

Revelation

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS



A VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY
OF
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

David Honey

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OF
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Pastor David Honey

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FORWARD

by Dr. Royal Blue

We live in such important days. People everywhere are asking, “What does the future hold?”

Surely, the best place to go for the answers to that question is the Book of Revelation.

Pastor David Honey has done an excellent job in giving us great insight into Revelation on a verse by verse study in his book: “REVELATION - For Such A Time As This.”

Pastor Honey’s method of presenting insights in the book of Revelation makes this study easy to understand.

Pastor Honey has had a very unique ministry for many years, as he has worked with people who have been rescued and encouraged by his spirit inspired ministry.

Not only as a Chaplain of a large jail ministry, but also by his loving leadership in a number of areas at the Good News Rescue Mission in Redding, California. In addition, Pastor Honey serves as Assistant Pastor at a church in Anderson, California.

He has spoken in a multitude of churches, and at many special community group gatherings.

I have known Pastor Honey for over 25 years. I have known him to be a man who loves the Lord, and loves people.

His desire for you as you read this book is that you might come to trust Jesus as your Savior.

If you are a Christian he would want you to be drawn closer to Jesus, and choose daily to redeem the time left, for God’s glory, while we are still on earth, before Jesus comes to rapture the believers.

This Work Is Dedicated To:

My Ministry Partner,

My Best Friend...

My Wife...

Lilly

Acknowledgments

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Pastor Linda has given of her editing talents so God's word may be shared and understood by many.

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Revelation Picture: God's Ink, Darren Weston-Artist and Friend Darren's art and personal testimony has greatly inspired me.

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Morgan Fisher, Accent Digital Publishing, Inc. The Fisher's have taught me much about the world of publishing while walking me to the release of this book

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INTRODUCTION

I believe the Book of Revelation to be the most incredible book ever written! We find ourselves in the company of the sole surviving disciple “whom Jesus loved”. After a failed attempt to, according to tradition, boil John alive, the Emperor Domitian, a crazed madman who has now launched a second wave of persecution against Christians for refusing to acknowledge him as a god, has banished John to the island of Patmos. Now, a prisoner on this God-forsaken rock off the coast of Asia Minor, John is treated to the most incredible season of his distinguished career as a humble servant of his Lord and King, Jesus Christ! John is given the Revelation of Jesus Christ! He is not simply handed a manuscript and told to distribute it to the entire known world. No! John is taken on a journey so incredible that he can scarcely put it into words! He is shown some things so horrific that he is not allowed to write them down! He is not only given the growth and condition of the entire church age to write down in the form of seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor, but he is taken into heaven to witness first hand, God’s plan for the future of the entire human race as it unfolds in brilliant, dazzling works of art that only God Himself could create and put into motion! He is dazzled by imagery so wonderful, so awesome, that mere words cannot describe in full glorious detail all that his eyes will see, but his mind will not begin to comprehend!

We are so privileged, so incredibly blessed to be loved so deeply, so completely, so unconditionally by a God, by the God who created each of us in His glorious image! Who breathed life into our very nostrils and placed eternity in our hearts! Not only does God tell us the rest of the story, but it comes with a blessing as well! Yes! A blessing!

Revelation 1:3

“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”

Certainly we are blessed whenever we read the Word of God, but Revelation comes with its own very special blessing! I personally believe the blessing I received was clear understanding of this wonderful Book! I suppose that some may disagree with my understanding, and that’s okay, it makes for lively discussion!

There are many opinions as to the meaning of this prophetic writing, but I will briefly explain the four most popular views. Many articles can be easily found online that go into much greater detail than I will in this introduction of the Book of Revelation.

1. THE PRETERITS’ INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

The term preterism comes from the Latin praeter, which denotes that something is “past” or “beyond.” The Preterist believes that most of the prophecies in the Book of Revelation have already come to pass. They are somewhat split in their interpretation however. Some believe that the prophecies were fulfilled shortly after John first penned them on the island of Patmos. Still others hold that the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD marked the fulfillment of most of the prophecies found in Revelation. The timing is close in either case.

2. HISTORICIST INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

The Historicist’s interpretation of Revelation believes that Revelation prophecy events that transpire over the entire course of the church age. Although the Historicist view from

our vantage point would still see some prophecies as future events which will continue to be fulfilled until the end of the age.

3. SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

The Spiritual interpretation does not look for specific fulfillment of prophecy, but that the Book of Revelation is a series of spiritual teachings that occur and reoccur in history. A major theme of this interpretation is that spiritual warfare is always being waged in the believer's life.

4. FUTURIST INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION

The Futurists believe that the Book of Revelation is prophesying future events to all but those who are living in the tribulation period immediately preceding the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. It is from this perspective of Revelation that I will teach. I believe that the church age will culminate at the Rapture of the Church, bringing about the Resurrection of all believers in Jesus Christ. It is then that the world will enter into Tribulation for a period of seven years at which point Jesus Christ will return to establish His Millennial Kingdom. There is disagreement within this interpretation in regards to when Jesus will bring about the rapture of His church. Some believe, as I do that He will rapture His church just prior to the seven year tribulation. Others believe that the rapture will occur halfway through Tribulation, and still others say the rapture will occur at the end of tribulation, just prior to His Second Coming. Also, there are those who deny that the rapture will occur at all.

No matter what our understanding of this incredible book may be, there is one single truth that we must not disagree on!

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

May God richly bless you as we journey together through this amazing book of God's most wonderful prophecy of all... The rest of His incredible story!



SECTION I

A GREETING FROM GOD!

Revelation Chapter 1

Greetings!

Revelation 1:1-2

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, ² who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

As the book of Revelation opens, I am reminded that all knowledge comes exclusively from the Father, as illustrated in verse 1: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God (Father) gave to Him (Jesus) to show to His (Jesus) servants (us!) things which must shortly take place.”

At first thought, you would think that Jesus Christ, being God the Son, would already have this revelation, but it seems clear that until God the Father gave it to Him, He was without this knowledge. “How could this be?” you may ask. How could it be that the three Persons of God, or one God in three Persons, do not share all knowledge as one God? I can almost hear your eyes roll as you chime in with; “Enough with your redundant chatter already! What’s your point?”

Great question! But first, another example of how Jesus found Himself in that dreaded “need-to-know” place! In Mark 13:32, Jesus is speaking of His own return: “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Okay, the point is that the dissemination of knowledge always originates with

the Father and culminates with us. In other words, we will always need to look to the Father, through His Son, to gain understanding, salvation and eternal life! Jesus made clear His position in John 14:6 when He answered Thomas with these incredibly exclusive words! “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” We must first know Jesus before we can access any greater truth in life!

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Verse 3 reveals a very unusual promise, the promise of a blessing! Here we are promised a blessing for simply reading or hearing the words found in this incredible book! This suggests that this book contains some of the most important information found in the entire Bible.....the end of the story! Every question ever asked about the future of mankind is answered for us in the twenty-two chapters of this wonderful work of prophecy!

Revelation 1:4-8

John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. ⁸“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Verses 4-8 begin to frame a beautiful picture of, not only the entire church age¹, but the eternity of the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit! The framework is built on a very special and powerful greeting!

First we are introduced to the “seven churches which are in Asia, Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey. Why seven churches? Well, first I believe that the number seven is the biblical number of completion. Second, and because of the idea of completion, we will see the entire church age as it grows and evolves through the letters dictated to John by Jesus Himself, to each of the seven churches.

The phrase “Grace and peace to you” can be considered the deepest and richest form of greeting of the day! But to receive this greeting from those who are introduced is beyond great! A greeting from Him “who is and who was and who is to come” is a big hello from the Father Himself! Included here are the seven spirits who are before His throne, or the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit as described in the book of Isaiah:

Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The Spirit of counsel and might,

The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

And finally, from Jesus Christ, God the Son!

In His part of this wonderful greeting, we not only see the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the totally undeserved position in which Jesus places us! Revelation 5:10 declares that we shall rule and reign with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom as priests and kings! Also, the first epistle of Peter teaches us:

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Verse 7 restates the promise in Daniel 7:13 that says the Son of man will come “with the clouds of heaven” (“clouds of glory” in verse 7 And it doesn’t say that He’ll just return, but to that He’ll be seen by every eye!!

In verse 8, Jesus introduces Himself as “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End”, and ultimately identifies Himself as God

What a great and loving God we serve, that He would...

- step out of Heaven;
- become one of us;
- identify with us; and
- die in our place so that we may spend all eternity with our risen Lord and King!

Revelation 1:9-11

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,” and, “What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”

In verses 9-11, we are introduced to John, the sole surviving disciple “whom Jesus loved”. John reveals his location to us as the island that is called Patmos, and he alludes to the fact that he is there because of his stand for

the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. He was banished there by the Emperor Domitian after a failed attempt to execute John in boiling oil! John was in the spirit when he heard the voice of the Lord behind him, again introducing Himself as “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last”. Can you even begin to imagine what John was hearing and experiencing? Hearing a very loud voice, more supernatural than natural? A voice he could only describe as a loud trumpet! And then, to receive such incredible marching orders. Write in a book all that I am about to show you and disseminate it throughout the entire age of grace into which My Church just has entered. The seven churches, given by name, but representative of the age of grace. What an amazing privilege!

Revelation 1:12-20

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; ¹⁵His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; ¹⁶He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, “Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. ¹⁹Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. ²⁰The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

And if that were not enough, John musters up the courage to turn and see who it is who is speaking to him in this most unusual way! Turning around to witness incredible imagery of seven golden lampstands and a magnificently-brilliant image of One like the Son of Man! In His brilliance, He holds seven stars in His right hand and there's a two-edged sword protruding from His mouth! It is no wonder that John fell as a dead man at His feet! As Jesus revives John with a touch of His hand, He commissions John to write the book of Revelation!

Jesus' most common reference to Himself in Revelation is "Son of Man". He does not refer to Himself as the "Son of God" until chapter 2:18 when He addresses the church of Thyatira.

John's description of Jesus includes incredible imagery of His absolute holiness and sovereignty:

- He comes on the wings of judgment — as seen in His glowing, white-hot feet of fine brass — but He comes in like a cloud of glory also known as Shekinah Glory² as evidenced in His head and hair which glow white like wool.
- I believe the most revealing testimony of Jesus' incredible love and genuine concern for His church (His children) are His eyes which burn red like flames of fire. His penetrating stare sees clearly into the uttermost depths of His church!
- Jesus refers to His own resurrection as One who will live forevermore! The keys to Hades and Death, which Jesus holds, are not to lock up souls, but rather to set souls free! There are those who continually teach that God is an angry, vengeful God who looks for opportunity to lock away, punish and destroy sinners! The truth is that God has done all He could do to set us free from

the bondage of sin and separation from Him! Sin separates us so completely from the Father that even His Son cried out from the cross when He became sin in our place:

Matthew 27:46

...and about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

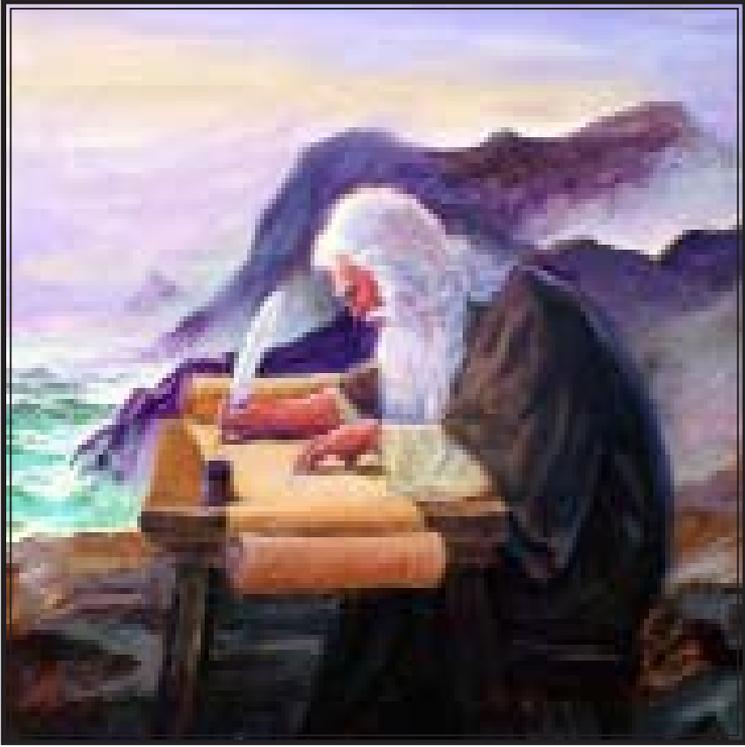
- The two-edged sword protruding from Jesus' mouth is, of course, the Word of God. We will study this further in chapter nineteen and the second coming of Christ!
- The seven stars in Jesus' right hand represent the seven angels of the seven churches.

Ephesians 6:10-12 describes a particular hierarchy of fallen angels or demons that have charge over various things. I believe this is just another attempt by Satan to counterfeit the realm of God's angelic army. As with any good army, there are infantrymen and there are generals, as well as all ranks in between. I believe the seven stars or angels are those angels given a particular charge over the churches within the church age. Some also believe the seven stars refer to the human shepherds or pastors of all Christian churches during the time of the church age.

- Finally, the seven lampstands are the seven churches. This part of John's vision reminds me that Jesus not only is in the midst of the churches, but He is also in the midst of every heart that calls Him Lord and Savior.)
- As we continue through chapters two and three, we will take a much closer look at the seven churches and what they each represent to the growth and evolution of the church age.

1 church age — n. A term used by many in the church to define the period of time between Pentecost and the pre-wrath rapture of all the saints before the time of the Great Tribulation. Many believe the church age has been defined with the seven churches found in Revelation 2 and 3.

2 Shekinah [also Shekhinah, Shechinah, Shekina, Shechina, Schechinah] — n. Derives from the Hebrew for dwelling or settling. Combined with “glory”, it refers to the visible majesty of God (the Divine Presence), especially when resting or dwelling between the cherubim on the mercy seat in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple of Solomon.



SECTION II
SEVEN LETTERS

Revelation Chapter 2

Letters to the Churches

In the next two chapters we find John poised and ready, pen in hand, to write all the words Jesus will speak to him regarding the seven churches of Asia Minor: The churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

These seven churches represent much more than a postal route for the purpose of disseminating information throughout Asia; but are particularly meaningful to John as he ministered in each of them. However, we will discover that each letter is filled with such rich prophetic information that we may scarcely believe our eyes as we read, or ears as we hear, what the Spirit says to the churches. Let us begin our journey through, not only the prophecy of the entire church age, but the stories found deep in our own hearts as each of us grows and matures as we journey through our relationship with Jesus Christ.

THE LOVELESS CHURCH

Revelation 2:1

To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:

THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF CHURCH HISTORY FROM A.D. 33 TO A.D. 100.

“To the angel...” refers to one of the stars held in the right hand of Jesus, as we learned earlier in chapter one. As Jesus

walks in the midst of the seven lampstands, He transcends time and space as He walks in the midst of 2000 plus years of church history. Not only that, but He walks in the midst of every human heart that ever called Him Lord.

Revelation 2:2-3

“I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary.”

Our hearts are an open book before Jesus. There is nothing that is hidden from Him.

John 10:14

14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own.

I love that Jesus knows everything there is to know about us and that, through the work of His Spirit, we are taught, and we are caught! Jesus lets us know that He knows the good as well as the bad . . . as we shall see.

Revelation 2:4

4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

We shall see that in five of the seven letters, Jesus has a condemnation to share with the churches. Sometime we “share” information with each other. Sometimes we share information about each other, but without a word of solution. The good news is that whenever Jesus points out our faults, He always does it in unconditional love! Not only does He chasten us in love, but He always offers the best solution possible, which usually involves repentance.

Hebrews 12:6

For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.

Oh. Did I mention that repentance and correction will sometimes hurt? When we are willing to surrender all to our Lord, He will refresh us with His absolute unconditional love!

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent.

“Come quickly,” as in judgment!

According to Adam Clarke’s commentary: “Take away my ordinances, remove your ministers, and send you a famine of the word. As there is here an allusion to the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, which could not be removed without suspending the whole Levitical service, so the threatening here intimates that, if they did not repent, etc., he would un-church them; they should no longer have a pastor, no longer have the word and sacraments, and no longer have the presence of the Lord Jesus.”

In other words, Jesus was warning of the end of the Ephesian church. In this case, the whole church must repent. However, there will be times in our own lives when there may be a need to repent of some darkening of our heart. I have always loved the lyrics in the song “Total Eclipse of the Heart” recorded by Bonnie Tyler. In the song, one person is calling to the other to turn around, while the other is claiming: “total eclipse of the heart”. This is a great metaphor for a heart condition that will drive us further and further away from the comfort and safety of our Lord. But isn’t it wonderful that our Shepherd will leave the ninety-nine to rescue the one?

Revelation 2:6

But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Another compliment! They hated the immoral heresies of the Nicolaitans. Nicolas means “one who conquers people”. According to the writings of Irenaeus¹, Nicolas, who was made a deacon in Acts chapter 6, was a false believer who later led the people into immorality. The Nicolaitans, followers of Nicolas, were involved in wickedness and tempted the church with sexual immorality. However, in this edifying statement from Jesus, the Ephesian church is encouraged. And so, we can also be assured that Jesus recognizes the positive discernment in our own lives!

Revelation 2:7

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”

“To him who overcomes...” According to John, to be an overcomer is to be a Christian. The tree of life, which is in the midst of Paradise, is the promise of heaven to every overcomer.

THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Revelation 2:8

“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:”

THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA REPRESENTS A PERIOD FROM A.D. 100 TO A.D. 312.

Jesus, referring to Himself as the First and the Last, is claiming Himself to be God! (cf. Isaiah 41:4, 44:6) The Trinity rears its beautiful Godhead once again!

Smyrna is as interesting a name as it was a place. The word Smyrna actually means “myrrh”, a spice used to prepare a dead body for burial. Because of its aromatic properties, myrrh was often used for perfume as well as in the anointing of a dead body. The interesting correlation between myrrh and Smyrna is that Smyrna was the “Persecuted Church”, and myrrh only gives off its fragrance when crushed. Smyrna was considered the “Crown of Asia”. The city today is Izmir, Turkey, but in earlier days was known as the most beautiful city in Asia Minor. Smyrna was intensely loyal to Rome; consequently, it developed a culture of emperor worship. In fact, approximately 50 years after John’s death, Polycarp, the pastor of the church of Smyrna, was burned alive for refusing to worship Caesar.

Revelation 2:9a

“I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich);

Jesus awards a commendation to the church of Smyrna. I should also mention here that Jesus has no words of condemnation for this church. Smyrna is one of only two churches to receive such blessed notice from the Lord. The second is the church of Philadelphia. Acknowledging Smyrna’s suffering and perseverance reminds her that she is rich. Matthew teaches us in chapter six of his gospel that true treasure can only be found in heaven, and if we would seek God’s kingdom above earthly wealth, we will be rich with spiritual blessings.

Revelation 2:9b

...and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.”

To continue, Jesus acknowledges Smyrna’s discernments of those who were Jews in name only. There were those Jews who were spiritual pagans as they aided those who attempted

to eliminate Christianity by putting Christians to death. Thus, they served Satan rather than God.

Revelation 2:10a

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days.

“Do not fear any of those things which [I] am about to suffer?” Oh my! Scary words! But Jesus is able to share with the church of Smyrna this somewhat sketchy prophecy of tribulation and suffering because He knows their hearts, and He knows that this amazing church can and will endure! What is the condition of our hearts today? Do we see a world gone mad and hide under a rock of indifference? Or, do we turn our hearts toward Him who promises never to leave nor forsake us?

“Ten days” of testing doesn’t sound impossible. After all, it’s only ten days, isn’t it? However, this is not a literal ten days. Rather, it refers to the period between the years A.D. 100 and A.D. 313 when there will be ten Roman emperors who bring such intense persecution against the Christian church that more than five million Christians will be murdered for their faith!

Revelation 2:10b

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

Jesus does not take away the trial, but leads them to victory — the victory won for them on the cross of Calvary! It is the victory promised His disciples when He said; “Let us cross over to the other side...” (cf. Luke 8:22). It is the day-by-day struggle of Christians in life. It is those times when it seems that all hope is lost, and then Jesus picks you up again and gives you hope again. Jesus is the victory! Amen!

Revelation 2:11

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”

“He who overcomes” is identified as a Christian. Revelation 20:13 & 14 declares that all who are judged are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Because of Jesus, however, no Christian will suffer the second death.

THE COMPROMISING CHURCH

Revelation 2:12

“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, these things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:”

The Church of Pergamos represents a period from A.D. 312 to A.D. 600.

According to Jon Courson’s Application Commentary, the Greek prefix permeans “opposition”; and the suffix gamos means “marriage”. Pergamos then, means “objectionable marriage”. Pergamos, therefore, having two meanings, is ultimately a church of compromise, which somewhat describes the next phase of church history.

The word pergamos also means “citadel” and is the word from which we get parchment, a writing material which was first developed in this area. “So what?” You ask. How will any of this help in my pursuit of biblical knowledge or spiritual wisdom? Well, first of all, the hidden meaning of anything can give us a clue to its spiritual stance. In other words, place known as “objectionable marriage” should give us concern about the spiritual motive behind it.

The sharp two-edged sword represents judgment on those who attack His people and destroy His church!

