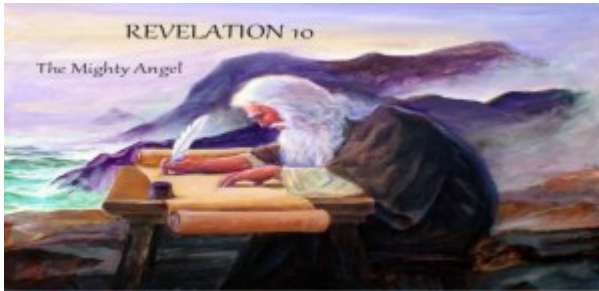


Revelation 10:1-3. Intervention Of The Covenant Angel



This is the continuation of [The Last Prophecy: An Abridgment of Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae.](#)

The Epoch Of Antichrist's Triumph, A.D. 1513.

[1] ¶ And I saw another mighty angel come 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:

[2] And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

[3] And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. (Rev 10:1-3)

GLORIOUS APPEARANCE! What a vision to rejoice the heart of the Evangelist! Who this bright and cloud-robed Being was he must have known full well, and what his mission he could easily anticipate. Is it not evidently the Lord Jesus, the Covenant Angel that now appears, come to vindicate his own cause, to assert his power, and by a renewed revelation of his grace and gospel to begin the consumption of Antichrist's usurped dominion? The rainbow must have betokened to St. John an interposition in support of the covenant of mercy, radiating from the Sun of Righteousness himself: in the roaring of the Lion of Judah was heard the voice of authority rebuking the enemies of God; and in the open volume he beheld the great means of effecting the divine purpose, the Bible. From all he must have gathered that at this juncture, when the power of darkness and corruption should be at its height, some sudden, striking, and direct intervention of Providence would take place, such as we cannot hesitate to recognize in the REFORMATION, with which the sixteenth century opened.

And here we observe another remarkable instance of that allusive contrast of which we have before spoken; the circumstantial of this vision of Christ's revelation to his Church having at the same time a pointed reference to several particulars attending the display of Antichrist's pretensions to Christendom at this very period.

[1] To those latter we shall first refer, and inquire what is taking place at Rome, that central metropolis of the world, as well as of the visible Church of Christ. History has fully preserved the record of the high festival. It is

the month of March, A.D. 1513. From the window of the conclave of cardinals an announcement is made: "I tell you tidings of great joy: a new Pope is elected, Leo X.;" and loud and joyous are the acclamations. Immediately the coronation begins at St. Peter's; but the grander ceremonial of his going to take possession of St. John Lateran – the church by the bishopric of which, as "mother and mistress" of all others, he is to be constituted universal pontiff – was delayed for a month that pompous preparation might be made. And now the day is come. Visitors from all parts fill the city. Besides the hierarchy of Rome, there appear many of the independent princes of Italy, ambassadors also from the states of Western Christendom, and the various deputies who represent the Church universal in the General Council now holden at the Lateran. The concourse from early morn has been to the great square of St. Peter's. Thence formed on horseback, the procession, crossing the bridge of St. Angelo, traverses the city to the Lateran church. First in order a troop of cavalry, then a long line of nobles and gentry, succeeded by the senators of Rome, Florentine citizens and other provincials; next the Pope's bodyguard, with another file of barons and gentry. Envoys from Germany, Spain, Portugal, and other kingdoms follow; then abbots, bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs, above 250; then the cardinals wearing jeweled miters in rich costumes, with streaming banners as on a day of jubilee. At length, closed in by a troop of military, the Hero (is it not rather the God?) of the day – the POPE comes. He rides on a white horse; a cope of richest broidery mantles him; the ring of his espousal with the universal Church glitters on his finger, and on his head the regno or imperial tiara of three crowns. A canopy is borne over him by the chiefest Romans. Beneath him the streets are strewd with tapestry and flowers; and, as he approaches, the multitude fall on their knees to receive his benediction.

"It seemed to me," said the Romanist narrator of the pageant, "that it was the Redeemer of mankind going to Jerusalem, there being substituted only for 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' the cry 'Life to the Pope, the Lion!'" But is it really the case that the people regard him as filling the place of Christ to them? that they look to him as their Redeemer and Saviour? Even so.

