



Basil Wolverton était un créateur inspiré par la documentation de l'Église Sabattéenne duquel fut membre, il décrivit par des images saisissantes sa compréhension des événements de l'Apocalypse.

### **Wolverton's Worldview BY MONTE WOLVERTON**

Longtime aficionados of Basil Wolverton are aware that he is somewhat of a paradox. On the one hand he was a Christian minister -- quiet, humble, generous to a fault -- morally and socially conservative -- always ready with a word of encouragement or humor. On the other hand, he created some of the most terrifying religious art since Hieronymus Bosch. And much of Wolverton's bizarre, frenetic secular work wasn't any less shocking. Like Bosch (an excellent cartoonist himself), the key to understanding Wolverton is an understanding of his religious convictions. The threads of Wolverton's creativity and his religion are inextricably woven together.

Wolverton's beliefs derived largely from the bizarre and eclectic teachings of Herbert Armstrong, a Chicago advertising and marketing man who had experienced an economic downturn in the early 1920's. Armstrong had moved his family to Oregon, in search of greener pastures. There, among a group of seventh-day sabbatarians, he became convinced that the Anglo-Saxon people were part of the descendants of the "Lost Ten Tribes of the House of Israel." A high-school dropout with no formal theological education, Armstrong thought he had discovered the heretofore lost key to all biblical prophecy, and that the Tribulation spoken of in the book of Revelation would shortly fall on the United States and the nations of the British Commonwealth.

Not unlike many evangelical preachers of the early 1930's, Armstrong adopted a dispensationalist paradigm, with a with a pre-millennialist, literal interpretation of the apocalyptic sections of scripture -- albeit with his own particular spin. The Bible, he taught, predicted imminent worldwide calamities, followed by the return of Christ and a happy Millennium, followed by the destruction of the wicked, followed by the advent of new heavens and earth.

As he began his ministry in Eugene, Oregon, Armstrong was convinced God had chosen him to bring a warning message to the world. In fact, he gradually became deluded into thinking he was the only true messenger of God in this age. To proclaim his message, Armstrong began a radio program, The World Tomorrow, and a magazine, The Plain Truth. As Armstrong's following grew, so did the threat of a second world war. He believed this was it -- the Beast, the Antichrist, and the whole end-time enchilada. Armstrong, of course, was wrong -- and this would not be the last time.

In the late 1930's, Herbert Armstrong's radio broadcast attracted the attention of a Vancouver, Washington comic artist, Basil Wolverton. The son of devout Christian parents, Wolverton had slipped into agnosticism. Armstrong changed that. Wolverton was baptized in 1941 and ordained an elder in 1943. During these years, Wolverton was also busily producing his comic book features--such as Spacehawk, Powerhouse Pepper, Rockman, Disk-Eyes the Detective, Scoop Scuttle, and Mystic Moot and His Magic Snoot.

When Armstrong moved his growing operation to Pasadena, California in 1946, he relied on Wolverton to pastor a small congregation in the Portland area. That same year, Wolverton achieved national fame outside of comics as winner of Al Capp's Lena the Hyena contest. This led to his grotesque drawings and caricatures being featured in Life and Pageant magazines. In the early 1950's, Wolverton also produced his finest comic book work -- 17 horror and science fiction features, including "Brain -Bats of Venus" and "The Eye of Doom." The early MAD magazine utilized Wolverton's unique talents -- and they continue to use his art today.

Meanwhile, Armstrong's Radio Church of God (later renamed WorldwideChurch of God), and Ambassador

College were growing, as were his broadcasting and publishing efforts. In the early 1950's, he commissioned Wolverton to begin work on two projects. One was writing and illustrating a story of the Old Testament, which began serial publication in The Plain Truth in 1958 -- later to be published in six volumes. The other was this series of spectacular illustrations depicting shocking scenes from the Book of Revelation, to accompany a series of articles on that subject in The Plain Truth. -- later reprinted in two booklets, 1975 in Prophecy and The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last.

During the 60's and 70's, Wolverton continued to be active in local ministry, while continuing to work on his story of the Old Testament, while continuing to create increasingly bizarre humorous work for a variety of publications and clients: Plop magazine, Barker greeting cards, Topps, and others.

Basil Wolverton died in 1978. Herbert Armstrong died in 1986. Shortly thereafter, a reformed Worldwide Church of God abandoned Armstrong's unorthodox doctrinal constructs, including Anglo-Israelism, an emphasis on prophecy, and ecclesiastical exclusivism. The Plain Truth magazine continues publication, albeit with very different content.