Revelation 2:13

“I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”

In the center of Pergamos was a one 150-foot high throne-shaped altar to Zeus, the Greek god. According to Greek mythology, Pergamos was the birthplace of Zeus. Another attribute of Pergamos was that it had become a gentile base for false religions, a sort of “Caesarea Philippi”, another region known for the worship of idols and false gods (cf. Matthew 16:13).

According to the historian Tertullian, Antipas (possibly the pastor of the church) was placed inside a brass bull and burned (baked) to death because he refused to renounce his faith. Jesus’ reference to Antipas being His faithful martyr is probably the greatest compliment Jesus could bestow on anyone who had died for their faith. Certainly, this begs the question we all may want to avoid: Could I lay down my life, or allow my children to die, for my faith? Any believer with even a cursory understanding of eternal life will also understand that death is not to be feared, but we may not want to think about it.

Revelation 2:14-15

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. ¹⁵ Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”

What exactly is the “doctrine of Balaam”? It is exactly what was taught about the name Pergamos: “objectionable marriage”. Numbers 22-25 tell the about Balaam, at the

bidding of Balak, King of Moab, who attempted to curse Israel and three times failed. As a result, Balaam devised a plot to have the Moabite women seduce Israelite men into intermarriage. The result was disastrous for Israel due to the practice of sexual immorality and idol worship as a result of the intermarriage with the Moabites. The doctrine of the Nicolaitans led to the same behaviors that were a result of the schemes of Balaam.

Revelation 2:16

“Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”

Jesus will fight and bring judgment against the things He hates:

- The “objectionable marriage” when well-meaning religious people embrace the marriage of church and state;
- the “objectionable marriage” acts of the Nicolaitans; and
- the religious, self-righteous circles of the church who think they are above all, even God. Remember Nimrod and Babel (cf. Genesis 11)?

Revelation 2:17

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it.”

1. “Hidden manna”: The children of Israel were given manna from heaven to eat. The word man or hu means “what is that?” or “what is it?”. The full word manna means “allot”, as in “provide”. The “hidden manna” is the spiritual bread God provides to every true believer, the bread the unbelieving world cannot see.

2. “White stone”: Secret ballots of John’s day were cast with stones — black for “no” and white for “yes”. A white stone from Jesus means “yes! You’re not guilty!”
3. “New name”: There is a name, or a message from the Lord, that is so personal that only the one who receives it will know what it is or what it means.

Wow! A word from the Lord that can only be discerned by a true believer. A verdict of “not guilty” from the Lord Himself! And a name so personal that only you and God know what it is. A personal relationship with Jesus is so much more than just Christian terminology. It is very, personal. That is how we need to see it: personal! Just you and God.

THE CORRUPT CHURCH

Revelation 2:18a

“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write,”

THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF TIME FROM A.D. 600 TO A.D. 1520, THOUGH MANY BELIEVE THIS CHURCH ALSO EXISTS TODAY.

Revelation 2:18

“These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass.”

Of all the descriptions Jesus uses for Himself in Revelation, this is the only time He identifies Himself as the “Son of God”. If He calls Himself the Son of anything throughout the book of Revelation, He usually refers to Himself as the “Son of Man”.

The attributes of fire and brass are, of course, judgment. His identifier here is important, as only God could come in true judgment to this or any other church.

Revelation 2:19

“I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first.”

Although Jesus will bring a strong word of condemnation to the church of Thyatira, He first brings a great word of commendation. So far, we have heard Jesus compliment the first four churches for their works; however, He especially commends Thyatira for her good works. Jesus recognizes this church for its last works as if the church's good works got better and better in the end.

Revelation 2:20

“ I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.”

You may recall from the Old Testament that the most wicked and ungodly woman in all of Israel's history was Jezebel — chaste, the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Zidonians, and the wife of Ahab, the king of Israel (cf. 1 Kings 16:31). This was the first time that a king of Israel had allied himself by marriage with a heathen princess; and in this case, the alliance was of a peculiarly disastrous kind. Jezebel had stamped her name on history as the representative of all that is designing, crafty, malicious, revengeful, and cruel. She was the first great instigator of persecution against the saints of God. Guided by no principle, restrained by no fear of either God or man, passionate in her attachment to her heathen worship, she did everything within her power to maintain idolatry around her in its entire splendor. There were 450 prophets who ministered to Baal under her care, plus 400 prophets of the groves [R.V., ‘prophets of the Asherah’ who ate at her table (cf. 1 Kings 18:19)]. The idolatry, too, was of the most debased and sensual kind. Her conduct was, in many respects, very disastrous to both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (cf. v. 21).

At length, she came to an untimely end. As Jehu rode into the gates of Jezreel, she looked out the window of the

palace, and said, “Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?” He looked up and called to her chamberlains, who instantly threw her from the window. She was dashed in pieces on the street, and Jehu’s horses trod her under their feet. She was immediately consumed by the dogs of the street (cf. 2 Kings 9:7-37), according to the word of Elijah the Tishbite (cf. 1 Kings 21:19).

Her name afterwards came to be used as the synonym for a wicked woman (cf. Revelation 2:20).

Very likely, the church of Thyatira was influenced by women who led the church into idolatry and immorality the way Jezebel seduced the Old Testament Jews into the same.

Revelation 2:21

“And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent.”

Our God is a patient, long-suffering God! He gave the church age of Thyatira almost 1000 years to change her wicked ways. Even today, He waits patiently, with outstretched arms for His idolatrous children to repent and turn back to Him.

How it must break His heart when His children refuse to turn away from their self-destructive ways. I wonder if we as Christians have made it a more uninviting proposition to turn away from idolatry and immorality if we who are called to love our neighbors as ourselves, have chased away the lost through a ministry of hate. God has called us to love one another, yet we sometimes spend more energy judging the lost. Have we forgotten that it is God’s job to judge and our job to love people into the kingdom!

Revelation 2:22

“Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.”

I have to wonder, how much do you want to test the patience and love of a God who has already demonstrated more grace than every man, woman or child put together could or would exhibit if the tables were turned?

Romans 1:18-23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

We can only reject Him for so long before it won't matter anymore....

Revelation 2:23

“I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.”

The church of Thyatira was only about 40 years old when John wrote this letter, so he would have seen a second generation of unrepentant persons engaged in idolatry and immorality.

There is another perspective that reveals a deeper level of consequence for these unfortunate children relative to Jesus' word that He “will kill her children with death”:

I know a woman whose drug addiction is so much a part of who she is that even her children do not take priority over the drug. In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul delivers up a list of the “works of the flesh”, or the things which God hates. One of the works listed is “sorcery”. The Greek word *pharmakeia* is from which we get the English word pharmacy. In this context, it refers to mood- and mind-altering drugs, as well as the occult, witchcraft, and magic. Thus, a drug addiction is in fact, sorcery. When the drug or any other bondage is the most important thing in life, it is idolatry.

The woman of whom I speak had her first child taken from her due to her lifestyle of drug addiction. Some years later she became pregnant a second time, and again her child was taken. She became pregnant a third, fourth, and finally a fifth time. Each child was taken from her. Her second child was born a “drug baby” and had to suffer a withdrawal process from the drugs his mother worshiped. He will likely be adversely affected by the drugs he was born addicted to for the rest of his life. Her other children may very well suffer a similar fate!

In this perspective, you might say the children born out of this type of idolatry and immorality are suffering a kind of generational slow death as a result.

Matthew 18:6-7

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”⁷ Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

The good news is that life does not have to remain in this way. In my work, I have seen individuals who, through their relationship with Jesus Christ, have broken the “Jezebel” lifestyle and have been set free! Another woman

I know suffered a life of drug addiction. Her children were taken from her and it appeared that her bondage, as well as her children's suffering, would never end. At their lowest point, she and her husband committed their lives to Jesus Christ. The cycle was broken! Today they live a wonderful life as parents and grandparents. Indeed, the spirit of Jezebel can be exorcised from even the most destructive and self-destructive life.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

John 8:36

Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Thank you, Jesus, for Your incredible forgiveness and unconditional love!!

Revelation 2:24

“Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.”

The “rest in Thyatira” most likely refers to all of the faithful of the church. Sadly, this would refer to a small percentage of the whole.

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Those that embraced the “Depths of Satan” would include so many then and today that, just like those of pre-Gnostic teaching, feel free to embrace the practice of evil in the body with no harm to the spirit. I can't help but recall Jesus' words as He confronted His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane the night of His arrest...

Matthew 26:40-41

Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?"⁴¹ Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

For those that are faithful to the teachings of Jesus, He will bring about divine protection and will not allow any other burdens to be placed upon you.

Revelation 2:25

"But hold fast what you have till I come."

The phrase "till I come" is a good indication that this church not only exists today, but will remain until Jesus' second coming. This is the first mention in these letters of His promise to return.

Revelation 2:26-27

"And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nation's"²⁷ He shall rule them with a rod of iron;

This promise refers to the time of the millennial kingdom when Jesus will literally rule with an iron scepter and protect His sheep with an indefeasible power of divine protection. He also promises that we will rule and reign with Him.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death has no power over these, but they will be priests of God and the Messiah, and they will reign with Him for thousand years.

To be an overcomer is simply to believe and receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. If you have not received Him as your Savior, won't you consider Him today?

Revelation 2:28

...and I will give him the morning star."

Malachi 4:2 refers to Jesus as the “Sun of Righteousness”; 2 Peter 1:19 declares that the “Morning Star” has risen in our hearts; and Jesus refers of Himself as the “Bright and Morning Star”.

Revelation 22:16

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star.”

Can there be any doubt of His promise?

Revelation 2:29

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

This is a command to each of us who call Jesus Lord. None of us is immune to the attempts of the enemy and our flesh when it comes to spiritual disciplines, such as remaining in God’s Word. We should ask ourselves regularly if we are hearing what our “itching ears” (cf. 2 Timothy 4:3) want to hear, or what our spiritual ears need to hear. And we should ask the Lord to search us and show us where there is need for repentance and/or improvement.

Psalm 139:23

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties;

Revelation Chapter 3

Letters to the Churches

THE DEAD CHURCH

Revelation 3:1

“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, these things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.”

THE CHURCH OF SARDIS REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF TIME BEGINNING A.D. 1520 UNTIL THE COMING OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

The word sardis means “remnant”. As we will see, there is a remnant in Sardis who will be counseled to strengthen what remains.

Here again, Jesus introduces Himself in descriptive terms:

- “He who has the seven Spirits” refers to the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit, as described in Isaiah:

Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,

The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The Spirit of counsel and might,

The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

- Jesus holding “the seven stars” reminds us that the pastors of the seven churches are continually in His

hands! Without His divine guidance the church would most certainly be lost.

- “I know your works, that you have a name...” Jesus, with His penetrating stare, sees into the very heart of our works and sees through the transparency of our name. The word name here is translated from the Greek word, onoma, from which we get the term or concept of “denomination”. The idea of denomination can lead us all over the chart relative to philosophical posture. We ought to understand a denomination before we become a card carrying member!

“...you are alive, but you are dead.” When Eve was in conversation with the serpent in the Garden of Eden, she had no real reference for the concept of death. She only understood “alive”. When Satan told her she would not die if she did that which God had commanded her not to do, he perverted the truth. He spoke only about physical death. However, what she did not understand was that she would immediately die spiritually! Jesus simply says to Sardis, yes, you are warm, but you are dead.

Revelation 3:2

“Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God.”

When in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked His disciples when He found them sleeping. He admonished them to stay awake and watch lest they fall into temptation. Here He is saying, “Watch, and strengthen what good you have, you remnant! You are about to spiritually fall off the face of the earth! Your works are of the world and not of the kingdom. I know that your works are lacking, and I

can assure you that My Father sees them as anything but perfect!”

Revelation 3:3

“Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.”

Jesus is saying: “You have received the completed work from our Father in heaven. You have received the perfect, unchanging and infallible Word of God. You have heard our Father’s Word from Him and you have it to read and to study. You should hang on every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord! But, if you will not watch and wait with Him even for one hour. . . He will come in judgment and you will not be ready!”

Revelation 3:4

You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

There is a remnant in Sardis, and their garments are white with righteousness.

Revelation 3:5

“He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

He who is born again, or saved, is righteous; otherwise, he is unrighteous. When you are cleansed in the life-giving blood of Jesus, your name cannot be blotted out of the Book of Life. However, if there has never been a repentant heart in you, then your name shall not appear in the Book of Life.

Revelation 3:6

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Once again, we hear. With a spiritually-discerning ear, we need to listen to what the Spirit of God is saying to us. It is a matter of life and death!

THE FAITHFUL CHURCH

Revelation 3:7

“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens”

THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA REPRESENTS A PERIOD OF TIME BEGINNING A.D. 1750 AND LASTING UNTIL THE RAPTURE.

Philadelphia is a very fitting name for this church. The name means “brotherly love”. The church of Philadelphia is the only other church, besides the church of Smyrna, for which Jesus has no words of condemnation.

There is that word again — “Rapture”! What is meant by “Rapture”? You may say; “That word does not appear in the Bible at all, so what are you talking about?” Even though the word itself does not appear in Scripture, the concept definitely does. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17, we see the words or phrase “caught up”, which is translated from the Greek word *harpazo*, which means “to be taken up by force”. When the New Testament was translated into Latin; the word *harpazo* became *raptus*, thus the English word *rapture*.

The concept of the Rapture of the Church can be illustrated as ambassadors being called home prior to an act of war. In Genesis 19, Lot and his family are persuaded to leave Sodom before God pours out His wrath on that doomed city. In fact, he is told that nothing can happen until

he is safely gone! We believers are called ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and He will call us home just prior to a time when God will pour out His wrath on the earth for seven years. Scripture teaches that believers are not appointed to wrath in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, which causes me to believe that we are not called to go through the time of Tribulation.

In Revelation 4:1 we read that John is called up into heaven. He indicates that he was immediately in the spirit. By virtue of how this event fits perfectly between the seven letters written to the seven churches of Asia Minor, and when the church is seen in heaven, I believe this is absolutely a reference to the Rapture of the Church! It should be no surprise that this event occurs just as the book of Revelation concludes the church age and enters into a period of tribulation. It should also be noted that during this time of tribulation, the Church is no longer seen on earth in the book of Revelation. Where then is the church? As we read through this incredible book, we find that the church is in Heaven, and will remain there until the second coming of Christ. We will study this thought in more detail in chapter four where Jesus, once again, introduces Himself in glorious, descriptive language.

Hebrews 7:26 states that Jesus is a fitting High Priest who is holy. In John 14:6, Jesus refers to Himself as “Truth”. Whereas in Revelation 1:18, Jesus holds the keys to Hades and death, in John 14:6, He holds the key to salvation and new life! Not only does He have the key, but in His perfect, sovereign authority, He controls the entrance to the Kingdom. The door is opened or shut by His command and His command alone!

Revelation 3:8

“I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength,

have kept My word, and have not denied My name.”

The phrase “you have a little strength” is not by any means a condemnation. It is, in fact, a blessing from the Lord that He tells it just as it is. In other words, we are not bullet-proof Christians, especially in the Last Days. We will always need to rely on the Lord for our strength.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

That the church has kept His word, and not denied His name, is another great word from the Lord! This last day’s church continues to follow His word and acknowledges that Jesus is indeed God!

Revelation 3:9

“Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie — indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.”

In today’s Church, specifically the church of Philadelphia, there are those so-called Christians who still persecute the Jews. Many today are already against, or are in favor of not supporting Israel. God is not pleased with those who reject Israel! They are a “synagogue of Satan”!

Genesis 12:2-3

I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

In the end, God will richly bless everyone who blesses Israel; but woe to those who have turned their backs on her! He says, “Don’t mess with My bride!”

Revelation 3:10

“Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come

upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

Here again, I am drawn to the doctrine of the Rapture of the Church, particularly the doctrine of a pre-tribulation Rapture. [See my notes on verse 7.]

Revelation 3:11

“Behold, I am coming quickly!” “Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”

In this case, “coming quickly” is not a threat of judgment, but rather a promise of hope—the hope based on the promise that we will be delivered from the hour of trial! Jesus admonishes us to remain steadfast, unmovable.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?²⁰ For you are our glory and joy.

God has blessed us with an incredible stewardship. It is more than money or other earthly things; it is His most precious gem — people! He’s telling us, “Hold on! Don’t give up on My people! I’ll be there soon!”

Revelation 3:12

“He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.”

All believers, overcomers, will have a place of eternal safety and security in Heaven and in the presence of God. The temple in heaven is God. Of all the temples that have been, or ever will be, this one is the greatest! His name written on us will speak of His character in us. The name of the city of God is the New Jerusalem, the capital city

of Heaven where we will have eternal citizenship. The new name of Christ cannot be comprehended today. However, when we see Jesus face-to-face, He will write His new name on us, and we will eternally know it!

Revelation 3:13

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

This means, we should get alone in a quiet place and listen carefully to the word of the Lord. We need to listen more than we talk; and He will be heard, when we listen with a spiritual ear!

THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

Revelation 3:14

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write;”

THIS IS THE FINAL CHURCH WHICH JESUS IS ADDRESSING. THUS FAR, we have witnessed God’s incredible grace and wisdom on many levels as He has directed and corrected the Church through these very revealing yet calming letters.

We have also had a bit of a jet tour through most of the Church Age. Finally, we have felt the words of these letters penetrate our hearts as God speaks to each one of us with words of commendation as well as words of correction. God has made it abundantly clear that what He truly desires is relationship, even over service. He has said to us, “Look, I know you have made mistakes, and you likely will again. What you need to know is this: I love you more than you know, so repent of your sin and return to Me!” What an amazing God we serve!

Now, let’s look at this final church of the “Seven Churches of Asia Minor”.

Note that the Lord is addressing the “Church of the Laodiceans” rather than “Laodicea”, which suggests that this church was directed by people, and not the Lord. This thought can be substantiated by their works, as indicated in the letter

Revelation 3:14

“These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:”

There is no shortage of descriptive introductions by the Lord in the book of Revelation. Here, He employs a threefold introduction to once again encourage us that He is . . . well . . . He is everything!

- The noun Amen comes from the Hebrew for “certainly” and in the Latin means “so be it” or “it is so”. Jesus is certain of who He is, as we are to also be absolutely certain of whom He is!
- The words “Faithful and True” say to us that He is not only trustworthy, but He is more trustworthy than any other.
- “Beginning of the creation” is exactly that, as the beginning, He is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega! The Laodiceans believed — as some cults do today — that Jesus Christ was a created being. Thus, this part of His threefold introduction serves to dispel this heresy.

Rev 3:15-16

“I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”

I really enjoy hot coffee. I also enjoy a glass of iced coffee sometimes. But when I sip lukewarm coffee, I want to spit it

right out of my mouth. Here, the Lord is saying somewhat the same thing. A Christian who is on fire with the work and service to the Lord is someone the Lord can use. This is someone who will live out the “Great Commission” with passion. On the other hand, one who is cold in their faith, Jesus can correct.

However, one who is lukewarm is a different story altogether. For example, have you ever tried to work with someone who thought they knew everything? Because they think they have all the answers, they are not teachable, nor do they care to learn anything new anyway. In the same way, Jesus can do nothing with a lukewarm church. They refuse to do anything that strays from or threatens their traditions. In saying “I will vomit you out of My mouth,” Jesus says He will, immediately and forcefully remove them from His presence!

Revelation 3:17

“Because you say, I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...”

If ever there was a “Tower of Babel” story, the Laodicean church presents one of the greatest.

Genesis 11:4

And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

The Laodicean church feels very much like the “Church of what is happening now”. Today we see, more than ever before, much of the Church trying to remove God from its midst and rejoice in its own greatness. This church has been blinded by its own self-righteousness, but in the end, they are lost!

Revelation 3:18

“I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.”

In 1 Corinthians 3:12, we read that the works we do for the Kingdom are represented with gold, silver, and precious stones. These elements, when put to the test of fire, will be purified. You can literally watch the impurities come to the surface of extremely-heated gold to be removed by the goldsmith. Jesus wants that for us. He wants us not to burn up in the fire, but to be purified in the fire because of our faithfulness, thereby declaring His righteousness in us!

The “white garments” with which He will clothe us, are garments of righteousness and salvation.

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Jesus employs the imagery of anointing one’s eyes with eye salve to emphasize the need for spiritual vision. We are not told in John 9 the purpose of the mud Jesus places on the blind man’s eyes when He healed his blindness. However, the purpose may be revealed in this passage of revelation. The blind man gained far more than eyesight that day, and so we also gain much from clear spiritual vision. I believe this kind of clear vision comes as a result of intentional intimacy with the Lord

Revelation 3:19

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Jesus is speaking to both believers as well as unbelievers. In either case, the solution is the same: repent! Repentance is our response to conviction. God so loves us that He is always willing to forgive us, and with us, move forward from there. However, unless we repent, there is little more He can do than what He has already done!

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Revelation 3:20

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

If ever there was a description of the love, grace, patience, long suffering, and determined nature of our Lord, this is it! Jesus is pictured standing at a door, gently knocking, and patiently waiting for anyone to open it. That anyone should open the door to Him is the key! This verse is one of the most-quoted verses as it relates to evangelism. Although the verse is intended for the Laodicean church, Jesus is speaking to every soul ever created by Him. His gentle care and unimposing nature tell us Jesus leaves the decision to each of us.

There is a more imposing message here that must not be overlooked. That is the message of the reality of sin, and the reality of Heaven and Hell. These issues are real and cry out for our attention and consideration. Although Jesus reaches out to us with gentle loving grace, He brings with His invitation a sense of urgency which is driven by the reality of life and death, eternal life, and the second death. You may have heard the saying: “Born once, die twice. Born twice die once.” The second death is defined as eternal separation

from God. You might ask, as many do, why would a loving God send anyone to Hell? The truth is, He does not! God has done all He can do to rescue us from destruction. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty of for sin in our place. (See John 3:16 quoted above.)

