

# THE END OF HISTORY

Translated by: Franz Berg

Cornelius a Lapide, in Flemish Van den Steen, whose Commentary on verse 5 of Chapter 20 of the Apocalypse we are about to discuss, was born in Bocholt (Limburg), Belgium in 1567 and died in Rome in 1637.

He spent thirty years of his life writing his much celebrated commentary on the Holy Scriptures, excepting only the Book of Job and Psalms, basing his commentary on the Fathers and Doctors of the Church as moreover supported by a broad knowledge of every relevant author, ancient and modern, religious and profane.

*"According to the symbolic sense, certain authors note the expression 'two thousand years' during which the Martyrs and Saints are to reign together with Jesus Christ is*

*repeated twice (verses 4 and 5), thereby meaning that the Church Militant will continue for an additional two thousand years together with the Kingdom of Christ in this world, and after this time will come the End of the World together with the glorious Kingdom of Christ and the Saints in the sky. In effect they estimate, or rather numerous authors speculate that the world will last six thousand years, which is to say four thousand years before Christ and two thousand years after, not exactly but approximately, more or less. These authors here mention one thousand years from the Return of Christ to the End of the World, which in reality will not be simply one thousand but one thousand repeated or doubled, and hence two thousand years.*

*Many give convincing reasons as proof. 1) Since the world was created in six days, the world will stand for the same length of time,*

*namely six thousand years. In effect, a thousand years is as a day, as Saint Peter says (Second Peter, 3:8) and also the Psalmist (Psalm 89:4). Hence the fact that is Chapter One of Genesis in which the creation and harmony of the world are described, there are six 'Alephs', and furthermore according to the arithmetic of the Aryan Hebrews 'Aleph' expresses the number one thousand. Which means God has created the heaven and earth in six days so that they will last for six thousand years.*

*This is confirmed by: 1) The fact that the seventh day, namely Saturday, the day on which God rested from the work of creation, means the day of the blessed stillness of the Saints in heaven after the First Resurrection as taught by the Fathers; in other words, the seventh millennium of eternity. So in a proportionate and consequent manner, the six days of the Creation of the world*

*preceding represent the six millennia of time and this world, after which immediately comes the Saturday, which is to say the seventh millennium of eternity. Whence, as Saint Cyprian states (Tractate De Exhort. Martyr, Chapter 11): 'In the divine dispensation the first seven days embrace seven thousand years'. 2) The first six parents of humanity, namely Adam, Seth, Enos, Cain, Mahalaleel and Yared die while the seventh, Enoch, was transported to Heaven, so then after six thousand years in which hard labour and death are in force, will come the beginnings of rest and immortal life, so says Saint Isidore, quoting the gloss of the Fifth Chapter of Genesis. 3) In Genesis 6:3 the statutory law for the life and duration of men is 120 years, which our authors expound understanding this in a symbolic sense as meaning great or Mosaic years, namely, jubilee years so that each contains 50: these*

*120 Mosaic years enclosing six thousand years during which the world and the generations of men will endure. In effect, 120 multiplied by 50 make 6,000. 4) Because Saint John in Revelation, Chapter 20, registers the duration and end of the world, mentioning "one thousand years" six times (verses 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7), as if to insinuate the world will endure for six thousand years. So therefore why repeat "one thousand years" six times without necessity or mention it insisting six times in a row, if not to be able to imply that after six thousand years the end of the world and the Apocalypse of everything will take place. (...)*

*The second reason is alike or similar. The world has known three laws and states: the law of nature, the law of Moses and the law of Christ. However the time of the law of nature that extends from Adam to Abraham (who received from God and instituted the*

*circumcision that signalled the beginning and distinctive sign of the Mosaic law) also lasted for two thousand years: this is in effect exact duration from Abraham to the birth of Christ, as appears in the chronological table I have put at the beginning of my Commentary On Genesis. In consequence the third law or third state, namely the law of grace and of Christ, will last for the same, or to put it another way about two thousand years, such that the triple time of this triple law added together make the duration of the entire age of the world which endures for six thousand years. Furthermore as the sign and figure of this duration (of the third state) God commanded Joshua that, when he crossed over the Jordan, the Ark would be two thousand paces away from the people (Joshua 3:4) to signify by this the time of two thousand years during which baptism would be in force, represented by the crossing of this*

*sacred river of the Jordan, together with the other sacraments, during which time the Ark would only be seen from a distance and the mysteries would be hidden within it as an enigma and though the mirror of the Ark, namely the humanity of Christ and his divinity hidden within it, something that would occur already some 1,600 years later when this could be contemplated nearby, for face to face in the Promised Land, or in other words in heaven once the two thousand years were fulfilled (...).*

*Therefore the conclusion followed that from the time of the commentary in 1623 until the Antichrist, the Day of Judgment, the First Resurrection and the Glory of the Blessed would be four hundred years, not exactly but approximately, during which the Gospels must be preached in China, Tartary, and the other unknown regions of the Indies so that churches would be founded and the religion*