These drawings are an important historical record, not only of a fanatically (albeit well-intentioned) literal view of biblical prophecy, but of the mindset of the mid-1950's. The bomb-- the threat of disorder and the breakdown of society -- radioactivity -- disease epidemics -- cataclysms -- things which caused the 1950's citizen to break out in perspiration. These are things (perhaps no less impending -- who knows?) at which we yawn today. But as you gaze upon Wolverton's images of the ultimate cataclysm, you just might find a few beads of sweat breaking out on your forehead.

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Basil Wolverton's works have been published in the last two decades by several sources: Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115 (Wolvertoons, Powerhouse Pepper); [Dark Horse Comics](#) (Wolverton in Space, Spacehawk #1-5, Fantastic Fables #1-2, Planet of Terror and Gateway to Horror ) and Glenn Bray, P.O. Box 923308, Sylmar CA , 91392 (Foopgoop Frolics, GJDRKZLXCBWQ Comics) -- to name just a few publishers of Wolvertonia. For more publishers and prices, see the [Basil Wolverton Catalog](#), or visit Gene Gallatin's [Basil Wolverton Homepage](#).

*Original b&w published in 1975 in Prophecy, 1959.*

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"Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword."  
Revelation 6:4



"I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth."  
Revelation 6:8



"When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come!' I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, 'A quart of wheat for a day's wages, and three quarts of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!'"  
Revelation 6:5,6



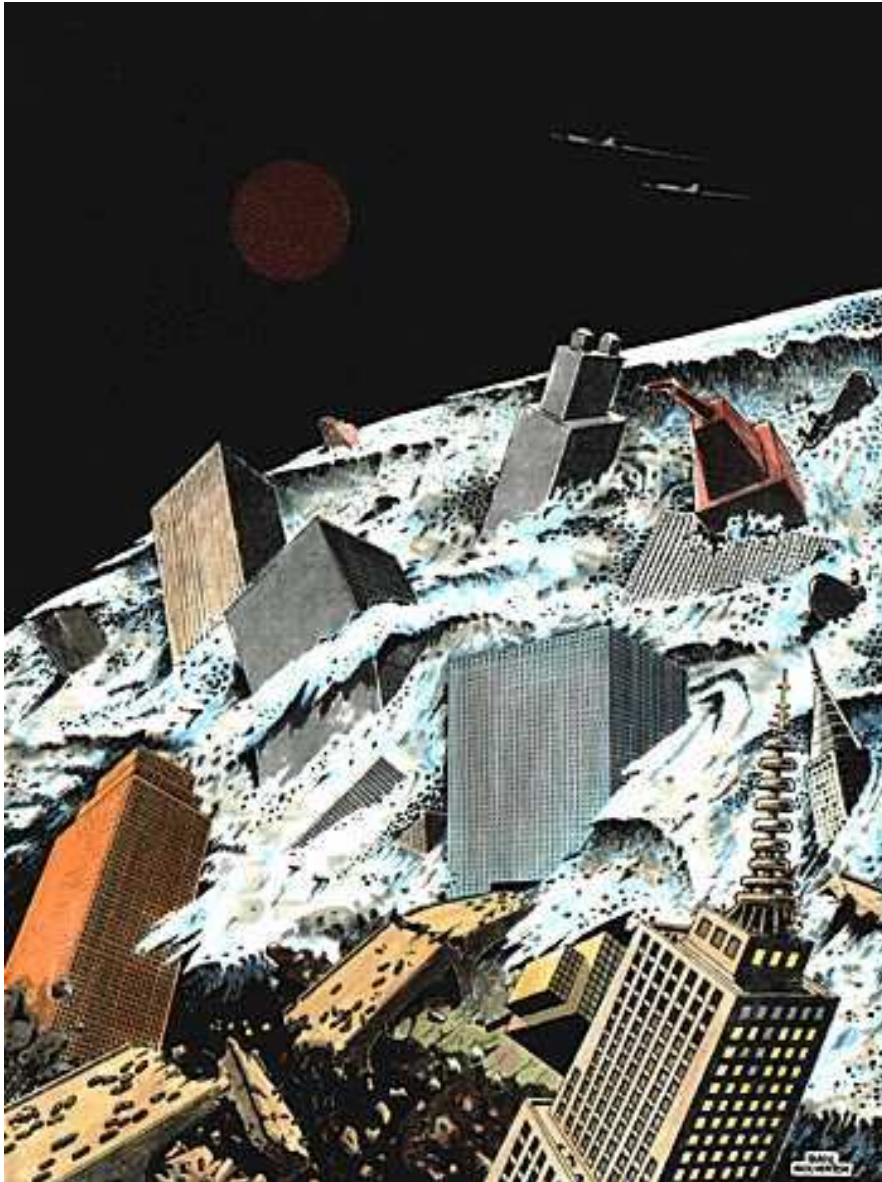
"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. . . . Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken."  
Luke 21:25,26





"I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig-tree when shaken by a strong wind. The sky receded like a scroll, rolling up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place."