Sin came into the world by way of disobedience. Originally, there was only one known opportunity to disobey God. Though Satan seduced mankind to disobey Him, we are still responsible for what has happened. Interestingly, the lie used by Satan to seduce mankind into sin is employed by him to deceive many today. The lie: You can become greater than God.

Revelation 3:21

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

This is so great a promise. Jesus isn't interested in simply ruling over us like so many monarchs. His desire, fueled by His desire for true relationship with us, is that we become co-heirs and rule with Him in His Kingdom. Imagine that! Jesus, God in the second person of the trinity of God, wants to include us as overcomers in His inheritance! He actually desires to share His throne as He shares His Father's throne.

Revelation 3:22

“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Jesus has ended this letter in the same fashion as the other six — imploring us to open our hearts to Him, and to hear His words as they are meant to be heard. “Don't twist or pervert My words,” He might say. “Hear them as truth! Hear and understand My heart for you!” He would say to each of us, “I love you so much! Please don't miss my meaning!”

We have concluded chapter three of Revelation and the

letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. I hope this was a meaningful journey for you. As we proceed to chapter four, I know our study is going to get very exciting as we move into the future of God's plan for mankind. But first, one more thought about where we've just been. Although these seven letters were written directly to the churches of John's day, they speak to the entire Church Age, also called the "Age of Grace". By way of these seven letters, Jesus defines for us the challenges and triumphs His Church, the Body of Christ, will go through in two thousand-plus years of church history. In every case, He directs His Church to keep doing what is right, and through confession and repentance, correct those things that are destructive to the Body of Christ.

However, there is a deeper, more personal application of these letters.

- I believe that the letters define what each individual believer will face in their lifetimes. Jesus comes along side of each of us to "captain" our lives, much as a Captain steers the ship. He fully understands that each of us will face challenges and temptations along the way. His heart for us is that we hold tightly to what we know is right, and when we fall, repent and move forward. It will take time for Jesus to bring about a perfect world in a new Heaven. We can know by His promises that He intends to accomplish this (cf. John 14:1-4). We must do all we can to persevere till the end.
- I also believe Jesus is speaking to all unbelievers through these letters. As He offered Himself as a sacrifice, holy and true, for our salvation, it is now our responsibility to walk out the "Great Commission" (cf. Matthew 28:18-19), as each of us has been called to do. Jesus has entrusted believers with an incredible stewardship, the care of His children, both lost and found!



SECTION III SEVEN SEALS

Revelation Chapter 4

Raptured! The Church in Heaven

Revelation 4:1

After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

There are those who say the above verse does not picture the “Rapture of the Church”. I say: “What else could it picture?” For the most part, the book of Revelation, is written as a series of future events, mapped out in order of the events. We have just completed chapter three, which brings us to the end of the “Church Age”. This first verse in chapter four finds John taken up into Heaven. Here we will read that John witnesses the Church, represented by the “twenty-four elders”.

Note that the verse says there was a “voice . . . like a trumpet” that called John up to Heaven. Notice the resemblance in the following verses:

1 Thessalonians 4:16

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (emphasis added)

1 Corinthians 15:52

...in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (emphasis added)

I believe that John being taken up into Heaven at the command of a “voice like a trumpet” is a representation of the rapture of the church. Further evidence of this is that the Church is not seen on earth again in Revelation until she returns with Christ at His second coming in chapter nineteen.

We will see in coming chapters that this event precedes the coming of the Anti-Christ and God’s wrath poured out on the earth.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 talks about a restraining force that must be taken away before the “son of perdition” (Antichrist) is fully revealed. Who is the “son of perdition?” The Antichrist will be filled by the same spirit that filled Judas Iscariot when he betrayed Jesus. The “son of perdition” is a term used to identify one filled with the spirit of Satan.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 (spelling error)

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ²not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. ⁵Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming

of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

There is One whose presence prohibits Satan from filling the one who would be the Antichrist, and that is the Person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was sent here by the Father at Pentecost, and has remained to fulfill God's plan throughout the "Church Age." At the "rapture of the church" the hindering force—the Holy Spirit—will step aside and Satan will have full access to ravage the world through the Antichrist.

Revelation 4:2

Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne.

This was not a dream, or even a vision. John was supernaturally transported into Heaven and into the presence of God. Another compelling argument that this event is a picture of the Rapture is that John is actually taken up into the presence of God. In what way? In the book of Genesis, mankind fell into sin and fellowship with the Father was broken. By His very nature, God cannot be where sin is. If you are not absolutely convinced of that, just look at what happened when Jesus, the Son of God, became sin in our place. Mark 15:34 records Jesus crying out from the cross; "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" God had to turn away from even His Own Son, at the very moment Jesus became sin in our place!

If we take a closer look at the rapture of the church as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, we may conclude that the rapture and the resurrection are the same event. At this event, we are given new bodies, free from sin and fitted for eternity. This is one of the most exciting events we believers can look forward to!

1 Corinthians 15:50-55

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?”

That John is taken in the spirit into the presence of God must signify that God supernaturally transformed him for the purpose of revelation.

Revelation 4:3

And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

The imagery of God’s throne is like that which is described in Ezekiel’s vision:

Ezekiel 1:26-28

²⁶ And above the firmament over their heads was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne was a likeness with the appearance

of a man high above it. ²⁷ Also from the appearance of His waist and upward I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. ²⁸ Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the brightness all around it. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

We can only describe the beauty of the LORD with the imagery of the most beautiful and precious things in life.

Revelation 4:4

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

The question here is: Who are the twenty-four elders? The imagery of white robes and gold crowns points to the redeemed. But to which group of redeemed do they belong? Israel has not yet been saved. That will happen at the end of the seven-year tribulation period, as we shall see later in our study. The only group left is the Church. This makes perfect sense as we have observed that the Church has just been raptured into Heaven. So John now finds himself in Heaven in the very presence of God along with the church!

Revelation 4:5

And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

As John continues to describe this incredible scene, he is witnessing the glory of the LORD in a dazzling display of beautiful gems, brilliant flashes of lightning, and powerful peels of thunder. He is witnessing something that, not only Ezekiel described in his first chapter, but Moses encountered on Mount Sinai.

Exodus 19:16-19

¹⁶ Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

¹⁷ And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

Here also is the Holy Spirit. The seven Spirits of God represent the seven-fold ministry of the Spirit of God as described in Isaiah 11:2

Revelation 4:6a

before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

Although there will be no sea in heaven (cf. Revelation 21:1), the crystal floor of the throne room of God will bring a calming peace to every heart who stands before it. In Mark 4:39 Jesus “rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace, be still!’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” If we cry out to the Lord in our time of tribulation, He will bring a peace to our hearts which surpasses all understanding. I believe the throne room’s sea of glass will have the same effect when we actually see it, but can have the same calming effect on our hearts as we read about it — possibly one of the blessings given to us when we read or hear the words of this incredible book.

Revelation 4:6b-8

^{6b} And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.

⁷ The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face

like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸ The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

This is an amazing scene! Isaiah described a similar scene in his sixth chapter.

Isaiah 6:1-4

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”*

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

Ezekiel described another very similar group of creatures in his first chapter

Ezekiel 1:4-14

⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸ The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of

the four had faces and wings. ⁹ Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies. ¹² And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

It is exciting to see that these scenes are repeated several times in the Bible. Certainly, this repetition and consistency lends credibility to the accuracy of the description of how God's throne room appears.

The "four living creatures" are seraphim or angels in God's service to worship Him.

Their attributes are very meaningful. They are "full of eyes" (v. 7) so that nothing escapes their scrutiny.

Revelation 4:9-11

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: **11** "You are worthy, O Lord,

**To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”**

The elders, which represent the Church in heaven, join the seraphim in worshipping God. We are taught in Scriptures of five crowns we may receive:

1. The crown of righteousness which is given to those who love His appearing (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8);
2. the crown of life which is given to those who love the Lord (cf. James 1:2);
3. the crown of glory which is given for who are servants (cf. 1 Peter 5:4);
4. the soul-winners crown which is given to those who share their faith (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:19); and
5. the martyr's crown which is given to those who lay down their lives for their faith (cf. Revelation 2:10).

Our crowns are not for our glory; they are for the glory of the One who gives us life, the One who gave His Life for us in order to save us. Our crowns are for His glory and His glory alone. What a wonderful time it will be as we worship the Lord, elbow-to-elbow with angels! Just to have a crown to cast at His feet will be the greatest honor of all. What a day that will be!

Revelation Chapter 5

The Lamb and the Scroll

Revelation 5:1

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

In John's day, a scrolls were written on parchment made from papyrus. Papyrus was a reed (tall, woody grass) that grew along the Nile river. As was the case with documents such as these, scribes wrote on both sides with the details written on the inside and a summary on the outside. Scrolls of greater importance contained more seals. Seven seals would have most likely been the most seals found on a document; and a document such as this would probably have been a title deed to property.

This particular scroll (deed) most assuredly would have been the title deed to Earth! That deed was once given to Adam by God (cf. Genesis 1:28) but was forfeited to Satan when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit (cf. Genesis 3:6). Mankind, however, continues to have opportunity to exercise his right of stewardship over creation. Thus, the "deed" seems to be available for anyone to claim until this point when God the Father hands it over to God the Son.

Revelation 5:2

Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"

Psalm 103:20-22

20 Bless the LORD, you His angels,

Who excel in strength, who do His word,

Heeding the voice of His word.

21 Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,

You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all His works,

In all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

There are commentaries regarding the identity of this “strong angel”.

There are three references to “strong” or “mighty” angels in Revelation, this one being the first. Revelation 10:1 is the second, and Revelation 18:1 is the third. We’ll look at the other two as we come to those chapters.

I suppose it is not so important who this angel is, but rather what he is there for. This may be a good place to dig a little deeper and possibly discover some incredible gem God may have for us there. A good example of angelic intervention can be found in the book of Daniel

Daniel 10:12-21

¹² Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. ¹³ But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people in the latter days, for the vision refers to many days yet to come.” ¹⁵ When he had spoken such words to me, I turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. ¹⁶ And suddenly, one having the likeness of the sons of men touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, “My lord, because of the vision my sorrows have overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. ¹⁷ For how can this

servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me.”¹⁸ Then again, the one having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me.¹⁹ And he said, “O man greatly beloved, fear not! Peace be to you; be strong, yes, be strong!” So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, “Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me.”²⁰ Then he said, “Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come.”²¹ But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

There are chief angels who occasionally work together to accomplish God’s will. In the case of Daniel, Gabriel is on his way to answer Daniel’s questions when he is held up by demonic forces. Michael, in a sense, tag teams with Gabriel so he can bring “revelation” to Daniel. I believe Gabriel is a chief angel with the authority to bring announcements and revelation as God directs. So, Gabriel is most likely the chief angel referred to here in Revelation 5:2 as the “strong angel”.

The question, “Who is worthy...” in verse 2 is really not intended to find one worthy, but rather to say that there is none worthy, as stated in the next verse.

Revelation 5:3

And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

I rest my case!

Revelation 5:4

So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

So great is our guilt that John wept much. This reminds me of Peter when he fulfilled Jesus' prophecy that he would deny Jesus three times.

Matthew 26:75

And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Our guilt can be felt all the way back to Genesis 3 and the fall of man!

Revelation 5:5

But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Who is this "Lion of the tribe of Judah"? Who is the "Root of David"? The Church in Heaven knows! The same hope they realized and believed on Earth is now before them in Heaven. It is Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world!

Revelation 5:6

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

There stands Jesus in the center of everything, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities! Jesus' rightful place should always be in the center of everything: of our troubles, of our pleasures, of our marriages and relationships, of our lives.

The imagery of Jesus as the Lamb who was slain is not only appropriate, it is accurate. Horns always symbolize power in the Bible, but seven horns would symbolize absolute perfect power. The seven eyes and seven Spirits of God are the all-seeing, all-knowing seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 5:7

Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

This is the moment we have been waiting for. We all are waiting for a hero to ride in and solve all the ills and problems of the world. In this most significant “hand off” of the scroll Jesus receives all authority and power from the Father. No longer available for anyone to take over, the earth and everything in it is His. Alleluia!

Revelation 5:8

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The imagery here is so significant. Now we see that seraphim are worshipping God at this incredible event alongside the body of redeemed believers in Heaven. The presence of angelic beings in our lives has, up to this point, been largely hidden from our view. However, there have been many biblical accounts of angels interacting with man, but few have actually seen or understood their presence. We are reminded in the book of Hebrews of the importance of hospitality towards strangers because of the very real possibility that we may be extending hospitality towards angels.

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

Psalms 144:9

I will sing a new song to You, O God;

On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You..

In a sermon preached in 1924, Herbert Lockyer Sr explains the deeper meaning of “ten strings”. He states that the early church fathers felt the ten strings found on the harp symbolize the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses, and the four sides of the instrument illustrate the four gospels. Lockyer goes on to say that the human frame is a type of instrument of ten strings, also, with two hands, two feet, two ears, two eyes, one tongue, and one heart — ten in all.

“Upon this divinely created instrument of ten strings we sing praises unto God, but to praise Him aright it is essential to have:

Two feet to walk in wisdom’s narrow way;
Two hands to do His bidding day by day;
Two ears to listen to our loving Lord;
Two eyes to read Jehovah’s holy word;
One tongue to tell and sing His worth and Grace;
One heart to love Him ‘til we see His face.”

The beauty of Scripture always confirms a thought — when that thought is from God.

John 13:12

*So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments,
and sat down again...*

Job 17:9

*Yet the righteous will hold to his way,
and he who has clean hands will be stronger and stronger.*

Psalms 40:6

My ears You have opened.

Job 31:1

I have made a covenant with my eyes

Psalms 141:3

Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth;

Keep watch over the door of my lips.

Psalm 138:1

I will praise You with my whole heart;

Before the gods I will sing praises to You.

Concerning the “golden bowls full of incense” in Revelation 5:8, golden bowls or saucers were typically used in Old Testament ritual. The smoke from the incense would be taken up into the nostrils of God as it was carried into the Holy of Holies. The smoke would symbolize the prayers of the saints. In this case, the smoke represents every prayer ever prayed by the redeemed saints of God. Isn't it awesome that God takes time to hear these prayers even as He prepares for what is to come? It certainly tells that God is never too busy to hear from His children.

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll,

And to open its seals; For You were slain,

And have redeemed us to God by Your blood

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;

And we shall reign on the earth.”

Who in Heaven could be singing a “new song” about being redeemed by the blood? The only group of redeemed believers is the Church. Once again, we have proof that the Church has been taken up into Heaven — raptured — prior to the horrific time of God's wrath — the Tribulation.

Revelation 5:11-12

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive

power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

The “number of them” can also be translated: “myriads of myriads”, which is to say; “innumerable”. God uses imagery in Scripture to describe such a number that is beyond calculation.

Genesis 15:5

Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Psalms 139:17-18

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand...

The worship depicted in Revelation 5:11-12 is by far the most incredible worship service that has ever, or will ever, take place. It is taking place in Heaven in the throne room of God, and it is growing in number and in power. Here, we see the Church, along with the seraphim now joined by every angel in Heaven, praising the Lamb who has been slain before the foundations of the world for the redemption of fallen man.

Revelation 5:13

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, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power

Be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

Wow!! Every creature, every angel, and every believer—

all of heaven, the entire universe in one humongous worship service Poor ol' Lucifer! He was once in charge of heavenly worship (Ezekiel 28:13), yet he gave up a glorious position because of iniquity and pride. What are we willing to trade away for the desires of a heart of stone? He could have been at the podium of a worship service such as this, yet he shrinks back in hateful anger at the very sound of such a glorious event. As believers, we will take part in this wondrous event. Our price of admission has been paid for by the blood of the One who is the Guest of Honor — Jesus the Christ . . . Jesus, the Savior of the world . . . Jesus!

Revelation 5:14

Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

A grand crescendo of worship culminating with “Amen!” When the worship leaves us breathless and panting on our faces, what more can we do but proclaim, “Amen!” and worship Him some more?

Revelation Chapter 6

Seal Judgments!

Revelation 6:1

Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, “Come and see.”

Let the judgments begin! As we study the next thirteen chapters of Revelation, we will find ourselves looking at God’s planned judgments through the seven years of tribulation. Daniel referred to this period of time as the final week of the seventy weeks prophesied in Daniel 9.

Daniel 9:24-27

²⁴ “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

²⁵ “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

²⁶ “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, and till the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.”

The book of Daniel is an incredible prophetic work which we will study once we've completed the book of Revelation. Daniel is sometimes referred to as the "Old Testament Revelation".

In Revelation 6:1, we are in the presence of God the Father as well as God the Son, depicted as the "Lamb [who has been slain]". Having received the scroll — the title deed to the universe — Jesus has now opened the first seal, which unleashes the first of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse".

Revelation 6:2

And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

There is much to say about who is riding the white horse, and there is something to say about who he isn't as well. There are two opposing views of who this rider represents. First of all, it is not very likely that this rider, or the next three who follow, are actually a physical horse and rider galloping onto center stage of tribulation. Surely, these "ghost riders" are mere symbols of the forces that come into play at the opening of the first four seals. The two most argued possibilities of the identity of this first rider are either Christ Himself, or the Antichrist. So let's first examine the possibility that this rider is Christ.

Indeed, Christ does make a very grand appearance in chapter 19: at His glorious second coming:

Revelation 19:11-16

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Let's examine some of the obvious differences between the rider of chapter six, and the rider found in chapter nineteen, who is Christ.

1. The rider in chapter six carries a bow, but no arrows are mentioned. I believe this symbolizes a bloodless victory, possibly one that is won by deceitful diplomacy and agreement. He brings peace, but only temporarily. The rider in chapter nineteen, however, brings a sword with which He destroys His enemies.
2. The rider in chapter six wears a stephanos, or a victor's crown. Typically, such a crown is constructed of olive branches and is received only for the moment. On the other hand, the rider in chapter nineteen wears many crowns, translated diadem, or kingly crowns. These would be permanent crowns.
3. The rider in chapter six "went out conquering and to conquer". In other words, he brings war with him — only after a false or temporary peace. In chapter nineteen, Christ brings an end to war, an everlasting peace.
4. The rider in chapter six ushers in tribulation, while Christ, in chapter nineteen, brings tribulation to a climactic end.

Matthew 24:4-5

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

I believe the rider in chapter six symbolizes the Antichrist, one who very well may be alive today, quietly waiting to spring his deadly surprises on all of mankind. Could we be that blessed generation who will not see death? Only the Father knows!

Revelation 6:3-4

When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁴ Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

I can't think of any time in world history when, at some point, a negotiated peace did not end in war. This fiery red horse and its ghostly rider gallop onto the scene wielding "a great sword".

This murderous rider is given authority to take away the peace which had been ushered in by the rider on the white horse, or Antichrist. With his great sword, he whips mankind into a killing frenzy.

Matthew 24:6-7a

⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ^{7a} For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Revelation 6:5-6

When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius,

and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.”

This new specter is the most ominous of all so far. Although a world war will take many innocent lives, the aftermath of war will not discriminate at all as to who will suffer and die a horrific death by famine. This is a certain by-product of war.

Lamentatione 5:8-10

Servants rule over us;

There is none to deliver us from their hand. ⁹ We get our bread at the risk of our lives,

because of the sword in the wilderness. ¹⁰Our skin is hot as an oven, because of the fever of famine.

The reference to scales in Revelation 6:5-6 represents the horrible and seemingly impossible economic conditions which will exist after war has ravaged the world. A denarius would have been a day's wages in John's day, thus the reference by John. A quart of wheat would only sustain a single person for one day, but three quarts of barley, a much less nutritional commodity usually used to feed animals, might sustain a small family for one day. Although oil and wine were necessary to prepare bread and purify drinking water, they will become luxuries that only the rich will be able to afford. War and the conditions that follow will no doubt create an extreme two-class system, where the wealthy will continue to profit at the expense of the lives of the poor.

Matthew 24:7b-8

there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Revelation 6:7-8

When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come and see.” ⁸ So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him

who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Okay, I know I said that the black horse and its rider were ominous, but this pale horse and rider would scare the socks off any horror fan!

The Greek word used here to describe the color of this horse is chloros. From this word we get “chlorine” and “chlorophyll”. It is the pale, ashen-green coloring of a decomposing body. This rider has been given authority to kill more than one billion people. That is incredible carnage! If that were not enough, he isn’t working alone. No! Hades is in his shadow. The place of the dead is moving along right behind this corpse-like killer. He has enlisted the same methods of death as both the fiery red and black horses and their riders. However, he has one more method by which he wreaks havoc during his murderous reign:

In the book of Genesis God has placed the fear of man into every living creature.

Genesis 9:2

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.

Now, fast-forward to the time spoken of in Revelation 6:7-8 — a time of war, death, famine. Food supplies are scarce and every living creature is literally starving to death. I believe that for such a time as this, God will remove the fear of man from the hearts of His wild kingdom! This condition of unabated starvation, God will turn all beasts against man. I cannot think of a worse time to be on earth! The good news

is that we don't have to be! God has made for us a way of escape through His Son, Jesus Christ.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

I believe the arrival of these horsemen is very close. You can almost hear them galloping towards us to carry out God's judgments. But, take heart, Christians! Just before their scheduled arrival, we will "meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord! Therefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:17b-18)

Revelation 6:9

When He opened the fifth seal; I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

Most likely under the altar of incense, God is hearing the prayers of all the saints. At this moment, however, He is hearing from all who have been put to death due to their faith in Jesus Christ. What a lonely cry this must be! How it must break the heart of God! This must be why He sets aside a special time to listen to this very painful overture.