Every mouth dwells on the high station of the Pope as divine rather than human. Every tongue tells of Leo's personal virtues, his fitness for the office of CHRIST'S VICEREGENT; and as with Christ, so now with the advent of Leo, they anticipate a new era of happiness to man.

On every side the splendid devices and paintings, and other decorations for the occasion which meet the eye, while they prove the revival of the arts in Italy, may be taken as the most faithful exposition of the general state of thought and feeling regarding him. In these the history, titles, and offices of Christ Jesus are applied to Leo, and with a singular adaptation to the prophecy before us. In one, in the Genoese arc, the azure heaven is represented. Refulgent with glory as the new-risen sun, the Pope is portrayed on the horizon: a rainbow reflects its radiance on an animated landscape, seen as if just emerging out of night and tempest; below which is the sentence, "The world hath been unveiled to light, the king of glory has come forth!" Another painting in the arc of the Florentines represents the Pope with one foot on the land, the other on the sea, having a key in his right

hand with which he opens heaven, and in the other another key (of hell, or perhaps of purgatory); with the legend beneath, "In thy hand I behold the empire of earth, and sea, and heaven." Yet again the lion appears as a symbol in these devices. For instance, in the area near the bridge of St. Angelo there appear two lions, each with one foot on the Papal insignia, to designate that it is the Pope they symbolize, the other on the mundane globe, with the inscriptions, "The prey is worthy of my glory!" and, "To me the charge belongs!" Various other devices might be instanced; such as Leo receiving the homage and offerings of the Magi; sitting a youth in a cardinal's dress disputing with the doctors; impersonating Christ at his baptism; one while surrounded by his cardinals sacrificing, with the scroll, "Tanquam Aaron;" then opposite, a leader among his armed men, "Tanquam Moses;" or, lastly, as a fisherman exercising Christ's prerogative, separating the good fish from the bad, returning the good into the river and casting the bad into a burning fire.

Such is the exaltation of the great usurper of Christ's place, the Papal Antichrist. While, shut up in a small box covered with gold brocade, guarded by some five-and-twenty attendants, the consecrated wafer is carried to swell the procession. That, they tell you, is CHRIST! Oh, foul dishonor to their Lord! A state-prisoner to add to the brilliancy of the pageant, a puppet in the hands of the priesthood!

Meanwhile, with every eye fixed upon him and every knee bent before him, the Pope reaches the Lateran. Here the studied mimicry of Christ is continued. Dismounting at the vestibule, Leo takes a lowly seat for a moment in assumed humility; then, amidst the chanting "He raiseth up the poor from the dust to make him inherit the throne of glory," he is raised by the officials, carried up the nave, and seated on the throne within. They call it his assumption or taking up, as if, like Christ, his elevation was to a heavenly glory, with all power given to him in heaven and earth.

These were not merely the exaggerations of popular excitement. The devices signified realities acted out in the history of Papal pretensions. As the sun in its effulgence, he claimed to be the dispenser of light to the world – the light of truth and of salvation. In all disputed matters of faith the appeal was not to the Bible but to the Pope, the very statements of the Bible being supposed to derive their authority from him, not he from them. One of the decretals burnt by Luther was, "The Pope has power to interpret Scripture and to teach as he pleases, and no one may interpret differently." And the rainbow emblemized his prerogative of mercy to dispense indulgences, whereby all punishments of sin, temporal and eternal, were remitted, its guilt blotted out, and innocence restored to the sinner. It is impossible to over-estimate the tremendous efficacy of these claims in support of such a system of superstition and error.

And so it was that immediately after Leo's assumption an opportunity arose for the exercise of this prerogative of mercy. The design had been proposed by his predecessors of building the Church of St. Peter's, and the execution of it devolved on him. Artists were ready. Everything needful was procured save money. But whence was money to be provided? He must draw upon the credulity of the people. He resolved upon an issue of indulgences, the

proceeds of which were to be given to the church.

