of God*. Conceive also, that the Angels which held the four winds were the first four of the seven Angels, who upon <268> opening the seventh seal were seen standing before God; and that upon their holding the winds, *there was silence in heaven for half an hour*; and that while the servants of God were sealing, the Angel with the golden Censer offered their prayers with incense upon the golden Altar, and read the Law: and that so soon as they were sealed, the winds hurt the earth at the sounding of the first trumpet, and the sea at the sounding of the second; these winds signifying the wars, to which the first four trumpets sounded. For as the first four seals are distinguished from the three last by the appearance of four horsemen towards the four winds of heaven; so the wars of the first four trumpets are distinguished from those of the three last, by representing these by *four winds*, and the others by *three great woes*.

In one of *Ezekiel's* visions, when the *Babylonian* captivity was at hand, *six men* appeared with *slaughter-weapons*; and a seventh, who appeared ^[5]*among them clothed in white linen and a writer's ink-horn by his*

side, is commanded to *go thro' the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations done in the midst thereof*: and then the six men, like the Angels of the first six trumpets, are commanded <269> to slay those men who are not marked. Conceive therefore that the hundred forty and four thousand are sealed, to preserve them from the plagues of the first six trumpets; and that at length by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, they grow into *a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues*: and at the sounding of the seventh trumpet come out of the great tribulation *with Palms in their hands: the kingdoms of this world*, by the war to which that trumpet sounds, *becoming the kingdoms of God and his Christ*. For the solemnity of the great *Hosannah* was kept by the Jews upon the seventh or last day of the feast of tabernacles; the Jews upon that day carrying Palms in their hands, and crying *Hosannah*.

After six of the Angels, answering to the six men with slaughter-weapons, had sounded their trumpets, the Lamb in the form of *a mighty Angel came down from heaven clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the Sun, and his feet as pillars of fire*, the shape in which Christ appeared in the beginning of this Prophecy; *and he had in his hand a little book open*, the book which he had newly opened; for he received but one book from him that sitteth upon the throne, and he alone was worthy to open and look on this book. *And he set his right foot upon the <270> sea and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth*. It was the custom for the High-Priest on the day of expiation, to stand in an elevated place in the peoples court, at the Eastern gate of the Priests court, and read the Law to the people, while the Heifer and the Goat which was the Lord's lot, were burning without the Temple. We may therefore suppose him standing in such a manner, that his right foot might appear to John as it were standing on the sea of glass, and his left foot on the ground of the house; and that he cried with a loud voice, in reading the Law on the day of expiation. *And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices*. Thunders are the voice of a cloud, and a cloud signifies a multitude; and this multitude may be the *Levites*, who sang with thundering voices, and played with musical instruments at the great sacrifices, on the seven days of the feast of Tabernacles: at which times the trumpets also sounded. For the trumpets sounded, and the *Levites* sang alternately, three times at every sacrifice. The Prophecy therefore of the seven thunders is nothing else than a repetition of the Prophecy of the seven trumpets in another form. *And the Angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, <271> that after the seven thunders there should be time no longer; but in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the Prophets*. The voices of the thunders therefore last to the end of this world, and so do those of the trumpets.

And the voice which I heard from heaven, saith John, spake unto me again and said, Go and take the little book, &c. And I took the little book out of the Angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. This is an introduction to a new Prophecy, to a repetition of the Prophecy of the whole book; and alludes to *Ezekiel's* eating a roll or book spread open before him, and written within and without, full of lamentations and mourning and woe, but sweet in his mouth. Eating and drinking signify acquiring and possessing; and eating the book is becoming inspired with the Prophecy contained in it. It implies being inspired in a vigorous and extraordinary manner with the Prophecy of the whole book, and therefore signifies a lively repetition of the whole Prophecy by way of interpretation, and begins not till the first Prophecy, that of the <272> seals and trumpets, is ended. It was sweet in John's mouth, and therefore begins not with the bitter Prophecy of the *Babylonian* captivity, and the *Gentiles* being in the outward court of the Temple, and treading the holy city under foot; and the prophesying of the *two Witnesses* in sackcloth, and their smiting the earth with all plagues, and being killed by the Beast: but so soon as the Prophecy of the trumpets is ended, it begins with the sweet Prophecy of the glorious *Woman in heaven*, and the victory of *Michael* over the Dragon; and after that, it is bitter in John's belly, by a large description of the times of the great Apostacy.