Revelation 6:10

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Jesus teaches us in His model of prayer in Matthew 6:10, "Your kingdom come..." for vengeance is ordained for them at the coming of God's kingdom. All Christians, as well as all of creation, long for the day of redemption!

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Romans 8:22-23

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³ Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Then the Father, as only a loving Father would, consoles them in a most comforting fashion.

Revelation 6:11

Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

There is a saying among some Christians that there is a number ordained of those who will be saved, and when that numbered is reached, when the last one comes to Christ; He will call His church home! In this passage, God is assuring those who have been killed for their faith that there are still a number of those who must be martyred for their faith before He will execute His vengeance on an evil and unbelieving world. They are given white robes which speaks of the purity, holiness, and righteousness of the saints.

Revelation 6:12-14

¹² I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. ¹³ And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. ¹⁴ Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

With the opening of this sixth seal, the picture changes dramatically. God has allowed mankind to bring about the calamities of the first five judgments! We have seen false

peace give way to world war and the horrific aftermath of war. Killing, starvation, and disease have taken a major toll on mankind. But now God brings about such incredible cosmic disturbances that all of mankind will be paralyzed in heart-stopping fear!

The Psalmist addressed such fear and reminded us just who it is that we serve. Even though new believers in the time of tribulation will experience such horrifying events, God will continue to speak to their hearts; “Be still and know that I am God!”

Psalm 46:1-11

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; ³ Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

⁴ There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn. ⁶ The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

⁷ The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

⁸ Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

¹⁰ Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

¹¹ The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

As God directly intervenes with dazzling displays of His power, the whole world shakes under His hand. The very

same power God demonstrated while creating the universe, He now employs to threaten the same. It is likely that some of the imagery of this event, such as the darkening of the sun, and the moon appearing blood red, may be the result of massive volcanic eruptions across the globe. The stars, which are described as falling to the earth, may be huge asteroids or meteors entering the earth's atmosphere. The effects of the culmination of all these disturbances on the earth's atmosphere may create the appearance that the atmosphere has rolled up like a scroll.

Whether these things are the result of natural phenomenon initiated by God or God has created this horrifying scene just as described, is not as important as the message God brings with it: He is shaking up His world and is demanding the world's attention!

Revelation 6:15-16

And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, ¹⁶ and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"

I would like to point out here that everything in these first six seal judgments has all taken place during the first half of the tribulation period. Why is this important? Jesus said in Luke 21:36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

I believe we have been given the assurance of a pre-tribulation Rapture so we won't have to go through the judgments found in these six seals.

This scene where all men, great and small, recognizing that God is the apparent source of their troubles, is not

exactly demonstrating that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, but it's close. The world will see and hear that God is earnestly trying to get their attention. Their fear of him will be so great that they would rather die than face this angry God! However, this is only the beginning of God's incredible wake-up call to Israel and the world.

Revelation 6:17

“For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

What is meant by “the great day of His wrath” or “the great day of the Lord”? The prophets often referred to the “great day of the Lord” as a day of coming judgment. The “day of the Lord” is often associated with seismic or cosmic disturbances. Read the Old Testament book of Joel for examples of this.

Taking a second look at Luke 21:36, we note: “...and to stand before the Son of Man.” The question found at the end of Revelation 6:17 is: “...who is able to stand?” Simply put, the answer is anyone who has trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Have you trusted Him? If not, would you consider Jesus today?

May God fabulously bless you as you continue to study this incredible book of Revelation!

Revelation Chapter 7

144,000 Sealed by God!

Revelation 7:1

After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.

There are an infinite number of angels found in Revelation. It might be a good thing, especially if you are a student of the Bible or a student of eschatology (the study of end-time events and prophecy) to attempt to identify who these different angels or heavenly creatures are. After all, we will be in their company for all eternity.

“A traditional hierarchy of angels ranked from lowest to highest into the following nine orders: angels, archangels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thrones, cherubim, and seraphim.”

Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary. Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

These particular angels in Revelation 7:1 seem to be the infantrymen by their ranking. These angels or angelos (Greek) or messengers are given incredible orders. They are deployed to four very strategic positions around the globe, possibly the four compass points of the earth. It is easy enough to figure the north and south, but east and west locations are anybody's guess. God illustrates this immeasurable distance when He casts your sin as far as the east is from the west. There is a very eerie quiet as these angels somehow manage to hold back the winds of the earth. They will only have to restrain this force for a short season.

Matthew Henry's Commentary relates:

“An account of the restraint laid upon the winds. By these winds we suppose are meant those errors and corruptions in religion which would occasion a great deal of trouble and mischief to the church of God. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is compared to the wind: here the spirits of error are compared to the four winds, contrary one to another, but doing much hurt to the church, the garden and vineyard of God, breaking the branches and blasting the fruits of his plantation. The devil is called the prince of the power of the air; he, by a great wind, overthrew the house of Job's eldest son. Errors are as wind, by which those who are unstable are shaken, and carried to and fro,” (from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

Ephesians 4:14

...that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting....

This is some amazing task for these four angels. But, another angel shows up to carry out a different task.

Revelation 7:2-3

Then 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 granted to harm the earth and the sea, ³ saying, “Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads.”

This angel has been set apart for a very special task. He carries with him the seal of God—a seal of authenticity and ownership. This angel is called upon to seal a special group of new “born-again believers”.

Revelation 7:4

And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed:

God has called His angel to seal 144,000 of the children of Israel for a very special mission. These sealed individuals are to be the evangelists of God during the time of tribulation! These 144,000 redeemed Jews will witness to the entire world. One amazing result is that Israel will become a nation of redeemed Jews!

God has called His angel to seal 144,000 of the children of Israel for a very special mission. These sealed individuals are redeemed Jews who will witness to the entire world during the time of tribulation. One amazing result is that Israel will become a nation of redeemed Jews!

There are many world views that claim this number as their own:

- Ellen G. White, founder of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church has said that they are the 144,000;
- the World Wide Church of God claims to be the 144,000; historically, Mormonism has claimed to be this group as well; and
- Jehovah's Witnesses have also claimed to be the 144,000. However, they changed their position when the number was reached in 1935. All other Jehovah's Witnesses live in what is called "The Great Crowd".

If you search the internet for "144,000", you will find many other references regarding that number. However, the Bible teaches very clearly who these people are:

Revelation 7:5-8

**⁵ of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed;
⁶ of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed;
⁷ of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed;
⁸ of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.**

You may notice that the tribe of Dan is missing from the list.

Deuteronomy 29:21

And the LORD would separate him [Dan] from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law,

You see, the tribe of Dan fell into idolatrous living when they were unhappy with the land God had given them. They were given a coastal territory but migrated north to just above the Sea of Galilee. There they found themselves in close proximity with pagans and there they fell into idolatry.

Oh dear! This is a terrible thing! Is that what you are crying out? Not to worry. When the Lord returns and establishes His Kingdom on earth, look who is the first to be named in the restoration of the land: Dan.

Ezekiel 48:1-2

"Now these are the names of the tribes: From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward, in the direction of Hamath, there shall be one section for Dan from its east to its west side; ²by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one section for Asher;

This particular passage also partially answers the question found in the end of chapter six: “Who is able to stand?” We see two groups who will stand. The 144,000 are the first.

May God continue to bless you as we move through this incredible prophecy!

Revelation 7:9-10

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

In number, the 144,000 pales compared to this “great multitude”. These are the “tribulation saints” — all who have been saved during a time when faith in Christ will cost them their lives. Yet, here they are, this innumerable crowd, arrayed in white robes of righteousness and shouting to the Lord a song of salvation!

Psalm 100:1-5

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands!

²Serve the LORD with gladness;

Come before His presence with singing.

³Know that the LORD, He is God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

⁴Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,

And into His courts with praise.

Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

⁵For the LORD is good;

His mercy is everlasting,

And His truth endures to all generations.

As we continue within the break from judgments in chapter seven, we are blessed with another amazing heavenly worship service.

Revelation 7:11-12

All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,¹²saying:

**“Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
*Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen.*”**

What an amazing gathering! What a party this is going to be, as every angel, all of the raptured redeemed of God, and the four living creatures all gather together before the Father and the Son to worship and to celebrate the homecoming of that great multitude: all of those who have given their lives for Jesus Christ during the time of tribulation!

Revelation 7:13-14a

Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?”

^{14a}***And I said to him, “Sir, you know.”***

A brilliant witness strategy! This elder demonstrates exactly what we should be doing, asking the question and initiating a conversation. How many souls will be lost if we don't ask the question? I spent many years working in sales and sales management and one important key point that is taught over and over again is; “ask for the order!” You can sell all day long, but at the end of the day, if you never ask the question, no one will buy from you. This understanding has served me well as a Christian and a pastor.

The question generated a response, an opportunity for this elder to engage in a spiritual conversation.

Revelation 7:14b

So he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Only Jesus could wash a garment white as snow using blood as a detergent! This detergent cannot be bought in any store; it is free for the asking.

John 3:16-17

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.¹⁷For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Amen!

Revelation 7:15-17a

Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. ¹⁶They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; ¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters.

John is witnessing what shall be at the end of the tribulation period. Although this time will be a time of great tribulation “such as has not been since the beginning of the world” (cf. Matthew 24:21), there will be such an incredible harvest that it can only be described as “a great multitude” which no one can number. Here is what Luke says about such a home going:

Luke 15:7

I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:10

Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

I am amazed at the love and passion of our Lord! I do believe His love for us is immeasurable!

Psalm 139:17-18

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!

¹⁸If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

HE IS OBSESSED WITH THE VERY THOUGHT OF US!

Revelation 7:17b

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

God will remove all need for tears, not only for this group of tribulation believers but also for the raptured Church. He will make all things new! You can forget about pain, sickness, sorrow and death, for “the former things have passed away” (cf. Revelation 21:4).

A final thought as we close chapter seven. During the remainder of our study, you will see several groups that come together in the millennial kingdom. However, regarding the two groups of redeemed believers, there are only the Church and the tribulation saints.

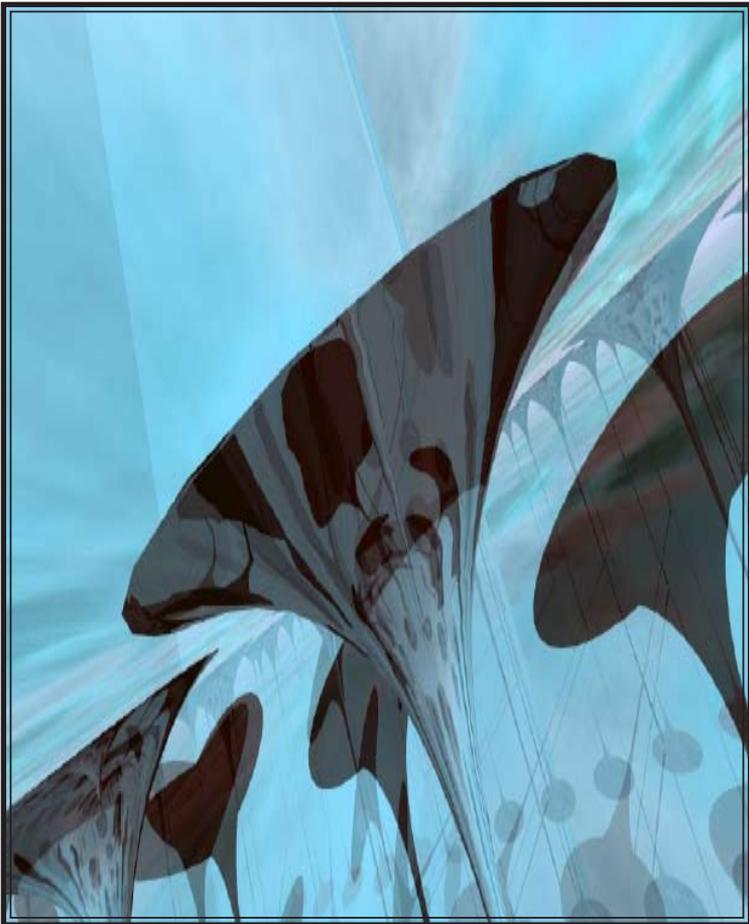
I am happy to be counted among the Church! I can't imagine going through any part of the tribulation, and I am glad that by faith I believed on the name of Jesus Christ beforehand. Keep in mind that the tribulation saints, although they believed unto death, had denied Christ until after the Rapture when the evidences and proof that Jesus is Lord were so compelling. Please don't let yourself be counted among them!

John 20:24-29

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵The other disciples therefore

said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." ²⁶And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" ²⁷Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

1 Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse — a phrase used to describe the first four seal judgments found in Revelation 6:2-8



SECTION IV

SEVEN TRUMPETS

Revelation Chapter 8

Trumpet Judgments!

Revelation 8:1

When He opened the seventh seal; there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

There is much to be said about this verse, but I will limit this discussion to three points:

1. The opening of the seventh seal is a transition to the second set of judgments of which there are three sets:

- a. the seal judgments;
- b. the trumpet judgments; and
- c. the bowl judgments.

2. “Silence in heaven”. God is all about peace, but this sounds like an intense , silence! There appear to be a couple of reasons for this sudden silence, but all have to do with the inhabitants of Heaven being in awe of at what the moment reveals:

- a. First of all, I believe the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders and the myriads of angels have all fallen silent as they recognize the reality of what is about to take place.
- b. And secondly, there is a holy silence as God listens intently to the prayers of the saints.

3. “...about half an hour”. Time is always an interesting topic as it relates to Heaven. Even though God exists outside

the boundaries of time and is omnipresent — present in all places at all times —all creation, including Heaven, apparently do not. In my opinion, time will continue to exist in Heaven and on Earth, as well as the universe as a whole, until the end of the millennial kingdom when all things are made new. At that point, eternity will be as it should be, timeless.

Revelation 8:2

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God and to them were given seven trumpets.

Seven angels with trumpets, commissioned by God to announce impending judgments. The second set of judgments will be more intense than the first set, but not as devastating as the third set of judgments which will occur in the final three-and-one-half years of tribulation, or the “Great Tribulation”.

Revelation 8:3-4

Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel’s hand.

In the Old Testament, the Levites —Priests chosen by God to perform the duties of Temple worship — would transport hot coals from the brazen altar to the altar of incense in a censer, or a golden pan, suspended by a chain or rope. The incense was symbolic of the prayers of the people. However, in Heaven this is not symbolism! The incense is the prayers of the saints. God is not only intently listening to the prayers of His children, but in this scene He is about to answer those prayers with vengeance. What a wonderful picture of how much importance God places on our prayers!

I think if we truly understood just how important our prayers are to God, we would live 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

I've said it before and I'll say it again; God is obsessed with the very thought of you!

Revelation 8:5

Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

We should never think that our prayers don't make a difference, or that God is casual about answering them. Jesus taught that a mustard seed of faith will move mountains, but prayer, especially intercessory prayer, praying for the well being of others, will motivate God to action! It is the stuff that miracles are made of.! Want a miracle in your life? Pray, step back and watch the power of God motivated by His incredible, unconditional love for you!

Revelation 8:6

So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

It is as if God is commanding: "Ready? Aim. Fire!!"

What is about to happen is incredible. A series of rapid-fire events are about to take place that will forever change the world we live in. The question that is somewhat difficult to answer is this: Are these events "natural" phenomenon brought about by God for the purpose of pouring His judgment out on an unsuspecting world; or are these events man-made catastrophic acts of war which God will allow and use to glorify Himself and bring judgment to a lost and sinful world?

Revelation 8:7

The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

What exactly is going on here? Is John trying to describe a firestorm resulting from a nuclear exchange? Is he witnessing World War III in all of its fiery destruction? That would explain the fire as it destroys a third of the trees and the hail as the waters of the earth explode high into the atmosphere where they freeze and return to Earth as large hailstones. Or, is he witnessing a more natural phenomenon as God awakens the volcanoes of the world, calling them to explosive life and causing catastrophic destruction on the earth? Whatever it is, God has moved and judgment has resulted!

Revelation 8:8-9

Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

I have read that at any given time one-third of the world's ships can be found in the Atlantic Ocean at the same time. A very large meteor exploding into the earth's atmosphere and crashing into the Atlantic Ocean could cause a huge tsunami and destroy a third of the ships. The effect of the impact could possibly kill so much sea life that a phenomenon known as "red tide" may occur, giving the sea the appearance of blood. "Red tide" is a result of millions of dead micro organisms which would poison the waters and kill even more sea life.

Another possibility is that God supernaturally turns the ocean to blood! He has demonstrated this before in the book of Exodus when He brought plagues upon Egypt in order

to demonstrate His sovereign power to Pharaoh (cf. Exodus 7:20-24).

Revelation 8:10-11

Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹ The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

A great metaphor regarding wormwood is found in Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 29:18-19

so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;¹⁹ and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I follow the dictates of my heart' — as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.

Wormwood is an extremely bitter root that makes water and foods unpalatable, even deadly. As judgment is poured out on the earth, God uses the analogy of wormwood to demonstrate how mankind's persistent sin poisons our souls and eventually brings death.

And now our life-giving water has become bitter and deadly to drink!

Revelation 8:12

Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.

With all that is going on in the world as a result of the first three trumpet judgments, some might think that the dust has really gotten stirred up.

Some theologians have pondered the possibility of nuclear incidents as being responsible for the light of the sun, moon and stars being partially blocked. One such indication of this is what the Apostle Peter wrote, when writing about the “day of the Lord”.

2 Peter 3:10-12

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. ¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.

His description seems to point to nuclear explosions, as those would cause everything to “melt in the heat”.

Or, it may be that we are attributing too much of God’s judgment to natural or man-made phenomenon. When God parted the Red Sea, He didn’t need us to build a dam to restrain the waters. When God created the heavens and the earth, did He require a project manager? No. He spoke and it was. God doesn’t need us at all, but the good news is that He loves us and delights in us! Having said that, do you think God has the ability to simply turn down the light of the sun, moon and stars? Absolutely! We must remember the omnipotence of God and not doubt that He will do just fine without our help.

Job 38:4-11

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? ⁸”Or who shut in the sea with doors, When it burst forth and issued from the womb; ⁹When I made the clouds its garment, And thick darkness its swaddling band; ¹⁰When I fixed My limit for it, And set bars and doors; ¹¹When I said, ‘This far you may come, but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop!’”

Revelation 8:13

And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”

Woe, woe, woe! Three more trumpet blasts. What has taken place up to this point has been unbelievably devastating. What is coming next is unimaginable! One blast will bring forth demons who will issue unbelievable pain to mankind. Another blast will give the demons power to kill a third of mankind. And the last trumpet blast will reveal the bowl judgments, the worst of all. These will take place during the final three-and-one-half years of the “Great Tribulation”.

Revelation Chapter 9

More Trumpets!

Revelation 9:1

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

In chapter eight we saw something like a mountain burning with fire thrown into the sea causing great havoc in the oceans of the world. Next we saw a great star falling from heaven, burning like a torch, and poisoning one-third of the earth's drinking water.

Now we see another star, but this one is not a mountain or an asteroid. This star is an angelic being. By his very description, however, he appears to be a fallen angel, maybe even Satan himself.

Revelation 12:7-9

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Christ, who has the keys of Hades and of Death (cf. Revelation 1:18) has apparently given this unholy angel permission to temporarily possess these extraordinary keys, to open the bottomless pit and release a deluge of demons.

Isaiah 14:12-15

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! ¹³For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit.

Revelation 9:2

And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

When I was a child, I would eagerly wait for the scary movies that came on every Saturday night on TV. We would sit and listen to the eerie music as we watched what we now call the classic horror movies. Inevitably, as each movie progressed, we were sure to find the characters in a remote cemetery where the mood was set with fog or smoke. As scary as those movies were, though, Hollywood didn't even come close to the heart-stopping fear that awaits anyone who witnesses the entrance to Hell!

Revelation 9:3

Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

In Exodus chapter ten is a record of the eighth of ten plagues God poured out upon Egypt in order to free His people from the bondage of slavery to Pharaoh. The plague of locusts was devastating to Egypt. However, it paled in comparison to what these demonic creatures will be given power to do to unbelieving mankind for a period of five months!

Revelation 9:4

They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

These are not like any locusts that have swarmed the earth before. Although a demonic angel, possibly Satan, is responsible for the release of this devastating swarm, God has commanded certain limitations on these creatures, — much like the conditional attack on Job's life by Satan (cf. Job 1:12 and Job 2:6). The nature of locusts is normally to look for the greenest pastures. In this case, however, they have been given a taste of human pain and suffering and they are programmed to inflict as much pain as they can within a specified period of time! Interestingly, they are also programmed to inflict their punishment only on the unbelievers.

Revelation 9:5

And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

Why five months? I would have understood six or seven, but five? I found that the average lifespan of locusts is five months. Okay, I'll go with that. God doesn't leave any question unanswered, does He?

Wow! Can you imagine the excruciating pain of being stung repeatedly by scorpions? I believe it would drive a man insane — maybe even to the point of suicide. But guess what?

Revelation 9:6

In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

During the time of the ten plagues poured out on Egypt, God continually hardened Pharaoh's heart. Who was actually hurt as a result of Pharaoh's actions? Right! Pharaoh and his armies. What was God's purpose? To glorify Himself among them. The mind of God, although never really understood, is perfect. His plans for those who seek His face are perfect indeed!

Revelation 9:7-10

The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. ¹⁰They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.