In Germany more especially the sale went forward. Tetzels, a Dominican, was the vendor employed. As he traveled with pomp from town to town, a herald announced his approach, "The grace of God is at your gates." Forthwith magistrates, clergy, monks, and nuns were formed into procession, and with wax-lights, standards, and the ringing of bells went out to meet him. The Papal bull was carried on a velvet cushion, a red cross elevated by the commissary near it, and amid the chanting of hymns and fuming of incense it was borne to the principal church and received with sound of organ. The red cross and Papal arms having been placed by the altar, the commissary mounted the pulpit and thus addressed the crowd: "Now is the heaven opened, now is grace and salvation offered. Christ, acting no more himself as God, has resigned all power to the Pope. Hence this dispensation of mercy. By virtue of the letters bearing the Papal seal that I offer you, not only is the guilt of past sins remitted, but that of sins that you may wish to commit in future. None is so great but that pardon is ensured to the purchaser, and not sins of the living only, but of the dead in purgatory. As soon as the money sounds in the receiving box, the soul of the purchaser's relative flies from purgatory to heaven. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Who so insensate, who so hard-hearted as not to profit by it? Soon shall I shut the gate of heaven and extinguish the bright sunbeams of grace that shine before you. How shall they escape that neglect so great salvation?" Then the confessionals are set, each with the Pope's arms attached. The confessors dilate on the virtue of indulgences. Crowds come to the purchase. Some of the more thoughtful question, "Can the grace of God be bought?" and turn away. With others the doubt is silenced by the reflection that it comes from the Pope. Can the Vicar of Christ err? So they, too, come to the purchase. The price is from twenty-five ducats to a half-florin (i.e., from £5 to ls.), according to the rank and opulence of the purchaser. The monk's money-box full, he deducts his wages, pays his reckoning at the inn with an indulgence, and transmits the surplus to the Prince-Archbishop of Mayence, whose agent he is, and at whose commands he acts, and passes on to the next town to perform the same blasphemous part again. An agreement had been made between the Archbishop and Pope for the division of the receipts, and so the moiety flows to Rome – the price of the merchandise of souls. Thus the cheat is consummated. Meanwhile the deluded purchasers live, and perhaps die, with a lie in their right hand. And as regards the Saviour, robbed by the usurping Antichrist of his own attribute of mercy, who can tell the magnitude of the insult offered to him, the true Sun of Righteousness? So was the first picture acted out in the history of Leo. '

Moreover the representation of the Pope in the Florentine arc, fixing one foot on the sea and another on the land, had its direct fulfillment. In the second year of Leo's reign an embassy arrived from the king of Portugal. Now observe what passed. The ambassador was a general celebrated for his part in the late conquests of the Portuguese in the far Indies. In testimony of them he brought, amongst other presents to the Pope, certain animals hitherto unknown. Great was the admiration as these were led through the streets of Rome, and more especially when, on reaching the pontifical presence, the elephant stopped, and, as if with more than instinct, knelt and three times

bowed down before him. Then the orator speaks. "Fear and trembling," he says, "are come upon me, and a horrible darkness has overwhelmed me." Then, reassured by the Pope's serene aspect towards him, – "That divine countenance, which, shining as the sun, has dispersed the mists of my mind," – he proceeds to narrate the Eastern conquests of the Portuguese arms, addresses the Pope as the supreme lord of all, and speaks of these conquests as the incipient fulfillment of God's promise, "Thou shalt rule from sea to sea, and from the Tiber river to the world's end. The kings of Arabia and Saba shall bring gifts to thee; yea, all princes shall worship thee, all nations serve thee," and under thy auspices "there shall be one fold and one shepherd." He concludes in the same style, "Thee as the true Vicar of Christ and God, the ruler of the whole Christian republic, we recognize, confess, profess obedience to, and adore, in thy name adoring Christ, whose representative thou art."

We must bear in mind that this acknowledgment of the Pope's supremacy was no new thing. Four centuries before Gregory VII. had claimed authority over the kingdoms of the world. Again, A.D. 1155, Pope Adrian IV., in the exercise of the same pretensions, gave Henry II. permission to subjugate Ireland, on condition that one penny per house should be paid as an annual quit-rent into the Roman coffers. In the fourteenth century Clement VI. gave Lewis of Spain the grant of the Canary Isles. Subsequently the Portuguese having made large discoveries on the coast of Africa towards India, Prince Henry of Portugal applied to the reigning Pope, requesting that, as Christ's Vicar on earth, he would give the grant of these lands to him, and promising to convert the natives. A bull was issued accordingly, granting to the Portuguese all they might discover. In 1493 Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain obtained a similar grant relative to the discovery of America by Columbus, care being taken not to interfere with the previous grant to the king of Portugal. All promised to have the Pope acknowledged as universal bishop over their dominions, the judgment of the princes of Christendom consenting in each case to these pontifical grants being an unimpeachable title. In this manner did Leo place one foot on the sea, the other on the land, usurper of the rights of Christ, to whom had been promised "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession!"