And the Angel stood, upon the earth and sea, saying, Rise and measure the Temple of God and the Altar, and them that worship therein, that is, their courts with the buildings thereon, viz. the square court of the Temple called the separate place, and the square court of the Altar called the Priests court, and the court of them that worship in the Temple called the new court: *but the great court which is without the Temple, leave out, and measure it not, for it is given to the Gentiles, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*. This measuring hath reference to *Ezekiel's* measuring the Temple of Solomon: there the whole

Temple, including the outward court, <273> was measured, to signify that it should be rebuilt in the latter days. Here the courts of the Temple and Altar, and they who worship therein, are only measured, to signify the building of a second Temple, for those that are sealed out of all the twelve tribes of *Israel*, and worship in the inward court of sincerity and truth: but *John* is commanded to leave out the outward court, or outward form of religion and Church-government, because it is given to the *Babylonian Gentiles*. For the glorious woman in heaven, the remnant of whose seed kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of *Jesus*, continued the same woman in outward form after her flight into the wilderness, whereby she quitted her former sincerity and piety, and became the great Whore. She lost her chastity, but kept her outward form and shape. And while the *Gentiles* tread the holy city underfoot, and worship in the outward court, the two witnesses, represented perhaps by the two feet of the Angel standing on the sea and earth, prophesied against them, and *had power*, like *Elijah* and *Moses*, *to consume their enemies with fire proceeding out of their mouth, and to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their Prophecy, and to turn the waters into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will*, that is, with the plagues of <274> the trumpets and vials of wrath; and at length they are slain, rise again from the dead, and ascend up to heaven in a cloud; and then the seventh trumpet sounds to the day of judgment.

The Prophecy being finished, *John* is inspired anew by the eaten book, and begins the Interpretation thereof with these words, *And the Temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his Temple the Ark of the Testament*. By the Ark, we may know that this was the first Temple; for the second Temple had no Ark. *And there were lightnings, and voices, and thundrings, and an earthquake, and great hail*. These answer to the wars in the *Roman Empire*, during the reign of the four horsemen, who appeared upon opening the first four seals. *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the Sun*. In the Prophecy, the affairs of the Church begin to be considered at the opening of the fifth seal; and in the Interpretation, they begin at the same time with the vision of the Church in the form of a woman in heaven: there she is persecuted, and here she is pained in travail. The Interpretation proceeds down first to the sealing of the servants of God, and marking the rest with the mark of the Beast; and then to the day of judgment, represented by a harvest and vintage. Then it returns back to the times of opening the <275> seventh seal, and interprets the Prophecy of the seven trumpets by the pouring out of seven vials of wrath. The Angels who pour them out, come out of the *Temple of the Tabernacle*; that is, out of the second Temple, for the Tabernacle had no outward court. Then it returns back again to the times of measuring the Temple and Altar, and of the *Gentiles* worshiping in the outward court, and of the Beast killing the witnesses in the streets of the great city; and interprets these things by the vision of *a woman sitting on the Beast, drunken with the blood of the Saints*; and proceeds in the Interpretation downwards to the fall of the great city and the day of judgment.

The whole Prophecy of the book, represented by the book of the Law, is therefore repeated, and interpreted in the visions which follow those of sounding the seventh trumpet, and begin with that of the Temple of God opened in heaven. Only the things, which the seven thunders uttered, were not written down, and therefore not interpreted.

[1] Isa. vi.

[2] Apoc. v.

[3] Apoc. vii

[4] Buxtorf in Synogoga Judaica, c. 18, 21.

[5] Ezek. ix.