Some scholars believe John was struggling to describe futuristic machines of war. One could make a good argument for that conclusion, but it doesn't require much faith to credit man with these wicked apparitions. I believe this is one of those passages of Scripture where we need to let God be God and believe that His creation is what it is. He certainly doesn't need us to qualify His use of demons to carry out His will and His wrath.

In another time, another prophet saw something very; similar and ominous.

Joel 2:5-10

***⁵With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.***

⁶Before them the people writhe in pain; all faces are drained of color.

⁷They run like mighty men, They climb the wall like men of war;

Every one marches in formation, and they do not break ranks.

⁸They do not push one another; every one marches in his own column.

Though they lunge between the weapons, they are not cut down.

⁹They run to and fro in the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter at the windows like a thief.

¹⁰The earth quakes before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.

The Prophet Joel has described with incredible imagery the “day of the Lord”

(cf. Jeremiah 46:10). Although this reference to the day of the Lord may not refer to the eschatological events described in Revelation chapter 9, he certainly employs similar imagery. However, as we will see in Revelation chapter 9, men’s desire will be to die rather than to repent.

Revelation 9:11

And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

Both names means the same thing: “destroyer”.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour [destroy].

Revelation 9:12

One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

The three woes represent the three final trumpet blasts. The first four trumpet blasts pale in comparison to these final three. We have just looked at the horrifying events of the first woe, now prepare yourselves as we study the next two woes or trumpet blasts!

Revelation 9:13-14

Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, ¹⁴saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, “Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates.”

A trumpet blasts and someone speaks. As God prescribed the design of the golden altar, or the altar of incense in Exodus 30:2, horns were added at each corner. This is considered a place of mercy. It is here that God would respond to His people’s prayers. Now Jesus Christ is speaking from the altar and commanding the sixth angel to release four angels from the great river Euphrates.

Why are angels bound in this place? Are these holy angels? No, these four angels are fallen angels who have now been released from their prison by the word of Jesus Christ — imprisoned there by God to be used for His wrath at such a time as He decides. This reminds us that God is fully in control of all things!

The river Euphrates is a very significant landmark in Biblical history. It was one of four rivers which flowed through the Garden of Eden (cf. Genesis 2:11-14).

Revelation 9:15

So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.

Four fallen angels are released to kill one-third of the earth’s population! Do you remember the fourth seal, the

pale horse whose rider is Death? Remember how he kills one-fourth of the population by sword? Now a third of who's left is murdered! Add those numbers to the many who died from the poison water due to wormwood, as well as all those aboard the third of the ships destroyed when something like a mountain burning with fire struck the ocean. It seems that more than half the earth's population is dead by now! God is not joking around when He brings forth His wrath! Warning after warning can be found in the Scriptures, yet we refuse to hear and heed!

Isaiah 6:8-9

8Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,

And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

9And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;

Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

WHO WILL LISTEN? WHO WILL.... ?

Revelation 9:16-19

Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. ¹⁷And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed — by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. ¹⁹For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

Here again, some Bible scholars say that John is attempting to describe a human army marching forward with an arsenal of man-made weaponry. However, human armies don't march out of rivers, nor are they set in motion by four fallen angels. I believe John is witnessing a massive army of demons who are on marching orders to kill one-third of the world's population. Arrayed in the finest uniforms of war that Hell can provide, they march on!

WILL WE LEARN FROM THIS? LET'S SEE....

Revelation 9:20-21

But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. ²¹And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

God named five things that He really hates:

1. Idol worship;
2. murders;
3. sorceries;
4. sexual immorality; and
5. thefts.

THESE FIVE AND MORE CAN BE FOUND IN GALATIANS

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

I want to say this. It is not our job to judge; it is God's. Our job is to love each other as we love ourselves, as it is our responsibility to judge and try to correct sin in ourselves and in others. Love never overlooks or condones sin. With all of this demonic killing going on, we ought to realize by now that God is deadly serious about His desire for us to turn from our self-destructive ways! We have our lives as the window of opportunity to turn away from sin and to turn towards Him. If you don't know Him as your personal Savior, won't you consider Him today? Salvation is free for the asking and there is no other way to receive His free gift of grace but through His Son, Jesus Christ!

Revelation Chapter 10

A Mighty Angel and a Little Book

Revelation 10:1

I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head; his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.

Many believe this to be Jesus Himself. I personally don't think so for a couple of reasons:

1. John refers to "another mighty angel" which may imply that this angel is one of several and we all know that there is only one Jesus, to whom none can compare!
2. The Greek word used here for "angel" is *angelos*, which means "messenger". This is the same word found in Revelation 1:20 which refer to the seven stars or angels who are over the seven churches. Again, the Greek word *angelos* or "messenger" also implies "pastor".

INCREDIBLE IMAGERY SURROUNDS THIS ANGEL:

- He is clothed in a cloud which assures us of the presence of God.
- A rainbow on his head represents the glory of God. It reminds us of God's promise not to destroy us, but in long-suffering love, He will patiently wait for us to call on His name.
- A face like the sun represents the authority of this angel, but also reminds us of the righteousness of the Lord.
- Finally, his feet being like pillars of fire speaks of the firm stance of the judgment of the "day of the Lord".

Revelation 10:2

He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land,

The “little book” is filled with information from God. It is most likely that John has been given full access to the scroll, or Earth’s title deed. The scroll will be fully opened with all the final judgments exposed.

Having one foot on the sea and one on the land, demonstrates that this angel has been given dominion over the whole of creation. It also reminds us that even though Satan has been given dominion over Earth for a time, every part of creation has always belonged to the Lord. Amen!!

Revelation 10:3

...and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

A voice loud with authority, filled with regal quality as the lion roars. What of these seven thunders and their voices? I believe John is referring to the fullness and ministry of the Holy Spirit. But what is their message?

Revelation 10:4

Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them.”

In chapters 11 and 12 of the book of Daniel, Daniel is given prophecy of the “end-time”. In verse 9 Daniel is instructed to go his way, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. John has now been told to seal up the words uttered by the seven thunders. It would seem in both cases that the words of these passages are intended for those who are actually living in the days of the end, or the Tribulation.

Revelation 10:5-6

The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven ⁶and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,

You may be thinking; “I thought swearing an oath is forbidden by the Lord. Yes, but this is different. Let’s read what Jesus says in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 5:33-37

”Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

I believe we fallen humans have a difficult time accomplishing all the oaths we commit ourselves to. Thus, God would rather we not swear an oath at all than to swear and not do. So how is this incident in Revelation different? This angel is not swearing an oath that will not be kept, but will fulfill the exact purposes of the Lord.

Here we witness this mighty angel swearing a solemn oath that there will be absolutely no more delay! Up to this point, God has been very long suffering, desiring that none should perish, but all come to repentance through His Son, Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). Now the time has come!

Revelation 10:7

...but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

I absolutely love the times we live in, as prophecy is being fulfilled right before our eyes! God is giving us more and more of the puzzle pieces each day. We can literally hold a newspaper in one hand and our Bible in the other and watch God unfold His mysteries to us. Unfortunately, not everyone will see or perceive. Remember God's words to Isaiah?

Isaiah 6:8-9

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand;

Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

God had declared His mysteries to His prophets, but had not fully revealed them until now. What a blessed generation we are! What an exciting time to be alive! We must share what we know with as many as will listen. The Lord is coming very soon — I believe in our generation — so remember the alternative and see if there is anyone you know whom you would not want to see the glory of God. I'm guessing there are none, so let us join together and share the gospel to every living creature!

Revelation 10:8

Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, “Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth.”

GOD SPEAKS A COMMAND TO JOHN...

Revelation 10:9a

So I went to the angel and said to him, “Give me the little book.”

...AND JOHN OBEYS.

Revelation 10:9b

And he said to me, “Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth.”

There is a word that sometimes appears in the margin of some passages of Scripture — the word “Selah”. It is used to break up a passage and cause you to stop and meditate on what you’ve just read — to chew on it

John has been prepared for the experience of “chewing” on this little book, the book containing the rest of the story. He will discover that God’s judgment will leave him feeling bitter in his stomach.

Judgment is never easy to digest, but the coming glory of God will be!)

It will taste like honey on his lips.

Revelation 10:10

Then I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

To John, it was just as he was told. Christianity is bitter-sweet indeed. We must never soft-sell life as a Christian. We will experience persecution as well as victory. We must have the same attitude as Paul.

Philippians 4:10-13

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. ¹¹Not that I speak in regard

to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: ¹²I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Revelation 10:11

And he said to me, “You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.”

We must not stop sharing the good news with others. We must share it with every person, nation, tongue, and king! Here, John is called to prophesy about the devastation to come with the seventh trumpet. We, too, must be committed to sharing the great news of Jesus Christ with everyone we know. We must give them every opportunity to avoid these horrific judgments!



SECTION V

FORTY-TWO MONTHS

Revelation Chapter 11

Temples! Temples! Temples!

The Two Witnesses

Revelation 11:1

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, “Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there.

This isn't the first time that future temples have been measured in such fashion. In Ezekiel 40:1-12 we see an angel, referred to as the LORD in chapter 44:2, taking Ezekiel on a guided tour of the future Millennial Temple. The purpose of the tour is to document the measurements of the temple. It makes sense that the LORD is conducting this particular tour, as this temple will be built by Jesus Himself at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom after His second coming.

TEMPLES! TEMPLES! TEMPLES!

Since the time of Moses, God has instructed man regarding the construction of His temples. Now, Let's take a jet tour from the temples past to temples future:

1. THE TABERNACLE

A temple is a place where God is worshiped. It is a place where God dwells and meets with His people We shall see

later how the temple of today provides a unique meeting place for us and God.

It was around 1444 B.C. when Moses received detailed instructions for a portable temple called the “Tabernacle”, (cf. Exodus 25:1-40:38). Tabernacle refers to a tent and this temple was much like that. It was designed so it could be quickly dismantled when the glory of the LORD left the temple, thereby signaling the time for the children of Israel to continue their journey.

Exodus 40:34-38

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. ³⁷But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. ³⁸For the cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

2. SOLOMON’S TEMPLE

The physical Jewish temples play a great role in the unfolding plan of God and His relationship with man. Although the tabernacle was noted here in this article as the first of eight temples found in the Bible, the first actual physical temple was Solomon’s temple constructed in Jerusalem

In 2 Samuel the word of the LORD came to the prophet Nathan instructing him to tell King David of this first temple. It had been on David’s heart to build a house for the LORD to dwell in.

2 Samuel 7:1-7

Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, ²that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains." ³Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you." ⁴But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, ⁵"Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? ⁶For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?"

Although it was David's desire to build the temple for the LORD, God would not allow him to. Rather, He laid the task on David's son and successor, Solomon. 480 years after the Exodus and the 4th year of Solomon's reign, Solomon began to build the temple on the summit of Mt. Moriah in 966 B.C. (cf. 1 Kings 6:1).

Solomon's Temple stood for approximately 380 years and was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 586 B.C. at which time the Jews were taken into Babylonian captivity.

Jeremiah 32:26-28

Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, ²⁷"Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? ²⁸Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it.

3. ZERUBBABEL'S TEMPLE

The Jewish people returned to Jerusalem after seventy years of Babylonian captivity. Zerubbabel envisioned and constructed his temple in 516 B.C.

Ezra 3:8

Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began work and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD.

Zerubbabel's Temple stood for 347 years until Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in June of 168 B.C. The following prophetic reference by the prophet Daniel speaks of this horrible act which is a foreshadow of the coming Antichrist and his abomination of the tribulation temple.

Daniel 11:29-31

"At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. ³⁰For ships from Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. "So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. ³¹And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

4. HEROD'S TEMPLE

In 19 B.C., King Herod the Great began an extensive restoration project to restore Zerubbabel's Temple. Herod's Temple was a magnificent work and won Herod much favor with the Jewish people. However, Herod's Temple would not last long — less than 100 years. Could it be that the

political reasons behind Herod's desire to restore the temple to the Jewish people lacked God's blessing? It seems that there may be times, even in our own lives, when we set out to do something for God that's actually more for personal gain or selfish ambition than it is for God.

Jesus referred to the destruction of this temple toward the end of His earthly ministry.

Matthew 24:1-2

Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

In 70 A.D. Jesus' prophecy came to pass. The armies of Titus converged on Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. Although Titus did not wish to bring down the temple, the Roman soldiers tossed torches into the temple causing a great fire that burned so hot that all the gold melted and ran down into the joints of the giant blocks of the temple. In an effort to retrieve the gold, the Roman soldiers pulled all the blocks down, thus fulfilling the prophecy; "...not one stone shall be left here upon another..."

5. PRESENT (HUMAN) TEMPLE

There has not been a physical temple in Jerusalem to this day. However, as the Jewish people, who have been dispersed throughout the world, have incredibly gathered again to their land — the land which became a sovereign nation in 1948 — there is a strong desire and need to rebuild their temple.

So what is stopping them? Namely, the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque built sometime after 600 A.D. The mosque was built on what was believed to be the exact

location of the previous temples. The location would be the summit of Mt. Moriah where the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Holy of Holies. However, Dr. Asher Kaufman, a Jewish archeologist, published an amazing finding in an article in *Biblical Archeology Review*, dated March/April 1983 (suggested reading). He claims that the exact location of the Holy of Holies would have been approximately 70 meters north of the Dome of the Rock, under a small structure called the Dome of the Tablets — an interesting name, as the Ark of the Covenant contained the tablets of Moses. This being the case, the temple could, in fact, be built and stand next to the existing mosque. Interestingly, the mosque would then be located in the outer court known as the Court of Gentiles! We shall read in Revelation 11:2 that John was instructed not to measure this area as it represents God's rejection of the unbelieving gentiles.

These are fascinating times in which we are living! Will the temple be built in our time? As I have stated previously, I believe the Rapture will occur in our generation. Scripture tells us the temple will be built shortly after that incredible event under the shadow of the Antichrist. There have been many preparations by the Jewish people to build their temple. They have even begun training those who will serve in temple sacrifices and worship. So, what are they waiting for? Probably the same thing all of us find ourselves waiting for.... God's timing!

So, if Herod's Temple was destroyed in 70 A.D. and it is presumed that a temple will be built sometime in the near future, what about the past 2000 years? You may recall that a temple is where God resides and we experience a relationship with Him. Incredibly, in this age of grace, or the "Church Age", God has not gone without His holy temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

Have you ever wondered what actually took place at the precise moment you asked Jesus into your heart? When we came to the Lord, or when we have had the privilege of bringing someone to Him, we are taught that we must repent of our sins and ask Jesus to come into our hearts. According to Scripture, Jesus ascended into Heaven with the promise that the Father would send His Holy Spirit to be with all believers, convicting and teaching us how to live Godly lives.

Luke 24:49-53

Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” ⁵⁰And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Acts 2:1-4

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So, when we ask Jesus to enter our hearts, it is the Holy Spirit of God who actually enters our body, thereby creating the new Temple of God!

1 Corinthians 6:19

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

2 Corinthians 6:16

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

What an amazing truth this is! The Spirit of God dwelling in us as He did in the Holy of Holies!

If you ever had doubts that God could love you, how do you feel about it now? God — the Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Creator of the universe — desires a personal relationship with us. But more than that, He desires to dwell within our hearts. We are now the Temple of God!

6. TRIBULATION TEMPLE

We now find ourselves back in our current text

Revelation 11:1-2

Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. ²But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months."

Here, John is given a measuring rod made from a reed-like stalk. Its length was six "royal" cubits (20.6 inches/52.3cm instead of the 18-inch/45.72cm cubit) or approximately ten feet/3.05meters. He is directed to measure specific areas of

the future temple which will be built by permission of the Antichrist during the seven-year tribulation period.

We have briefly discussed the Jewish people's desire to rebuild their temple and re-institute a system where the atonement of sin is accomplished through animal sacrifice. In general, Israel has rejected the idea that Jesus is the Christ, their long-awaited Messiah.

On 14-15 May 1948, Israel became a sovereign nation once again. Many believe, including myself, that this event marked the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and that there is now nothing to stand in the way of the Rapture of the Church!

This event also cleared the way for the rise of the Antichrist and the seven years of tribulation. It will be under the authority and permission of this "son of perdition" (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:3) that the temple can and will be rebuilt. However, this temple, the Tribulation Temple, will have the shortest life span of all the temples. Depending on the timing of the project, this temple will not exceed seven years as a functioning sacrificial system.

Thankfully, the times to follow will no longer look to animal sacrifices to atone for sin! In fact, from the demise of the Tribulation Temple, the world will see no other atonement for sin than Jesus Christ!

Daniel 9:27

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate."

Matthew 24:15

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand)

Daniel is referring to a peace treaty offered by a powerful new world leader, the Antichrist, guaranteeing Israel seven years (referred to as “one week”) of peace and the freedom to rebuild their temple and resume their system of animal sacrifice for the atonement of sin. However, after only three-and-one-half years he will break his treaty and defile the temple just as was foreshadowed by Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king who defiled the Holy of Holies in Zerubbabel’s Temple in 168 B.C.

The prophetic passage of Matthew 24 also refers to the Antichrist’s act of defiling the Holy of Holies of the Tribulation Temple. Scripture does not speak of the destruction of the Tribulation Temple; however, the prophecy of Jesus’ second coming found in Zechariah alludes to seismic events which will create topographical and geological changes which could perhaps destroy the Tribulation Temple.

Zechariah 14:4

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley;

Half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

Regardless of whether that temple is or isn’t destroyed, when Christ returns to establish His Millennial Kingdom, He will bring about a new temple, Ezekiel’s Millennial Temple.

7. EZEKIEL'S (MILLENNIAL) TEMPLE

The study of prophecy (eschatology) is thrilling, to say the least. We are given so much information regarding our future. In fact, did you know that more than one-third of Scripture is prophetic? And while much of the prophetic writings have already come to pass; there remain several events which will profoundly affect our lives.

One incredible event that we Christians look forward to is the second coming of Jesus Christ. I believe the Rapture will occur at least seven years prior to the second coming of Christ. This is particularly exciting to me as we will be so blessed to participate in this wonderful event!

Revelation 19:11-16

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The “armies is heaven” include all believers in Heaven. May I suggest that this will be the greatest day of horseback riding in all of history!

When Jesus returns, He has already prepared plans for a most incredible temple, Ezekiel's Millennial Temple.

Ezekiel 40:1-5

In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there. ²In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city. ³He took me there, and behold, there was a man whose appearance was like the appearance of bronze. He had a line of flax and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway. ⁴And the man said to me, "Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and fix your mind on everything I show you; for you were brought here so that I might show them to you. Declare to the house of Israel everything you see." ⁵Now there was a wall all around the outside of the temple. In the man's hand was a measuring rod six cubits long, each being a cubit and a handbreadth; and he measured the width of the wall structure, one rod; and the height, one rod.

Ezekiel has been so privileged in his life as a prophet:

- He has witnessed a dazzling display of heavenly activity as he has been treated to a vision of God on His throne
- He has seen the restoration of Israel in a vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel, chapter 37.
- He has watched God supernaturally intervene against a coalition of nations teamed together to destroy Israel.
- He has witnessed God destroy five-sixths of those attacking forces, as he recorded the prophecy of Gog and Magog, found in Ezekiel, chapters 38 & 39.
- And now he has been taken high atop a mountain and given an incredible tour of the temple that Jesus Himself will construct upon His second coming! This

temple will last for a thousand years, ultimately yielding to the greatest Temple of them all!

8. THE ETERNAL TEMPLE

Revelation 11:19

Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

Although this temple is not directly mentioned in the line-up of eight temples, I believe this refers to God and His throne in heaven. During the period of time known as the “Age of Grace” or “Church Age”, all believers are temples where the Holy Spirit dwells. Now the Church — all believers — is in Heaven in the very presence of God. The ark of the Old Testament was merely a foreshadow of the ark that is in Heaven, which is revealed here in Revelation 11:19. The point here is that every earthly temple, including the human heart of belief, has been a mere foreshadowing of an ever-present temple, which is and was and forever will be!

Revelation 21:22-27

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. ²⁴And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. ²⁵Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). ²⁶And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

What an incredible promise! A promise of our future and hope, our inheritance and our salvation! We will live

eternally in the glory of the “New Jerusalem” and in the very presence of the glory of the LORD!

THE TWO WITNESSES

Revelation 11:3

And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”

In 1986 when I was first saved, I went home to my apartment, poured my whiskey down the drain and proceeded to write a Christian children’s song! The lyrics went something like this; Two by two, Two by two, that’s what I’ll do for you, for you! Two by two, Two by two, I’ll bring you all My creatures, Two by two!

That was a great first day as a Christian!

So, why do I share this bit of “New Christian” history with you?

To emphasize the importance of “Two”.

Verse 2 above mentions a forty-two month period of time in which the Gentiles will tread the holy city of Jerusalem under foot. Forty-two months, or three-and-one-half years, is the same period of time as mentioned in verse 3 — “one thousand two hundred and sixty days”, or three-and-one-half years. The translation of forty-two months (or one thousand two hundred and sixty days) into three-and-one-half years only works when applied to the early Jewish calendar where one year is 360 days not 365 as the calendar is today.

God’s two witnesses are given power as we shall see. They are sent on a preaching mission — probably stationed at the new temple location — where they will prophesy to the nation of Israel and the world. Some disagreement exists as to which half of the Tribulation period this event will take

place. However, I believe it will be during the final half of the Tribulation period. That they will be wearing sackcloth must certainly represent humility and patience during their time of ministry.