*of Christ established, and then suddenly with this done the end of the world and all things will come, the Apocalypse will be fulfilled together with every mystery there insinuated by Saint John. That the time of the law of Christ does not last longer, or at least not much longer, than the times of the natural law and that of the Mosaic law can be deduced from the fact that the Prophets call the time of Christ 'the last', and 'the last hour' by Saint John in First John, 2:18, and "the end of the ages" by Saint Peter in First Corinthians, 10:11. Whence what Saint Paul says: 'The end of all things is nigh: Be therefore sober and watchful in the night,' (First Peter, 4:7), and Saint James (5:8): 'Be you also patient: strengthen your hearts, for the Coming of the Lord is at hand.' Thirdly, therefore we see the world growing old and tending towards her conclusion and end. As Saint Cyprian said (ad Demetrianum): '(...) Such is the sentence*



*given with respect to the world, such is the law of God, that everything born perishes, everything that develops grows old, everything strong becomes weak, everything great diminishes and after having become weak and diminished everything reaches its end.' (...) This is confirmed by the fact that we see the Gospels preached in China, in Japan, in the Indies and in lands unknown until now and proclaimed little by little throughout the entire world. Hence the end of the world draws near. Such is the voice of Christ himself who has declared: 'And these Glad Tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the earth, for a witness to the nations, and then shall the end come.'* (Matthew 24:14)

*Fourthly, this is shown by arguments from authority and from tradition. In effect the Christians, Hebrews, Pagans, Greeks and Latins agree in this same belief, to the extent*

*that it appears as an old and universal tradition.*

*Saint Augustine (City of God, Book 20, Chapter 7) states these apocalyptic one thousand years thus: 'One thousand years can be understood in two ways, or rather this event will occur in the last days, or said in another way, during the sixth millennium, as the sixth day whose ultimate stages are passing now; immediately afterwards the Saturday without night shall follow, or in other words the rest of the Saints that shall have no end. Saint John, in the manner of speaking that takes the part for the whole, would call the thousand years the ultimate part lacking until the end of ages in which he uses the whole of the time of this ultimate age as a thousand years with the intention of pointing out the perfect number, even the fullness of time.'*

*Saint Jerome in the explanation of Psalm 89 sent to Cyprian concerning that verse: 'For a thousand years in Thy sight are as the day just passed,' deducing the entire duration of the present age will be six thousand years: "I think it is from this passage that we have the habit of speaking about a thousand years as a day, so that considering the world was made in six days, we believe it will only last for six thousand years and then the seventh and eighth number will come soon in which the true Sabbath will be held, from whence the fact the reward for good works is promised in the eight beatitudes." He also implies this in his Commentary On the Fourth Chapter of Micah.*

*This is also expressly taught by: Saint Victor, Saint Justin (Quaest. 71 ad Gentes), Saint Irenaeus (Book Five, last chapter), Lactantius (Book Seven, Chapter Fourteen), Saint Hilary (Chapter 17, Commentary On Matthew),*

*Saint Rabanus Maurus (Commentary on Deuteronomy, Book One, Chapter Eleven). This tradition is also in force among the Pagans in Hydapses, Mercurius Trismegistus and the Sybylline Oracles, as Lactantius and Sixtus of Siena testify.*

*Moreover Saint Gaudencio Brixiano (Tenth Tractate) also expressly states: 'We await this truly holy day of the seventh millennium that will come after these six days, in other words the six thousand years of the age, which having been fulfilled there will be the rest of true holiness and of those who have firmly believed in the resurrection of Christ. Then there will be no more combats against the Devil who will henceforth remain subjected to torture.'*

*Saint Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, teaches likewise (in his book De Theoria rerum Ecclesium), on the authority of the*

*illustrious Greek Fathers Saint Cyril, Saint Hippolytus, etcetera, who seeking the reason for which the*

*Pope blessed the people by raising his fingers up to symbolize the number 6,500, replied that the Pontiff blessed the people in that way to manifest the coming of Christ for the Judgement which will occur in the year 6,500 of this world.*

*So also teach Saint Isidore, Saint Robert Bellarmine (De Rom. Pontiff., Book Three, Chapter 3) and others (...) among them Saint Cyril and Saint John Chrysostom.*

*Among the Hebrews of great authority there are Moses of Gerona, Rabbi Isaac (basing himself on Genesis, Chapter One), and Rabbi Elias who the Jews celebrate as an oracle in the Talmud (Book Four, Tractate Four) where he writes under the inscription 'Sanhedrin,' meaning Judgement: 'The world will endure*

*for 6,000 years and then quickly be destroyed: There are two thousand years of emptiness (or the natural law), two thousand years of the Mosaic law, and then the days of the Messiah will be two thousand years.'*