Revelation 6:12-14



"On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea."  
Luke 21:25





"The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed."  
Revelation 8:8-9



"From the sky huge hailstones of about a hundred pounds each fell upon men. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible."  
Revelation 16:21





"A third of mankind was killed by the three plagues of fire, smoke and sulphur that came out of their mouths."



"Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, 'Go, pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth.' The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly and painful sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshipped his image."





"The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was given power to scorch people with fire. They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him."  
Revelation 16:8-9



"The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up."  
Revelation 8:7





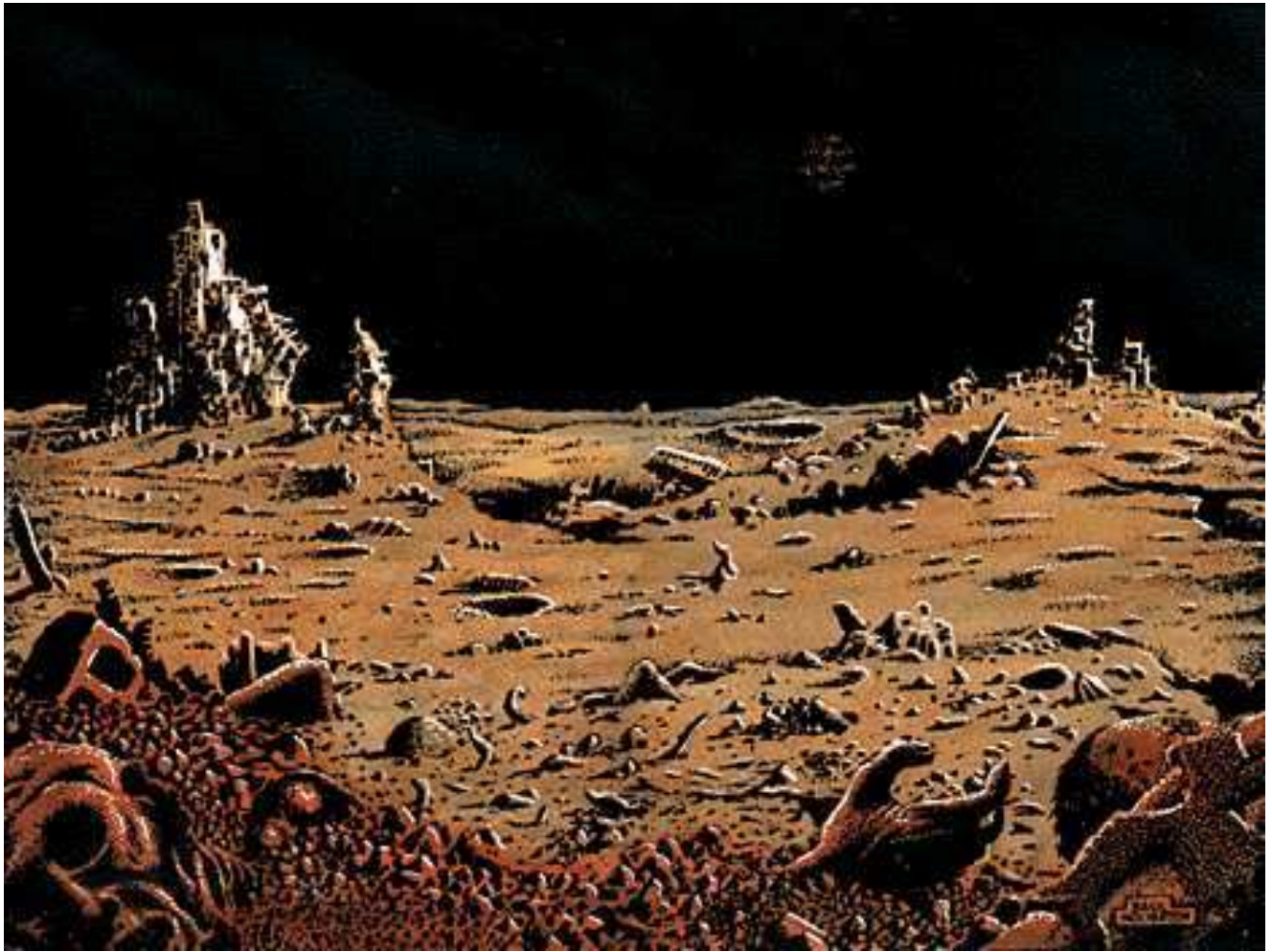
"The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was plunged into darkness. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done."  
Revelation 16:10-11



"The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, 'It is done!' Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since man has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake."

Revelation 16:17-18





"For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equalled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened."  
Matthew 24:21-22