Revelation 11:4-6

These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. ⁵And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. ⁶These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

Three questions come to mind:

1. Who are these two witnesses?
2. What do the olive trees represent?
3. What do the lampstands represent?

As to who, there is no shortage of commentaries and articles available which speak to the many possibilities of who these two witnesses are. Some believe they will be two men who may even be alive today, but may yet be unaware of this calling on their lives. However, I believe the most probable identity of these two is Moses and Elijah. My reasoning:

These two witnesses will strike the earth with plagues much like Moses did. Just as Elijah did, they will cause the rain to stop for three-and-one-half years (cf. James 5:17). Both Moses and Elijah were seen with Jesus in the transfiguration (cf. Luke 9:28-31). Also, there is a belief by the Jewish people that both Moses and Elijah will one day return.

(cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and Malachi 4:5-6). Remember: Elijah never died, but was taken up into

Heaven; and God buried Moses' body where it could never be found.

The reference to the two olive trees and lampstands is clear:

Zechariah 4:1-6

Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. ²And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. ³Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." ⁴So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." ⁶So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Zechariah 4:11-14

Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees — at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" ¹²And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" ¹³Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." ¹⁴So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

This incredible imagery reveals so much about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as it relates to these two witnesses! As olive trees provide a supply of oil needed to keep the lamps lit, so also is the Holy Spirit referred to as oil and the illuminated lamps are the knowledge of the Word of God. I think it is particularly interesting in this context that there are seven pipes in which the oil flows to the lamps, ensuring

an abundant supply. Could it be that the seven pipes may be referring to the complete seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Isaiah 11:2? It appears that the fullness of His ministry is represented in these two witnesses that they may prophesy and evoke repentance from the nation of Israel, as well as the whole world.

Revelation 11:7-8

When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. ⁸And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

At the midpoint of tribulation, Satan comes out of the bottomless pit, or Hell, and he indwells the popular new world leader who will be revealed as the Antichrist. His first order of business, however, is to destroy these witnesses and then he defile the Holy of Holies within the Jewish Temple. He then leaves the dead bodies in the street and does not allow them to be buried.

Revelation 11:9-10

Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. ¹⁰And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The people who have not yet recognized the evil within this popular world leader, rejoice and celebrate the death of the two witnesses because they have plagued and accused their “wonderful” world leader. They will soon know the truth, yet, because of their pride and unwillingness to admit that they have been wrong, many will continue to follow him.

Revelation 11:11-12

Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from

God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹²And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.

I am reminded why this is known as one of the “woes”. After three-and-one-half years of prophesying the Word of God and then lying dead in the street for three-and-a-half days, this event has the greatest impact on the world! It is the exclamation point at the end of the message and strikes fear into the hearts of all who have rejected them and hated their words. To those who have believed, it will bring great joy and confirmation!

Revelation 11:13

In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.

Included in God’s exclamation point, He shakes up the earth and leaves seven thousand bodies in His wake. Those who are giving glory to God are most likely Jews who have, to this point, rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Suddenly their eyes are opened and with great fear and repentance, they glorify Jesus as King. No doubt, there are also people around the world watching these unfolding events on television and the internet who hate God and curse Him, as well as those who embrace Him as Lord and Savior!

Revelation 11:14

The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

GOD'S NOT FINISHED YET!

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

The real significance of the seventh trumpet blast is that it marks the end of Satan's rule of the earth.

The seventh trumpet also introduces the final seven judgments, or the "Bowl Judgments". This trumpet blast is the third woe. There has never been a judgment like this before, nor will there ever be again. We are getting closer to Jesus' return and the Millennial Kingdom!

Revelation 11:16-18

And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,

¹⁷saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,

The One who is and who was and who is to come,

Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

¹⁸The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come,

And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,

And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,

And those who fear Your name, small and great,

And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

I am reminded of David's words in Psalm 46 as the twenty-four elders — the Church in Heaven — praise God and give thanks to Him for His amazing covering and protection!

Psalm 46:1-11

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, Even though the earth be removed, And though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³Though its waters roar and be troubled, Though the mountains shake with its swelling.

Selah

⁴There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God, The holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.

⁵God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.

⁶The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved; He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Selah

⁸Come, behold the works of the LORD, Who has made desolations in the earth. ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariot in the fire.

¹⁰Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Revelation 11:19

Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

I believe this verse refers to God and His throne in Heaven. During the period of time known as the “Age of Grace”, or “Church Age”, all believers are the temples where the Holy Spirit dwells. Now all believers, are in Heaven in the very presence of God! The ark of the Old Testament was merely a foreshadow of the ark that is in Heaven, which is

revealed here. The point here is that every earthly temple, including the human heart of belief, has been a mere foreshadowing of an ever-present temple, which is and was and forever will be!

Chapter 12

Satan, Israel, and a Child

Revelation 12:1

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

This chapter contains so much symbolism. God paints the most beautiful pictures with words. As only God can, He tells us the truth through His most beautiful imagery:

He begins with the first of seven signs revealed in the second half of the Great Tribulation, or the final three-and-one-half years. The sign begins with a woman. . . She's not a real woman, but a symbol or representation of a person or group of persons.

There are four views of who this woman is. They are:

1. The woman is the Church and the twelve stars represent the twelve apostles.
2. The woman is Mary and the twelve stars represent the twelve apostles.
3. The woman is the redeemed and the twelve stars represent the twelve apostles as well as the twelve tribes of Israel.
4. The woman is Israel and the twelve stars represent the twelve tribes of Israel.

As we shall see later in verse 5, the male child born to the woman has a rod of iron with which he rules the nations. At Jesus' return in Revelation 19, 15, Jesus will rule the nations with a rod of iron. Therefore, we can conclude that this child is the Messiah.

Having determined the identity of the child, we can then go on to say the woman could not be...

- the Church since it did not give birth to the Messiah.
- Mary, as she was not hidden in the wilderness, but rather escaped to Egypt, possibly two years after the birth of Jesus. Also, Mary was not pursued by Satan for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or three-and-one-half years.

Thus, the woman is clearly the nation of Israel as Israel who would bring forth the Messiah.

She is “clothed with the sun”, which certainly would represent the glory of God assigned to Israel, God’s chosen people who have been promised a kingdom through their salvation. You simply cannot have a discussion about God without the mention of Israel!

Next, the moon is under her feet. Have you ever heard the hymn “Standing on the Promises of God”? In this picture, Israel is standing on the promise or covenant of God’s protection.

The garland of twelve stars represents the twelve tribes of Israel. This is somewhat similar to the seven stars of Revelation 1:16 in which the stars represent the messengers or heads of the seven churches of Asia Minor.

Revelation 12:2

Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

The Bible refers to Israel’s long and painful longing for the coming of their Messiah as labor pains quite often. Micah 5 is one example of that.

Micah 5:2-3

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting."*

*³Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.*

There is also imagery in the Bible regarding the whole of creation longing, as a woman in labor pains, for the return of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:22-23

for we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Revelation 12:3

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

Satan, the dragon, is the mortal enemy of Israel, or the woman. Satan is called a dragon 13 times in the book of Revelation. That the dragon is red refers to the horrific bloodshed he will cause!

The dragon's seven heads and seven diadems on his heads most likely refer to Satan's dominion over the seven world kingdoms: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece,

Rome, and the final revised Roman Empire, or kingdom of the Antichrist. Satan will rule the world until the seventh trumpet blast in revelation 11:15.

The ten horns of the dragon refer to the ten future kingdoms of the Antichrist. Horns always represent power, and the number ten represents the culmination of political and military power which will fall into the hands of the Antichrist during his short reign of terror.

All of this incredible imagery fully coincides with the book of Daniel.

Revelation 12:4

His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

Satan rebelled and was cast out of heaven (cf. Isaiah 14:12). The imagery here points to the one-third of the angels who rebelled with him and became demons.

Satan was unsuccessful in preventing the birth of Jesus, so, as we know, he set out to destroy Him in a slaughter of all male children up to the age of two.

Matthew 2:13-16

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son." ¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death

all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Revelation 12:5-6

She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. “Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Jesus was born and, by the word of God, was protected from Herod by when God led Joseph, Mary and Jesus to Egypt until the death of Herod. The reference to the Child being “caught up to God” refers to the ascension of Jesus following His resurrection.

Acts 1:9

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

The mention that the male Child would “rule the nations with a rod of iron” clearly refers to Jesus at His second coming (cf. Revelation 19:15).

Revelation 12:6 refers to Israel at the midpoint of the Tribulation. She will flee into the wilderness for three-and-one-half years to a place God has prepared for her safety. I, as well as many others, believe that place is Petra. This silent city carved into the cliffs in southern Jordan stands ready to receive and shelter those who are forced to flee Jerusalem at the midpoint of tribulation.

Matthew 24:15-16

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Revelation 12:7-8

And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

Satan and his demons were cast out of Heaven at the original rebellion described in Isaiah 14:12-15; however, they have been allowed access to Heaven up to this point. As the ongoing war is intensified during this time of tribulation in both the physical world and the spiritual realm, Satan is now denied access and cast out of Heaven on every level, forever!

Revelation 12:9

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Satan's anger will intensify and crescendo as he lashes out against Israel for the last time.

Revelation 12:10

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

An incredible announcement is made, possibly by Gabriel himself, proclaiming to all creation the significance of what has just taken place. Prior to this, Satan has been allowed access to the throne room of God. His agenda? To accuse believers of their sin. Now, the time has finally come when he is cast down, no longer able to accuse our brethren. Amen!!

Revelation 12:11

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

No accusation will stand against those who have trusted in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. The accuser is powerless against the children of the Most High God!

Revelation 12:12

Therefore rejoice O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

There is a huge celebration in Heaven! Who is part of this celebration? Several groups are celebrating this great day:

- All the Old and New Testament saints who have died and gone to Heaven;
- the raptured church which, along with all the saints, were resurrected and given new bodies fitted for eternity; and
- the entire angelic realm.

What an incredible reason to celebrate! I am reminded of the song from “The Wizard of Oz”: “Ding Dong! The Witch is Dead. Which old Witch? The Wicked Witch!”

But on earth we find a very angry Satan! He is out of control with explosive anger as he realizes that his time is very short indeed. His agenda? Destroy Israel at any cost!

Revelation 12:13

Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

Satan not only realizes he has been cast down to earth... again, but now he has absolutely no access to Heaven. He has been completely banned from the throne room of God and can no longer accuse the body of Christ. His hate and anger towards Jesus, Israel and all believers is now at an all-time high! He now attacks the woman, Israel, with such vengeance that, unless God shortens Satan's days of hate-filled persecution, no one will survive!

Matthew 24:15-22

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

From the beginning of time, God has prepared a way for those whom He loves. Whether by creation or construction, God's ultimate purpose will be fulfilled!

Revelation 12:14

But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time from the presence of the serpent.

This verse could very well be describing a massive evacuation. The enemy is coming with all of his murderous hate and now the inhabitants of Jerusalem must be airlifted

to that safe hideout that, by God's incredible plan, was created/constructed centuries earlier for just such a time as this... Petra!

I wonder if the Prophet Isaiah envisioned this scene when he penned this incredible verse:

Isaiah 40:31

But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

When Jesus is our Lord and we trust only in Him, then whenever we walk through the fires of life's trials, He will not leave us there to die, but rather He will always walk with us to the other side.

Isaiah 43:1-3

1But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by your name; you are Mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.

When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.

³For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior...

A "time and times and half a time" in Revelation 12:14 refers to three-and-one-half years, or the Great Tribulation. God will sustain and protect those in Petra from the serpent — the dragon, or Satan — until the return of Jesus. Amen and amen!

Revelation 12:15

So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

As the Jews flee from Jerusalem, Satan will pursue them with an army as great as a flood. Zechariah 13:8-9 prophesies that two-thirds of the Jews will die in this vicious attack! The good news is that one-third of the Jewish people, the remnant, will live to call Jesus Messiah.

Zechariah 13:8-9

And it shall come to pass in all the land,

Says the LORD, “That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it: ⁹I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested.

They will call on My name, and I will answer them.

I will say, ‘This is My people’; And each one will say, ‘The LORD is my God.’”

This remnant is what will be the “saved nation of Israel”. The surviving one-third will stand face-to-face with the Lord Jesus Christ and call out, “My Lord and my God!” They will walk into the Millennial Kingdom and be with their God.

Revelation 12:16

But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

If you’re wondering what this will look like, remember God has done this before!

Numbers 16:28-34

And Moses said: “By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. ²⁹If these men die naturally like all men, or

if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. ³⁰But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD.” ³¹Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words that the ground split apart under them, ³²and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. ³³So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. ³⁴Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up also!”

That is an example of how God will come to the rescue of those whom He loves. Wait upon the Lord and He will vindicate you!

Psalms 28:8-9

The LORD is their strength,

And He is the saving refuge of His anointed.

⁹Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance;

Shepherd them also, and bear them up forever.

Revelation 12:17

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

At this stage of the battle, Satan's anger knows no bounds. There is only one hope for mankind and that is Jesus Christ. Jesus will soon return, but not before God issues the seven bowl judgments introduced at the seventh blast of the trumpet.

God's wrath will be complete and it will be just! Praise His holy name that those who have been sealed in His love will not be subject to the judgments to come. Although some may die as a result of the ensuing judgments, that only means that those who die will go to Heaven and, as a result, be included in the greatest day of horseback riding in all of the ages!

Revelation 19:14

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

What a day that will be! Satan may growl and frighten, but remember what the word says

1 John 4:4

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Jesus is our protector. He is the lover of our souls. If He is for us, who then can be against us? Trust in God alone and you shall be victorious!

Revelation Chapter 13

Beasts!

Revelation 13:1-2

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ²Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

As John is standing on the sand facing the sea, we might suppose he is on the Island of Patmos looking out on the Aegean Sea. The vision he is experiencing of this monster rising out of the sea has terrifying implications. His vision is directly tied to Daniel's vision:

Daniel 7:1-8

In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream and visions of his head while on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling the main facts. ²Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. ³And four great beasts came up from the sea, each different from the other. ⁴The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it. ⁵"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' ⁶"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had

on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had 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, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words.

I find it interesting that the two visions, although very similar, are in reverse order to each other. I believe the explanation is that Daniel is looking forward in time and John is looking back in time.

In both visions, the beast is rising out of the sea. On a spiritual note, the sea represents the abyss. The beast has been summoned from the abyss by Satan to carry out his horrific tribulation plan. On another note, the sea can be a metaphor for Gentile nations. The seven heads represent seven world empires: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the revised Roman Empire of the Antichrist. The dragon, of course, is Satan. The ten horns with their ten crowns represent ten world governments, the future one-world government under the authority of Antichrist.

Revelation 13:3-4

3And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

This pictures Satan’s deceptive plan to enact Antichrist’s assassination and subsequent resurrection, which is nothing

more than Satan's attempt to counterfeit the death and resurrection of our one true Lord, Jesus Christ. However, the world will witness this event, believe and worship the risen Antichrist.

Consider the words of Jesus when He spoke of this time:

Matthew 24:4-5

And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

Revelation 13:5-6

And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.

For the final three-and-one-half years — the second half of the "Great Tribulation" — God will allow the Antichrist to speak blasphemies against Him. This is a sad testimonial of a fallen world. It seems whenever one wants to replace another, whether by force or election, blasphemies are spoken, insults are thrown, and much mud is slung! It is sad that a potential leader will rarely run on his or her own merit, but rather attempt to drag their opponent down to their level. In this case, God is the One receiving the blasphemies, but He will place His sovereign controls on Antichrist.

Revelation 13:7

It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation

For thousands of years, false religions have murdered Christians and Jews alike. In the final years preceding Christ's return, the Antichrist will be given permission to murder

many more. The Great Tribulation will be a horrific time in which the Antichrist will utilize every resource available and spew his hateful and murderous rage on the world. His agenda is much the same as we hear today from the Arab nations surrounding Israel: Destroy Israel and eradicate every Jew and every Christian at any cost!

Revelation 13:8

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

The Antichrist will have everyone who has not received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior horribly deceived! The good news? Everyone who belongs to God cannot be taken in by this master of lies and deception.

John 10:28-30

And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30I and My Father are one."

Romans 8:38-39

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 13:9-10

If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Notice the phrase "If anyone has an ear, let him hear" does not include the "what the Spirit says to the churches"

— which is commonly used in chapters 2 and 3 —because the Church is already in Heaven via the Rapture. Those who believe during this horrible time of tribulation and persecution are given assurance in the knowledge that the horrific plight they have been given will come to an end and they will be vindicated. Praise God!

Revelation 13:11

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.

The beast which is rising up out of the earth is known as the “False Prophet” (cf. Revelation 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10).

He will unite the religions of the world — with the exception of Judaism and Christianity — and create the one-world religion of the Antichrist’s short-lived reign. This beast’s two horns — as opposed to the ten horns of the Antichrist — portray him as a much weaker beast than the Antichrist. He comes in a gentler fashion. He comes as a lamb, another counterfeit of the one true Lamb, Jesus Christ. He is not a politician like the Antichrist, but he sings a false song of love and hope as one who appears to care for the spiritual well-being of the people of the world. This song will soon lose its melodious tone and give way to the voice of the dragon, Satan.

Revelation 13:12

And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

That he exercises the same authority as the first beast simply confirms the source of that authority: Satan. He is instrumental in convincing the world to worship the Antichrist as some sort of a deity. His role is important to

the Antichrist because the world will not be made up of government apart from religion, but rather a government of religion as the world begins to worship this world political leader. I am sure the False Prophet will play an important public relations role in the alleged assassination and resurrection of Antichrist.

Revelation 13:13-14

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

Satan has made a career out of imitating God and counterfeiting His great miracles. Do you remember the scene in Pharaoh's court with Moses and Aaron?

Exodus 7:11-12

But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. ¹²For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

So Satan can empower his false prophet to perform signs and wonders. It only makes him a good magician and nothing more. We need to always remember that Satan was defeated at Calvary and the only power he has over us is that which we give to him by believing his lies.

Matthew 24:23-24

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

My friend Joe who is a musician and song writer, wrote a wonderful song that tells of Satan's deceptive powers entitled

“Don’t Buy the Lie!”

Believe it, my friends, you just cannot believe Satan. Jesus didn’t call him the “father of lies” for no reason (cf. John 8:44).

Daniel, chapter three tells of Nebuchadnezzar’s decree to have an image of gold constructed. The statue would be 60 cubits, or ninety feet, tall and would be of himself. He commanded all to worship the image or die! Here we see that the Antichrist is up to the same craziness.

Revelation 13:15

He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

The Antichrist will have his image constructed in Jerusalem as a means to abolish his established world religion and demand that the world worship him alone as God. Another sign and wonder the false prophet performs is to make this image of the Antichrist speak and appear to live. This will help greatly in convincing the world that the Antichrist should be worshiped. But to worship him as God is a bit much, even for this crazy, twisted world! We shall see.

Revelation 13:16-17

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, ¹⁷and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

The Antichrist will gain almost absolute control over the people of the earth with his extremely anticipated move. Every human being on the planet will be required, under the penalty of death, to receive this mark. Most will rush

to have the mark applied to their forehead or right hand. Most likely, the fact that people are given a choice as to where the mark can be applied will be considered an act of benevolence by the Antichrist. There will be a growing number of Christians, as well as Jews, who will be forced to go 'underground' in order to avoid execution for refusing to take the "mark of the beast". The mark is a number which somehow reveals his name.

From bar codes containing information about products to computerized micro-chips that can be placed under the skin for identification, today we are seeing much in the way of foreshadowing this prophesied "mark". Many believers have become concerned as this technology progresses. However, I do not believe Christians today have anything to be concerned about. I am convinced that believers will be raptured and will be in heaven during the time of tribulation.

It is interesting, though, that we are witnessing the evolution of the very technology that may be employed by the Antichrist for such a mark. Christians should keep in mind that we are sealed in our relationship with Christ and no one can take that away from us. So, rather than worry about what will most likely not happen to believers today, we must walk out the Great Commission with the same passion and urgency that any world renowned sports team would play their game at the final two minute warning!

Revelation 13:18

Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.

It is dangerous and unwise to attempt to use numerology² to try to identify the Antichrist today. He will be revealed in a time that God has ordained. I believe Christians today will

not be on earth at that time, but rather in Heaven, so it matters not to us who this person will be. There have been many attempts already to identify the Antichrist, and those attempts may have placed a false identity on an innocent person. Also, this is something God has commanded us not to do. The Bible teaches that the Antichrist cannot be revealed until that which restrains him has been removed.

2 Thessalonians 2:5-12

Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. ⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, ¹⁰and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, ¹²that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The number 6 is said to be the number of man. Man certainly falls short of the glory and perfection of God, whose number is 7. These are valuable generalities to help us understand that every man, the Antichrist, every demon, and Satan fall short of God's glory. Praise be to God that He has given us, a way back into a relationship with Him, something that is not given to Satan and his fallen angels! However, even as redeemed believers, our number is still six. Perhaps where the Antichrist is concerned, the number is repeated three times in Revelation to drive the point home that he has no righteousness whatsoever and never will!

1 time, and times, and half a time — A year, two years, and half a year; that is, forty-two months as specifically noted in Revelation 11:2. Assuming a month of 30 days, “forty-two months” would be twelve hundred and sixty days. This obvious allusion to the same phrasing in Daniel 7:25 (...time and times and half a time...) enables us to understand this reference in Revelation to mean twelve hundred and sixty days, as the same explanation or calculation must apply in both instances.

2 numerology — n. The study of the supposed religious or occult significance and influence of numbers on human affairs.



SECTION VI
THE FALL OF BABYLON
&
THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Chapter 14

Hear the Angels!

Revelation 14:1

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads.