*(...) This statement (which does not define any day or year with exactitude) while common, suggests a great probability. Since we can certainly define nothing with certainty in the matter, because it depends on a secret decree of God as expressed by Christ in Acts 1:7 (...) and Mark 13:32. We must therefore not understand this number of six thousand years in an arithmetical and exact form, but rather geometrically and morally, in the sense that the world will only last for six thousand years, no more and then will not reach the completion of the seventh millennium but end before then. As for how many years and decades, including centuries after the sixth millennium, there will be in the course of the*

*seventh millennium before the consummation of the seventh millennium to reach the end of the world, we do not know. Enough for us to know we live in the ultimate millennium of the years of the world. Whether there will be more or less time remaining is hidden from us.*

*It follows from this that we are much closer to the end of the world, and that already little remains lacking (...), which confirms the fact we see the Gospels preached throughout virtually the entire world (...); another sign is the prophecy of Saint Malachi, Archbishop of Ireland, of whom Saint Bernard wrote the life, a prophecy cited by Arnold Wino in the 'Chronicles of the Order of Saint Benedict,' in the 'Tree of Life,' Book Two, Chapter Forty to the end, in which Saint Malachi describes chronologically, through symbols and emblems, every future Roman Pontiff from his time until the end of the world (...).*

*In this prophecy, after Gregory XV who currently headed the Roman Church, there were counted in effect only 32 Roman Pontiffs, the last being Peter the Roman. Now if this prophecy is true and there were only 32 Roman Pontiffs remaining, then there now remain only about 200 years until the end of the world, since on average we can easily count 16 Pontiffs per century, and even more, thus from Saint Peter until now, that is until the year of Our Lord 1623, we count 238 Pontiffs. If we divide this number by the years of Our Lord this makes for an average of seven years per Pontiff. If we apply this average to the number 32 of the future Popes, then we obtain as the time of their succession and duration, 224 years. If we concede 10 years on average to each, we obtain 320 years. If we double the number seven, then we obtain approximately the exact number of years that should be required to achieve the*



*consummation of the sixth millennium of the world, or rather 430 years.*

*We contemplate this and prepare the Day of the Lord as being very near: let us not allow our hearts to cling to the earth below nor seek to erect family palaces that may not last for more than another 200 years, but build eternal dwellings in the heavens through the practice of virtue. Let us transfer our entire spirits to the future age; let us apply ourselves to study, paint and live in the light of eternity." (Cornelii a Lapide, Commentaria in Scripturam Sacram, Book Twenty One, Sancti Joannis Apocalypse, ed. Ludovicus Vives, Parisiis, 1863, Chapter Twenty, 5, pages 352-355).*

Note that, unfortunately and mistakenly, Cornelius a Lapide does not distinguish between the end of the apocalyptic Last Days (relatively and related to the Parousia) and the End of the World (relative to the Second

Resurrection and Last Judgment). Please note that other text also by Cornelius a Lapide, who without being a millenarian admits that in any event there will be a Kingdom of Christ on earth as shown by Cristino Morrondo, Canon law reader of Jaen, in his magnificent book "Catastrophe and Renewal," p. 215, from 1924: "*Cornelius a Lapide, in his Commentary On the Prophet Daniel, 7:27, although frequently resisting the millenarians in a variety of places in his voluminous work, finds himself obliged before the evidence of the sacred text to record their convictions, stating: 'For the kingdom and power and greatness of the kingdom under heaven is given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is eternal and which every king shall serve and obey... I say it is certain that this Reign of Christ and His Saints shall come, and that this kingdom shall not only be spiritual as it has always been on earth, when*

they have persecuted the Saints subjecting them to persecutions and hardships, but that this kingdom will be corporal and glorious, which is to say the Saints must reign with Christ on earth as they shall reign forever in heaven. Moreover I believe this kingdom will begin on earth at the moment the Antichrist is killed, because the latter dead is stripped of his dominions and then the Church will reign throughout the universe and the flock will replace both the Jews and Gentiles, and then the Kingdom will be taken up to heaven for all eternity." What a magical summary of Millenarianism, affirmed by a non-Millenarian, but a wise exegete such as Cornelius a Lapide.

Moreover it is clear that during that reign the great Promise will be in effect: There will be one sole Flock beneath one sole Pastor, and this is the Millenarian triumph of the Church

that every Antichrist and Judizer repudiates.

Well should we remember what Saint Peter the Apostle and first Pope said concerning the Parousia, seeing in the brightness of the Transfiguration a reflection of the glory and majesty of Christ in his Second Coming: "*For we have not* made known to you the power and coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ, not following skillfully devised fables, but we were eye-witnesses of his Divine Majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, this voice coming down to him from the excellent glory: This is my Beloved Son, in whom I find my delight. And this voice we heard borne from heaven when we were with him on the holy mount." (Second Peter, 1:16-18).

We should also keep in mind the warning against the traitors of the Last Days among whom we find the Anti-apocalyptic partisans.

*"Knowing this first, that in the Last Days there shall come deceitful imposters, walking according to their own lusts. Saying : Where is the promise of his Coming? For since the time the Fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were since the beginning of creation."* (Second Peter, 3:3-4).

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