Once more let us see Leo acting out the emblem of the Lion. We must again visit St. John Lateran, and hear what is passing in a grand council there assembled. There are sitting in ordered array above 300 bishops and archbishops, arrived from England, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Savoy, and the lesser states of Italy, together with ambassadors, generals of religious orders, the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, and not a few other ecclesiastics from beyond the seas, the whole, under Pope Leo's presidency, constituting the representative body of the Universal Church! The bishops are in splendid dresses and miters, and the Pope sits on a throne high and lifted up, robed in scarlet and gold, and wearing on his head the badge of universal empire. Truly he was "as God sitting in the temple of God." (2 Thess. 2:4) This council has been summoned for the extirpation of heresy and the union and exaltation of the Church. Before the business of each day mass is celebrated, the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" chanted, and a sermon preached. One preacher paints on this occasion the Church as in desolation, seeking

refuge with the Roman Pontiff, and prostrate at his feet addressing him, "Unhappy, degraded by wicked hands and defiled, I come to thee, my true lord and husband, to be renewed in beauty. Thou art our shepherd, our physician – in short, a second God upon earth."⁵ Another figures the Church as the Heavenly Jerusalem in present desolation, and says, "But weep not, daughter of Zion! God hath raised up a Saviour, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath come, and shall save thee from all thy enemies. On thee, O most blessed Leo, we fix our hopes as the promised Saviour." And then other orators unite, "Vindicate the tent of thy spouse, purify what is polluted in thy Church. By the fire and the burning of the pastor's office extinguish schism and heresy, that so, the renovation of the Church accomplished, the golden age may revive, and, in fine, that prophecy be fulfilled, 'Thou shalt rule from sea to sea, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.'" And now hearken to the lion's voice. Accepting all this praise, this deification as his due, his first act in assertion of that sovereignty over the world which had been assigned him was to denounce as schismatics the Pisan Reform Council, mentioned in the previous lecture as being held at this time under the authority of the king of France; and straightway, behold, the two schismatic cardinals and the French king hasten to make public humiliation and ask absolution. The absolution is granted, and on the submission of the whole of Western Christendom to the Papal supremacy the schism is healed. His next lion's roar is against the Bohemian heretics, the only ones apparently remaining. These are cited to appear, but with promise of pardon in case of submission. And when, as was triumphantly avowed by the preacher in the next session, no heretic or opposer of the Pope's opinion was forthcoming, but all hushed in submission, then the Papal lion issues his voice of command: – First, that forasmuch as printing, that wonderful art just invented, might be used to disseminate heresy, no books be printed without consent of the Pope's inquisitor in the district. Second, that no preaching be allowed, or explanation of the Scriptures, except in conformity with that of the recognized fathers and doctors of the Church; no mention to be made of Antichrist, or inquiries as to the time of the final judgment. Third, that the Inquisition fail not in searching for and rooting heresy out of the Church. As to reforming the Church, a few externals were to be corrected; and for its exaltation, the solemn bull was repeated and confirmed in which the Church is defined as one body under one head, the Roman Pontiff, Christ's representative, and of which this is the conclusion, "We declare, define, and pronounce that it is essential to the salvation of every human being that he be subject to the Roman Pontiff;" with the prefix thereto, "Whosoever obeys not, as the Scripture declares, let him die the death!" So roars the Papal lion, and the assembled Church assents. After a Te Deum of thanksgiving the members separated, each having received from the Pope a plenary remission of sins and indulgence, once in life, and in the article of death.