This amazing group of men is one-in-the-same as those introduced in chapter seven. There have been many commentaries written regarding the identity of these men, as well as their location and timing. Some of the possibilities are:

1. These are the 144,000 Jewish witnesses introduced in Revelation 7, assembled on the heavenly Mt. Zion, before the throne of God, following their martyrdom. The problem with this idea is that it suggests God's seal of protection was of no use to them.
2. These are the 144,000 Jewish witnesses introduced in Revelation 7, now standing victoriously on the earthly Mt. Zion, at the end of the tribulation period before Jesus, the Lamb of God.
3. Still others see the 144,000 as symbolic of the Church which is in Heaven.
4. Some cults believe these are the 144,000 among their members who will go to Heaven while the remaining believers live in Paradise on earth, thus fulfilling God's original purpose back in Genesis.

I personally believe number 2 is correct. The 144,000 witnesses have come through the Tribulation victoriously and now stand before the Lord in triumph!

God has placed His name on the forehead of the 144,000 Messianic Jewish witnesses for their protection. There is power in His name! Demons tremble and flee at His name! Satan, of course, will attempt to counterfeit Christ's powerful name by requiring everyone to accept the "mark of the beast", the number of his name 666, on their forehead or right hand. The difference is that God's name is given freely to anyone who chooses to willingly follow Him, whereas Satan must intimidate people with the fear of death into accepting his name. That is the difference between love and hate, peace and fear!

Revelation 14:2-3

And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. ³They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

The voice of God has been heard like this before. In Ezekiel 43:2, God's voice is described as sounding like many waters. John heard the Lord Jesus Christ speaking to him with a voice that sounded like many waters in Revelation 1:15. When God speaks, His voice is distinctive and clearly His own! Read the words of Jesus as He teaches that there is peace and safety in His voice...

John 10:1-5

¹Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him,

for they know his voice. ⁵Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

...compared to the absolute power of His voice:

Psalm 46:6b

He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

The “voice of many waters” and like the “voice of loud thunder”. I can only imagine the majesty of His voice!

In Revelation 14:2 above, a group of harpists begins to play in concert with one another as the 144,000 begin to sing a new song of redemption before the throne. These 144,000 are the only ones who can learn and sing this wonderful song; probably because no one has seen the trouble they have seen. This is a very special group who now stand with the Lord Jesus Christ on Mt. Zion at the end of the tribulation period, sharing the sweet victory of an incredible harvest with each other.

Revelation 14:4

These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

You may recall the “doctrine of Balaam” spoken of in Revelation 2:14. In Numbers, chapters 22-25, Balaam, a pagan prophet, was hired by Balak, king of the Moabites, to curse the Israelites. Each time Balaam would attempt to speak a curse against Israel, God would turn the curse to blessing. Realizing he could not succeed by speaking curses against Israel, Balaam advised Balak to send Moabite women to seduce the Israelite men into sexual immorality and pagan idol worship, thereby breaking down the Israelite forces and defeating Israel.

The time of tribulation will be a time of unspeakable sin! Sexual sin will run rampant as mankind worships the Antichrist. The 144,000 Jewish evangelists will not only be of great character, but they will be sealed with the name of God on their foreheads. They will steadfastly resist the temptations of lust and human pleasure and find victory in Jesus as they bring to God a great harvest. These men (???) are totally dedicated to God and His plan. Their mission is paramount and they will follow their marching orders, from Jesus to the ends of the earth!

These will be the firstfruits of God and His Son. They will choose to pursue holiness in their lives. Everywhere they go, every word they speak, and every thought they think will be covered by the blood of Jesus!

To be “sold out” for God shouldn’t be only when we feel like being sold out for God. It isn’t a great sale, here today and tomorrow it’s “business as usual”. It is written that these men will follow the Lamb wherever He goes. We should want the greatest commandment to not only be in our lives, but to be our way of life!

Matthew 22:37-38

Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

Revelation 14:5

And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

God will choose 144,000 Jews who will willingly repent of their sin and receive Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. He will choose 12,000 Messianic Jews from each of the twelve tribes of Israel to be His very special witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They will share the Gospel without error to every person they reach. They will by no means

embellish God's Word, but they will share God's message to a tormented world. The message will be God's truth and it will sound something like this; "Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Him!"

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Revelation 14:6-7

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people — ⁷saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

Concerning these three angels and the messages they bring to the world, as well as the application of these messages as they relate to this particular time of tribulation, the first angel has been flying, symbolically, since Genesis 3:15. From the very first prophecy of a coming Savior, to the preaching of the everlasting gospel by this tribulation angel, mankind has been given the gospel in some form or another during every generation, from Adam to this present time. Scripture confirms that every living person is accountable for their acceptance or rejection of what God has shown them, either in nature or in the Scriptures themselves.

Romans 1:20

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 16, clearly illustrates the availability of the gospel to every man through the Scriptures.

Luke 16:19-31

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. ²⁰But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, ²¹desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. ²²So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. ²⁴”Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ ²⁵But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’ ²⁷Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, ²⁸for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ ³¹But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ “

Revelation 14:8

And another angel followed, saying, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.”

I remember some years ago, 1983 to be exact, when Saddam Hussein began to rebuild the city of Babylon atop the ancient ruins of that fallen city. Some say he committed a mortal sin when he set out to rebuild Babylon because of the words of the Prophet Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 50:13

Because of the wrath of the LORD

She shall not be inhabited,

But she shall be wholly desolate.

Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified

And hiss at all her plagues.

Inscribed on a brick of this new construction reads:

“In the era of President Saddam Hussein all Babylon was constructed in three stages. From Nebuchadnezzar to Saddam Hussein, Babylon is rising again.”

Early records indicate that Babylon was established as a city around the twenty-third century BC. A man named Nimrod led the construction of the Tower of Babel as a monument to the greatness of man over God. Babel eventually became Babylon and gave birth to the false systems of religion in the world. Babylon had a very dark history and eventually fell to the Persian armies in 539 BC. However, the spirit of Babylon lives on in false religions and in political and economic empires throughout history. Ultimately, Babylon will be revived as the city of the Antichrist during the seventieth week¹ of Daniel.

The angel is announcing that Babylon has fallen, but what exactly is he referring to? There are several schools of thought as to what Babylon refers to:

1. Babylon refers to the revised Roman Empire which, according to Daniel, is the final world government preceding the return of Jesus Christ.

2. Babylon is the rebuilt city of the Antichrist.
3. Babylon refers to the sinful age of false religions and the political-economic empires of the world.

Whatever you might think, you are probably right if you answered any one or all three of the probabilities. You see, all three will exist during this period of time, and the coming of Christ will bring an end to the evil age of Babylon as well as the spirit of Babylon!

Throughout the ages, the world has been seduced by the worship of idols and the intoxicating wealth of the nations. But no longer will the Antichrist or the spirit of Babylon have its way with the people of the world. Some will mourn this loss and will realize the cost of rejecting Christ. However, many will find incredible rest:

Matthew 25:34

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world...'

Revelation 14:9-10

Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

This seems to be an announcement rather than a warning. This announcement will have a comforting effect for those who have already made the choice to reject the mark of the beast. However, the right choice will cost them their lives—but only for a fraction of a moment. Just as a seed must fall to the ground and die so the life contained within that seed may be released, those who choose Christ over the

Antichrist will close their eyes in death, only to open them in eternal life with Christ!

Those who have rejected Christ and accepted the mark of the beast, however, will endure the coming bowl judgments! Following the tribulation period, Christ will send the lost to Hades, only to be resurrected to the “Great White Throne of Judgment” spoken of.

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...’

Revelation 14:11

and the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

There are many aspects to God. Because we are created in His image, we share in many of those aspects, one of which is our immortal soul. Our soul, or that which makes us what we are, will exist for eternity and cannot be destroyed! Many believe that a loving God would never inflict such punishment on someone as eternal damnation and everlasting suffering. The truth is, God does not and will not. He desires that none should perish (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). He has sacrificed His only Son that we should not go to the lake of fire. But, if we choose to reject God’s solution for our sin, there is nothing more He can do; we will be separated from Him for all eternity...

Revelation 14:12

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

Perseverance is the name of the game! Those who have been saved during the time of tribulation must persevere even

unto death. Understanding the promise of eternal salvation enables the believer to keep his or her faith.

Romans 8:18-21

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Romans 8:37-39

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Revelation 14:13

Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’”

“Yes,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them.”

Whether we are reading about the future time of tribulation or we are living in the time of tribulation, a child of God who has been saved by the shed blood of Jesus Christ has no need to fear death. Death is simply transition from this life to eternal life in the presence of God. How wonderful it is to be a child of the Most High God who tells us that we have the right to call Him “Abba Father” — the most personal use of the word “Daddy”!

Revelation 14:14

Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

Throughout Scriptures, clouds represent the presence of God. In the imagery presented here, we find that the One who is like the Son of Man is Jesus Christ Himself. The imagery of the Lord sitting on the cloud seems to fulfill the prophecy from Daniel.

Daniel 7:13-14

***"I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, One like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.***

***¹⁴Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.***

***His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom the one
Which shall not be destroyed.***

Jesus having a "sharp sickle" in His hand in Revelation 14:14 indicates an impending harvest. This is actually the first of two harvests and can be understood to be the grain harvest (cf. Leviticus 23:10; Numbers 18:12; 2 Chronicles 32:28; Isaiah 23:3; Mark 4:29).

It represents the seven bowl judgments which will take place just prior to the Lord's return and the establishment of His Millennial kingdom. This is the last time that Jesus refers to Himself as the "Son of Man."

Matthew 8:20

And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

He has come wearing a “stephanos”, a victor’s crown. It is a crown of triumph! Jesus has come as a triumphant victor with a sharp sickle to mow down His enemies!

Revelation 14:15

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

This angel has come to deliver a message from God the Father to God the Son. The message? The time has come to take it all back! Remember in chapter five when the Son, or the Lamb, took the scroll from the Father, when He was given the title deed to earth and all creation? Well, now it appears that we are seeing that fulfilled!

At first read one might think Jesus is preparing to harvest new believing souls for His Kingdom, but looking closer we see that this is a scene of judgment. The world is clearly divided at this point and Jesus is about to use the sickle of His righteous judgment to mow down His enemies and cast them into everlasting damnation. On a personal note, I would say His anger is fueled by His broken heart. Although He cannot look upon those who He is now reaping, His vision of those who hate Him must certainly be softened through His own tears!

Revelation 14:16

So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

I remember sitting in the hospital with a woman who was watching her brother die as a result of a life of alcoholism. I can still feel her anger as she explained that she had five other siblings who had died for very similar reasons. She would become the sole survivor of her family. On more than one occasion she was called on to make that dreaded end-of-life decision and terminate life support for a few of her siblings.

Here we see Jesus who is now terminating life support for maybe millions of those whom He loves — because they have made a clear decision to deny their spiritual life and choose death apart from God. Nothing more to do, Jesus did it all! He paid the ransom required by sin; He paid with His own life. God was willing to sacrifice His one and only Son so we might have eternal life with Him, but the decision is ours alone. We must make our free-will choice between life and death, between sin and salvation...

1 Thessalonians 5:8-10

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

If you have not received Him as your Savior, won't you please consider praying the following words from your heart as you read them?

“Lord Jesus, I come before you and acknowledge that You are Lord and God. I know I am a sinner and I have sinned against You. Your Word tells me You became flesh and dwelt with us, so that You might die on a cross for the forgiveness of sin. I now repent of my sin, indeed, I run from my sins and into Your arms! Please forgive my sins and come into my heart. I want You to be my Lord and my Savior! Thank You, Jesus!”

Revelation 14:17

Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

If you're keeping track, this is the fifth angel to come on the scene so far in chapter fourteen. This angel also comes out of the temple, but unlike the fourth angel, this time the angel carries a sickle.

The first harvest — or the grain harvest — represented the seven bowl judgments. The bowl judgments are the final set of seven judgments preceding the Lord's victorious return. This next angel will initiate the “Grape Harvest” (cf. v. 18), or the “Battle of Armageddon”.

Revelation 14:18

And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.”

This sixth angel, who also comes with a directive, probably from the Father, is uniquely equipped. He has come from the altar, the same altar mentioned in chapters six and eight, and is given power over fire

Revelation 6:9-11

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.¹⁰ And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"¹¹ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.

Revelation 8:3-5

Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.⁵ Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

The sixth angel in Revelation 14:18 calls in a loud voice for the fifth angel to thrust in his sickle and gather the clusters. Clusters of grapes represent unsaved sinners. His command is in response to those under the altar (chapter six) and the prayers of the saints (chapter eight). The fact that the clusters of grapes are "ripe" does not mean they are useful; on the contrary, the word "ripe" refers to the wickedness of the unrepentant peoples of the earth who are bursting with wickedness and unrighteousness!

Revelation 14:19

So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Gathering the “vine of the earth” is interpreted as the inhabitants of the earth. Unrepentant sinners from the whole earth will be gathered and cast into the great winepress, of the wrath of God. The winepress is symbolic of God’s wrath.

The action of this angel is simultaneous with the action of Jesus as He crushes the nations in chapter nineteen;

Revelation 19:15

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

Revelation 14:20

And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

As Jesus returns, He is careful to protect Jerusalem from the bloodshed and the effects of the “Battle of Armageddon”. Whether blood runs four to five feet deep from the valley of Armageddon (from the Hebrew Har Magiddo) one hundred and eighty miles (one thousand six hundred furlongs) south from Jerusalem to Bozrah in Edom, or the slaughter splatters the blood of millions to the height of the horse’s bridal is not nearly as important to me as the bloodbath all humans will ultimately choose to be associated with. Jesus will have fought two incredibly bloody battles during both His first and second comings:

- He fights is the first battle on the cross of Calvary. He shed His blood to defeat our greatest enemy, sin.
- Jesus fights the second battle at the Valley of Armageddon as He defeats the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all of His human and demonic enemies. Actually, Jesus doesn’t “fight” the battle, He simply ends it!

Jesus Christ is a mighty and undefeated warrior. He is also our gentle Savior and best Friend. It is hard to understand why anyone would reject Him, let alone hate Him. He gave His life for His friends — you and me. He didn't have to, but He chose too!

Chapter 15

Song of Moses

Revelation 15:1

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.

Much more than this spectacular image of seven angels appearing with seven bowls, is that this great and marvelous sign indicates that these seven bowl judgments are the final judgments of Revelation.

If you remember back in Revelation 11:15, the angel having the seventh trumpet sounded his trumpet which introduced these seven bowl judgments. The completion of this segment of God's wrath, depicted later in chapter 16, will signify the end of tribulation and will lead us into the Millennial Kingdom.

Revelation 15:2

And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.

Revelation 4:6 describes a "sea of glass" like crystal before the throne of God. We also see in Ezekiel 1:4, his vision of God's throne, including a whirlwind of raging fire. In Heaven, as seven angels exit the temple, they will walk on a sea of glass where the appearance of fire will represent a time of God's judgment. Cheering them on will be a heavenly choir made up of all those who have been martyred for their faith during the time of tribulation.

Revelation 15:3-4

They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:

“Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!

Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!

⁴Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy.

For all nations shall come and worship before You,

For Your judgments have been manifested.”

The “song of Moses” was a song of victory and deliverance. It was sung by the Children of Israel following their escape through the Red Sea (cf. Exodus 15). The Children of Israel sang on the banks of the Red Sea; the tribulation saints sang the “song of the Lamb” on a sea of glass!

Revelation 15:5

After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.

This is the heavenly temple where God dwells. According to Revelation 11:19, if we could look inside we would see the ark of His covenant.

Revelation 11:19

Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.

How amazing it must have been for John to look and see this incredible temple now opened! All the temples of the earth, as well as all the articles of temple worship, including the earthly ark, would clearly be seen as just pictures of this amazing and wonderful heavenly temple and its incredible contents.

Revelation 15:6

And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.

Now the time has finally come for God's final great judgment to be poured out on what's left of the world — a world ravaged by war, pestilence and so much death. The Antichrist, who three years earlier had promised a new world of hope and peace, is now revealed for who, or what, he really is — a monster bent on destroying Israel and all of her people! Seven angels march out of the temple, ready to dispatch the seven plagues which are about to be handed them in seven ceremonial bowls.

Their clothes are appropriate for this occasion: The bright linen fabric represents their holiness, and the golden bands represent royalty. They are arrayed in formal attire for this unprecedented activity.

Revelation 15:7

Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

The four living creatures are cherubim, which are of the highest ranking of the angelic realm. These very special creatures are always seen in the presence of God where they serve Him without end. Here they are seen delivering the seven bowls of strategic plagues into the hands of seven angels who have been chosen by God Himself for this incredible mission.

Revelation 15:8

The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Smoke symbolizes the glory of God and the majesty of God. Smoke also symbolizes His wrath which is so appropriate in this context.

Isaiah 6:4

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

You might understand the latter part of verse eight to say that no one was able to re-enter the temple until the glory cloud of God's judgment had left the temple. The smoke of His judgment will remain in the temple until the last bowl has been poured out and its plague has run its course. It will be at that time, and only that time, that the world will have been purged and made ready for its King and the Millennial Kingdom.

I cannot even begin to imagine how horrific a time it will be on earth during these final seven judgments! They will come fast and furiously as the angels pour out, in rapid succession, these horrifying judgments on the remaining lost of mankind!

I believe that the Lord Jesus is ready to rapture His church at any moment now. The burning question is: Are you ready? Have you taken care of the business of your eternal destination? If you have, great! You can know with assurance that your eternity in heaven with God is secure, and nothing or no one can take that from you! But, if you have not heeded the words of the gospel, if you have dismissed the word of God and exchanged truth for a lie, if you have said in your heart, "There is no God!" If you have rejected the Son of God, then I implore you to consider this: God created all of us in His image. One unavoidable aspect of His image in us is immortality. He created our souls and they shall never cease to be. Sin has separated us from God, and if we reject His Son as the solution to our problem of

sin, then there is a place that was created only for Satan and his fallen angels (cf. Matthew 25:41). That place is where unresolved sin will go: the Lake of Fire or Hell!

You may ask, “What makes you so sure that I am a sinner?” Great question! You and I are sinners by virtue of our birth. Original sin has guaranteed that all of us are sinners. We didn’t become sinners because we sinned; rather, we sin because we are born sinners! So, what I want to ask is this: If many of people you know have suddenly disappeared, leaving you all alone, will you believe the inevitable lie the media and government leaders will use to explain what happened? Or, will you consider the things we’ve been talking about in this study on the book of Revelation? Coming to faith in Christ at that time will be a more difficult choice, as the Holy Spirit will not be here to convict your heart of sin or to restrain man’s wickedness. So don’t wait! If you are depending on your own goodness and have never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, won’t you please do it today?

Chapter 16

Bowl Judgments!

Revelation 16:1

Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth.”

Several thousands of years earlier, God wrought ten plagues upon Egypt:

1. Plague One: Water turns to blood;
2. Plague Two: Frogs;
3. Plague Three: Lice;
4. Plague Four: Flies;
5. Plague Five: Livestock diseased;
6. Plague Six: Boils;
7. Plague Seven: Hail;
8. Plague Eight: Locusts;
9. Plague Nine: Darkness; and
10. Plague Ten: Death of the firstborn.

The purpose of the ten plagues was to convince Pharaoh to release the Hebrew slaves from Egyptian captivity. More importantly, though, it was so both the Hebrews and the Egyptians would know He is the God through His demonstrated majesty, glory and power.”

Clearly there are similarities between the ten plagues of Exodus and the trumpet and bowl judgments of Revelation. I think it is a marvelous thing that from Genesis to Revelation, God’s eternal plan is clear, concise and consistent. These seven

final plagues have been a long time in the making. God does not haphazardly throw bits and pieces of His wrath at the world. On the contrary, He has precisely mapped out every act of this wonderful drama. His plan for the ages continues to unfold and now, He is bringing it all to a spectacular conclusion with seven judgments which will be poured out like fuel on an already-raging fire!

Revelation 16:2

So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

Exodus 9:9

And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt.

Job 2:7

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Luke 16:21

desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Looking at a few examples of God's use of sores or boils in both the Old and New Testaments, you wouldn't think it could possibly mean something beyond an affliction of ulcerating boils. It is interesting to note that in Job 2:7 the definition includes two words: "boil sores". Here, Satan had afflicted Job with "evil ulcers". Although God has afflicted the unbelievers in Revelation 16, it is no less a calamity than when Job was afflicted in Job 2:7, or when He plagued the Egyptians with boils sores in Exodus 9:9

Revelation 16:3

Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.

Although similar to the first plague in Egypt as recorded in Exodus, chapter seven, or the second trumpet found in Revelation, chapter eight, this particular judgment is far more devastating. The entire oceans of the world have become blood, like that of a dead man. The oceans cover about three quarters of the earth's surface, so you can only imagine what it will mean to the survivors of earth to be surrounded by so much rotting death. Not only that, but a major food source has now been destroyed!

The overwhelming stench of death will most certainly speak loudly and clearly about how wicked the inhabitants of earth have become.

Revelation 16:4

Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.

Wow! The fresh water supplies have now turned to blood, so certainly the fish in the rivers and streams have died as well. I am reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 24:

Matthew 24:22

And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

These final seven judgments come in quick succession, which is a very good thing. The Lord is making ready His return just as soon as the dust settles from the seventh bowl. I praise God that new believers will not be affected during this time!

Revelation 16:5

**And I heard the angel of the waters saying:
“You are righteous, O Lord,
The One who is and who was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.**

No matter how horrific God’s judgments may be, they are just, appropriate and deserved to be received by all of those who, even to this point, continue to reject the work of Jesus Christ on the cross!