Such was the character of the Papal assumption of the functions of Christ at the time represented in the Apocalyptic vision. And now we are prepared to turn to the text with advantage. For so it was, that just when this Antichristian usurper was acting out the character of Christ before admiring and applauding Christendom, and was professing to exercise in regard to both worlds his prerogatives and functions, opening heaven to all believers in his magic charms, however laden with guilt, and exhibiting himself as the

dispenser of covenant mercies, the fountain of grace, the saviour, the justifier, the sun of righteousness; –

Just when, as lord of the universe, he received the homage of its princes, and granted the kingdoms of the earth to whom he would; –

Just when, at his enthronization, there were exhibited paintings on which art seemed to have lavished all its ingenuity in order to depict him in these his threefold assumed offices as Christ's vicar and impersonator, – in one as the sun with a rainbow reflecting its brightness, in another as planting one foot on the land and the other on the sea, in a third with the world in his grasp, even as when a lion roareth over his prey; –

Just when, after assuming Christ's title of Lion, he had begun to rage against and threaten every opposer, uttering forth his own voice to the shutting up and denouncing the Book, the Word of God, –

Just then was fulfilled another symbolic figuration – devised by higher than human art, and evidently in purposed contrast to the former – which 1400 years before had foreshown in the visions of Patmos Christ himself as now at length intervening, revealing himself as the true Covenant Angel of light and mercy, putting the world under his feet, and making his mighty voice to be heard, and opening again that long-forgotten and now forbidden Book of God. All this had been foreshadowed, and was now to be done. It is " when the enemy shall come in like a flood that the Spirit of the Lord " will ever "lift up a standard" for his people. "If the Lord himself had not been on our side, they had swallowed us up quick when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. (Psalm 124:1-6)

Continued in [Revelation 10:1-4. The Epoch Of The Reformation](#)

All chapters of The Last Prophecy: An Abridgment of Elliott's *Horae Apocalypticæ*

- [Revelation 1, 2, 3. St. John in Patmos](#)
- [Revelation 4, 5. View of Scenery As It Appeared to St. John](#)
- [Revelation 6:1, 2. The First Seal](#)
- [Revelation 6:3-8. Second, Third, and Fourth Seals](#)
- [Revelation 6:9-11. The Fifth Seal](#)
- [Revelation 6:12-17. The Sixth Seal](#)
- [Revelation 7:1-8. The Sealing Vision](#)
- [Revelation 7:9-17. The Palm-Bearing Vision](#)
- [Revelation 8:1-5. The Seventh Seal](#)
- [Revelation 8:6-12. The First Four Trumpets](#)
- [Revelation 8:13. Forewarnings Of Coming Woe](#)
- [Revelation 9:1-11. The Fifth Trumpet](#)
- [Revelation 9:12-19. The Sixth Trumpet](#)
- [Revelation 9:20-21. The Unrepentant State of Western Christendom](#)

- [Revelation 10:1-3. Intervention Of The Covenant Angel](#)
 - [Revelation 10:1-4. The Epoch Of The Reformation](#)
 - [Revelation 10:5-7. The Angel's Oath](#)
 - [Revelation 10:8-11 And 11:1-2. The Covenant Angel's Commission](#)
 - [Revelation 11:2-6. Retrospective View Of The Two Witnesses – Part I](#)
 - [Revelation 11:3-6. Retrospective View Of The Two Witnesses – Part II](#)
 - [Revelation 11:7-12. Retrospective View Of The Two Witnesses – Part III](#)
 - [Revelation 11:12-14. Ascent Of The Witnesses. Great Earthquake](#)
 - [The British Church Amongst The Witnesses](#)
 - [Revelation 12:1-17. The Great Red Dragon](#)
 - [Revelation 13 And 17. The Beast From The Sea, Etc. The Lamb-like Beast. The Image Of The Beast.](#)
 - [Revelation 14:1-20. The Song Of The 144,000](#)
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- [Revelation 15 And 16:1-12, The Seventh Trumpet, The Vials](#)
 - [Revelation 11:15, 19, And 16:6, 7. The Temple Opened. The Angel With The Everlasting Gospel](#)
 - [Revelation 16:13, 14. The Three Frogs](#)
 - [Revelation 17-22. Concluding Visions](#)
 - [Appendix – The Last Prophecy: An Abridgment of Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae](#)