Romans 3:10-18

As it is written:

“There is none righteous, no, not one;

¹¹There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

¹²They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

¹³“Their throat is an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit”;

“The poison of asps is under their lips”;

¹⁴“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

¹⁵“Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways;

¹⁷And the way of peace they have not known.”

¹⁸“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

The very sad news here is how simple a truth they have missed! Their hate has blinded them and the things of the world have seduced them into believing that they have no need of God, or God’s Son. However, the very good news is that the truth is simple and easy to grasp. We can easily avoid judgment by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 10:9-10

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the

dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Revelation 16:6

**For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
And You have given them blood to drink.
For it is their just due.”**

The fresh water has become blood and it is all that is available for the lost to drink. However, I believe the water remains pure for the believers.

Revelation 16:7

And I heard another from the altar saying, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”

In the last words of this overcomer’s song, the angel emphasizes that God is just and righteous in His judgments.

Revelation 16:8

**Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun,
and power was given to him to scorch men with fire.**

Talk about global warming! Imagine the heat of our sun being increased enough to scorch men, yet not kill them. If the heat from the sun were suddenly increased, the polar ice caps would melt and the oceans of the world could rise as much as 150 feet, conservatively speaking. Imagine what would happen to cities such as Los Angeles or New York, not to mention the dramatic loss of life due to the extreme heat.

Revelation 16:9

And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.

When Isaiah answered God’s call he was told that those whom he would try to reach would not receive the word.

Isaiah 6:8-9

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” And He said, “Go, and tell this people:

Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.”

It is amazing to me that with such incredible evidence of God’s plan to redeem man unto Himself that man would curse Him and reject Him! Ministry has been difficult since the very beginning. Remember?

Genesis 3:12

Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

From the beginning, we have been rebellious towards God and unwilling to take responsibility for our deficiencies; so we have blamed God as well as others for the discomfort we feel as a result of our own sin.

Revelation 16:10

Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain.

From the throne of the Antichrist to the far reaches of the globe, darkness will spread and engulf his entire kingdom, which for just a short time longer, is the whole earth. The phrase “full of darkness” refers to a darkness so great that it can almost be felt and one that causes extreme distress and anguish, as indicated by them “gnawing their tongues” in pain. A friend described a personal experience of the darkness of Hell;

“I went to Hell once — or had a very real ‘vision’ of it. And as bad as the sounds and smells were — and they were bad!!! — what still sends shivers down my spine is the

total blackness. It wasn't the type that your eyes eventually adjust to. It was totally, inescapably and indescribably black. And the feelings that accompanied it were feelings I'd never felt before or since — that of total abandonment, isolation, deprivation, and sheer terror so great that I can't begin to describe — something that would make even Freddy Krueger cringe and cry out! I could actually feel the darkness as it seemed to grip my very soul! It was the kind of blackness and nothingness that one can actually feel in their bodies.”

As the darkness extends from the throne of the Antichrist, there is no question as to its origin. However, the lost, unrepentant sinners continue to curse the One who came to take away the sin of the world.

Revelation 16:11

They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Hate is an amazing foe. When it grips our heart, we will seek out others to agree with our hate and then we will support each other by adding hateful fuel to each other's fire, making true the saying: “Misery loves company”. At this stage of tribulation, sinners will be so deceived and their hate and rebellion so deeply rooted that it may resemble the time when Lucifer rebelled and caused one-third of God's holy angels to fall and become unholy demons!

Revelation 16:12

Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

The “kings from the east” are not the two hundred million demons from Revelation, chapter nine. They are a subset of the kings of the whole earth who are collectively marching towards Armageddon. God will supernaturally dry up the great river Euphrates — which will most likely be

overflowing its banks as the increased heat from the sun has melted the snow and ice in the slopes of Mt. Ararat.

Revelation 16:13

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

These slimy “unclean spirits like frogs” are more than just evil beings. They are spawned out of the mouths of an unholy trinity made up of Satan (the dragon), the Antichrist (the beast), and the false prophet.

Revelation 16:14

For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Their mission is to draw the kings of the whole earth to an invasion of Palestine at the valley of Armageddon with supernatural signs and wonders. You’ve most likely heard the phrase “mother of all wars” regarding previous wars. The “battle of that great day of God Almighty” refers to the final battle of Armageddon which will prove to be the bloodiest battle ever fought.

Revelation 16:15

“Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.”

I can’t help but think of the parable of the ten virgins:

Matthew 25:1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with

their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

⁶”And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’⁹But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹”Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’¹²But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’¹³”Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Jesus warned us more than once to watch and wait, to stay awake and sober. He places importance on His command to watch by offering a crown to anyone who “loves His appearing” (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8).

One of my favorite verses which doesn’t directly teach us to watch, but my heart receives that message, is Psalm 46:10 — Be still, and know that I am God.

I have learned great value in watching and waiting upon the Lord. It has revolutionized my life and it can do the same for anyone who develops the discipline of expectant watching and waiting.

Revelation 16:16

And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

Napoleon referred to the valley of Megiddo as the greatest battlefield he had ever seen. So many battles have been fought there, but the battle of Armageddon is a battle that has been anticipated for centuries. It will be the end-all

of wars. Jesus will make His glorious appearance at this battle as He rides in, in majesty and victory and establishes His Millennial Kingdom!

Revelation 16:17-19a

Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”¹⁸ And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.¹⁹ Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell.

Jesus cried out from the cross, “It is finished!” marking the beginning of the end of sin and Satan! In the above verses, the voice of God Himself announces that His judgment is accomplished. This immediately precedes the “second coming of Jesus Christ”. God’s exclamation point is a dramatic earthquake — the most powerful earthquake in the history of the world!

Zechariah 14:4

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,

From east to west,

Making a very large valley;

Half of the mountain shall move toward the north

And half of it toward the south.

God completes His judgment with a grand crescendo of His voice from His throne in Heaven, thunderings and lightnings, the return of His Son, and a devastating earthquake! God divides Jerusalem into three parts, not for judgment, but for remodeling.

Revelation 16:19b

And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath.

Babylon, the seat of the Antichrist's kingdom, will now receive all she was promised.

Isaiah 13:6-13

Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. ⁷Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, ⁸and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces will be like flames.

⁹Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.

¹¹"I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. ¹²I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. ¹³Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger.

Revelation 16:20-21

Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. ²¹And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

As a result of the devastating earthquake at Jesus' return and touchdown on the Mount of Olives, the whole earth

will be changed in a scene that will appear as powerful and dramatic as the days of creation must have been! God will use huge hail stones, weighing up to 80 pounds each, in His final act of judgment!

FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD. . . .

Revelation Chapter 17

The Woman and the Beast

Revelation 17: 1

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, “Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters...

Jeremiah 51:13 refers to the destruction of Babylon:

Jeremiah 51:13

O you who dwell by many waters, Abundant in treasures, your end has come...

It is interesting that Jeremiah referred to Babylon as “one who dwells by many waters” as if to connect her destruction to Revelation 17:1. However, we shall read in Revelation 17:15 that “many waters” refers to the nations of the world. Chapters 17 & 18 target the “great harlot” as the focus of the bowl judgments, not as a literal prostitute, but representative of false religions, religious apostasy, and idolatry.

Revelation 17:2

...with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

The sphere of the harlot’s influence is huge! She has enticed world leaders on every level to fall for her seductive lies, just as the serpent turned the tide of all mankind when he deceived the world population in the Garden of Eden.

The kings of the earth have not committed spiritual adultery as might be understood by the phrase “committed fornication” because, as unbelievers, they have not known

God as His bride. The rulers of the world have become obsessed with the false religions of the world, which causes them to believe they have become greater than they are. The idea that they might be “enlightened”, or have become greater than God, is an age-old lie that deceived Lucifer himself when he fell from heaven:

Isaiah 14:12-15

”How you are fallen from heaven,

O Lucifer, son of the morning!

How you are cut down to the ground,

You who weakened the nations!

¹³For you have said in your heart:

’I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;

I will also sit on the mount of the congregation

On the farthest sides of the north;

¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,

I will be like the Most High.’

¹⁵Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,

To the lowest depths of the Pit.

All of the inhabitants of the earth, referring to all unbelievers, will be seduced by the false religion (the “great harlot”) of the Antichrist.

Revelation 17:3

So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

As described by the angel, the woman is the great Babylonian harlot, or false religious system of the unsaved world. The beast is the same beast described earlier:

Revelation 13:1

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

The beast is the Antichrist. He will not only blaspheme God by taking the names that are intended for God alone, but also by speaking many blasphemous things to and about God.

Daniel 7:25a

He shall speak pompous words against the Most High...

The seven heads represent seven kingdoms used by Satan: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the revised kingdom of Rome, or the final kingdom of the Antichrist. We will read more in verse nine regarding the meaning of these seven heads.

The ten horns represent the ten kings who will rule ten regions of the world in the “New World Order”, or the coming one-world government.

Revelation 17:4

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

Prostitutes are often portrayed as being outfitted with beautiful clothing and jewelry. Here we see the “great harlot” arrayed in purple and scarlet, the same scarlet color as the beast. Certainly, the same or similar colors indicate a particular partnership, or alliance. The fancy clothing, precious stones and pearls must certainly be tools of seduction, promising a time of untold pleasure. All of this, of course, is a metaphor for a false religious system, which seduces the inhabitants of an unbelieving world into committing spiritual immorality with her.

The “golden cup” makes me wonder if this isn’t just another attempt by Satan to employ a counterfeit picture of the communion cup of Christ, as this false religious system calls the world to share in a perverted communion of spiritual fornication with her.

Revelation 17:5

And on her forehead a name was written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

If you think about it, the sixth of the seven kingdoms, Rome, certainly had its issues with immorality. In the ancient Roman world, prostitutes were to somehow identify themselves. Now, in the time of the revised Roman Empire, or the kingdom of Antichrist which is yet a mystery to us, we find that the “great harlot” must identify herself, just as the followers of the Antichrist must do, with a name on her forehead.

Revelation 17:6

I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

As long as false religions or cults have existed there have been bloodshed and martyrs — especially Christian and Jewish martyrs. Nothing makes Satan happier than to see human beings, all created in the image of God, murder each other in the name of religion. From the perspective of the Romans and the Pharisees, even Jesus was put to death in order to keep the status quo within a religious system. Of course, as Christians we understand that no one took the life of Jesus; rather, He willingly laid it down for His friends. Amen!

The Antichrist and the false prophet will enjoy the bloodbath that will take place during the time of tribulation, and it will be the “great harlot”, the false religious system of the world, which will be responsible for much of the mayhem of its followers.

John watched with amazement as this great harlot reveled in the destruction of so many because he could not understand what he was seeing.

Revelation 17:7

But the angel said to me, “Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

God is always faithful to send exactly what we need at just the right moment. While Daniel was praying and fasting for three weeks, seeking information that would explain all that he did not quite understand, an angel finally got through the gauntlet of demonic opposition and arrived on the scene to answer all of his questions. I am sure that you have experienced times when you simply could not understand the situation facing you, and all at once, God came through with the answers you needed to bring peace back into your heart. I believe that is exactly what is happening in verse 7. John must be at his wits end witnessing the vision before him. Who is she? What is she? What is this monstrous beast she is riding? Why is there so much death? What does it all mean? So many questions! John must have been near fainting! And then, the angel is there to explain... Thank You, God!!

Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

A little confusing, don't you think? The beast, referring to the Antichrist, “was “and then “is not”. The man who has risen to global leadership has been assassinated with a lethal strike of a sword, and then he is not. Satan appears

on the scene from the bottomless pit to “resurrect” the man. However, this is only another attempt by Satan to counterfeit our Lord and Savior’s resurrection. He supernaturally resurrects the Antichrist by possessing him. I personally believe this is simply Satan manipulating a corpse for a time. The unsaved world will marvel as they witness their leader rise from the dead, and now he “yet is”!

Revelation 17:9-10

”Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

John refers to wisdom in Revelation 13:18 as it relates to understanding the “number of the beast, 666”. Here in 17:9, he again refers to the need for wisdom. There are a couple schools of thought regarding the angel’s explanation, which I’m sure is the reason wisdom is required.

One thought is that the seven mountains on which the woman sits refers to the seven hills of Rome, as Rome is known as the “City of Seven Mountains”. It should be noted here that Jerusalem is also known as a city built on seven hills (Google either Rome or Jerusalem as a “city of seven hills” for more information).

- Another thought is that the seven mountains refer to seven world kingdoms: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the revised Roman Empire or kingdom of the Antichrist.
- The latter makes more sense to me as it relates to a broader world system than do either Rome or Jerusalem by themselves.

- In one view, where Rome is represented by the “seven mountains on which the woman sits”, seven kings may refer to seven emperors. Indeed, prior to John’s revelation, five had fallen, one is (in John’s day), and one is yet to come. The five who had fallen before John’s day are:

- Julius Caesar, who was assassinated;
- Tiberius, who was murdered by poisoning;
- Caligula, who was stabbed to death;
- Claudius, who was smothered; and
- Nero, who committed suicide.

At the time John was writing the book of Revelation, Domitian was on the throne; and the king who is yet to come will be the Antichrist. That will make seven kings.

- In another view, I refer you back to seven kingdoms, five of which were represented in the great statue envisioned by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and written about in the book of Daniel. Those were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the revised Roman Empire or the kingdom of the Antichrist. The two which preceded these five were Egypt and Assyria.

Revelation 17:11

The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

More riddles! Okay, let’s walk this out. The beast, or the Antichrist, was, and then was assassinated with a sword strike to the head, and so he was not. Now he is the eighth yet the seventh. The kingdom of the Antichrist is the seventh kingdom, but the Antichrist himself was alive, dead and then alive again, so he is the seventh and at his “resurrection”, he then becomes the eighth.?

The Antichrist “going to perdition” simply means he is going to eternal destruction or damnation.

Revelation 17:12

“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.

The ten kings are future kings of the revised Roman Empire, or the Antichrist’s kingdom. The kingdom is global, so these kings will rule a ten-nation federation under the authority of the Antichrist. The fact that they will “receive authority for one hour” signifies a short time.

Revelation 17:13

These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

These kings will become the sole authority, under the Antichrist, of the entire world. Thus, for a short time they will serve him with all of their power and authority. There is a saying that “absolute power corrupts absolutely”. This ten-nation federation under the Antichrist will be the most corrupt form of government that the world has ever known!

Revelation 17:14

These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

The ten kings of this one-world government will be so totally devoted to their evil master that they will, without question or hesitation, make war against God Himself!

Psalm 2:2-6

*Why do the nations rage,
And the people plot a vain thing?*

*² he kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
³“Let us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us.”
⁴He who sits in the heavens shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
⁵Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
⁶“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.”*

We will see this fulfilled in chapter nineteen when the Lord returns with His chosen and faithful armies of heaven. Jesus will crush His enemies with a word from His mouth! “He shall speak to them in His wrath...” (Psalm 2:5a)

Revelation 17:15

Then he said to me, “The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

The imagery is that of the whole unbelieving world sitting under the most evil satanic system it has ever known! This is the Antichrist, or the beast, and his Babylonian world system.

Revelation 17:16

And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

The ten kings will follow the Antichrist and together, they turn their hatred towards the one-world religious system (the harlot), which Antichrist successfully used to bring the unbelieving world under his spell and control. Now he demands that all worship him and only him as god!

Revelation 17:17

For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

It shouldn't surprise us that this evil empire has turned on itself

In the city where I live, there is a newspaper which can be read online. Behind each story are blogs written by a group of "concerned readers". In reality, these readers-turned-writers can find nothing nice or constructive to say about anything or anyone reported in the paper. I know, because I have been the target of these unholy blog writers! But, what is interesting and almost fun to observe is that in almost every attack, they inevitably disagree on some point and turn against one another in a sort of feeding frenzy of "friendly fire"! This usually ends their blog for the moment or at least until the next article peaks their interest.

I believe God fulfills His purpose, not at the expense of some people, but in spite of them.

Romans 9:14-18

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." ¹⁶So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." ¹⁸Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Revelation 17:18

And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth.

The woman is not only the great city of Babylon, but the idea and spirit of Babylon. She is an evil presence in the world, the monster under every bed and in every closet. She is that extreme sense of fear when you walk into a dimly lit room after being awakened by something at midnight. She is the demon that haunts your dreams at night, and she is coming! The great news is that Jesus is also coming to once and forevermore save the day! He is returning to remind us that His victory on Calvary was and continues to be absolute! His return to earth will not only bring about the destruction of the “great harlot”, but will usher in a kingdom of unsurpassed, universal peace. Her days are numbered as are Satan’s! Praise be to God whose Son’s appearing we long for and love . . . He who says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” And we respond, “Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!”

Revelation Chapter 18

The Fall of Babylon!

Revelation 18:1

After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.

Some believe this is Christ, but he is not. This angel is like the last angel who was speaking to John in chapter 17. This chapter 18 angel shows up in a blaze of glory and illuminates the whole earth, probably because the fifth bowl judgment in chapter 16 sees the earth cast into darkness.

Revelation 18:2

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!”

Didn't this just happen in chapter 17? Yes, but not completely. In the previous chapter we saw the destruction of the great harlot, or the false religious system. Now, in chapter 18 we witness the destruction of the economic and political world system emanating out of the rebuilt city, the headquarters of the Antichrist, the great city of Babylon.

In actuality, what is being described in several chapters is the seventh angel pouring out his bowl. The seventh bowl judgment marks the return of Christ as the earth is utterly shaken! These events fulfill other prophecies:

Zechariah 14:1-9

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. ²For I will gather all the

nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

³Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. ⁴And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south.

⁵Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.

⁶It shall come to pass in that day that there will be no light; the lights will diminish. ⁷It shall be one day which is known to the LORD — neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen that it will be light.

⁸And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. ⁹And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — “The LORD is one,” and His name one.

The prophet Isaiah described the demise of Babylon as so utterly complete that there would remain no good life, only unclean birds and demons, a description worthy of Hell:

Isaiah 13:19-22

*And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.*

*²⁰It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from generation to generation;*

*Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
²¹But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,
And their houses will be full of owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
²²The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.
Her time is near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged.*

Revelation 18:3

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.”

This verse reiterates the spiritual drunkenness brought about by the false religious system, also adding reference to the sinful attraction of a corrupt world and its economic and political systems. Both will come to an abrupt end when Christ returns!

Revelation 18:4

And I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.

God calls His people to come out of the Babylonian world system and repent before He brings His total judgment on her. God has said this to His people in historic Babylon as well:

Isaiah 48:20

***Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this,
utter it to the end of the earth; Say, “The LORD has
redeemed His servant Jacob!”***

Jeremiah 50:8

*“Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans;
And be like the rams before the flocks.*

Revelation 18:5

For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

That “God has remembered” does not mean God has forgotten these unforgiven iniquities. It means simply that the time for judgment of them has come.

Revelation 18:6-7

Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. ⁷In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, ‘I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.’

The angel is petitioning God to carry out a principle of retaliation, remembering that vengeance belongs only to God!

Exodus 21:23-25

*23But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life,
24eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
25burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*

Romans 12:19

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

Her prideful and haughty spirit will crash and burn eternally with her!

Revelation 18:8

Therefore her plagues will come in one day — death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

As recorded in the book of Daniel, historic Babylon fell in one day when Belshazzar, King of the Chaldeans, was slain. Now as well, God sees no reason to delay even a day when the time comes for her destruction. Babylon will be utterly destroyed in one hour, cast down, never to be found again!

Revelation 18:9-10

”The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, ¹⁰standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’

The whole world has been divided into ten kingdoms ruled by ten kings who now are witnessing the destruction of the great city of Babylon, as well as all that she represents. They will watch and mourn from a safe distance (for the moment) as the world’s economic and political systems go down in flames. As they watch, they will be overcome with the fear at the sudden realization that their fate will be the same, and it is not far off! Verse 9 reiterates the speed in which judgment befalls Babylon stated in verse 8. In one hour judgment comes and that great city is utterly burned!

Revelation 18:11

And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

The businessmen and women of the unsaved world have grown accustomed to the amazing profits they have enjoyed while buying and selling in the Antichrist’s world. They

have accepted the mark of the beast necessary to buy and sell, and they have greatly prospered. Now they will mourn the loss of their great luxury. They will greatly mourn the lost opportunities to buy and sell their long list of worldly products.

Revelation 18:12-13

merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; ¹³and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.

Included are twenty-eight commodities, which interestingly include products of slavery. Just as in the days of old, it should not surprise us that in a world so completely enamored with luxurious living, human beings will be bought and sold by the rich and richer. The value of life will be measured by wealth, and those who have not will be greatly devalued. If you're thinking to yourself, "Well, that's happening now," certainly, you are correct. We already live in a world where a person's value has more to do with their financial and material gain than their character. But remember, in the tribulation period, the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn. This means there is no more spiritual restraint to convict mankind of their heinous actions against each other. Just imagine how much worse things would be right now if the Holy Spirit's influence were suddenly taken away!

Revelation 18:14

The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

All is gone forever, and so the wind has been taken from the sails of Babylon. That wind of fornication and self-

serving luxury will never blow again. Those who luxuriated in her will forever be adrift on the “lake of fire”!

Revelation 18:15

The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Just prior to ‘setting sail’ on that hellish sea, they will stand trembling on the shore! Hearing the weeping and wailing, they will be overcome with fear as they see their fate rolling toward them as a fiery tsunami!

Revelation 18: 16-19

...and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.’ Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’ ¹⁹”They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’

It is amazing that mankind will have become so deceived that, even as their luxury and wealth, disappear beneath the surface of that fiery sea, they will still cry out for that which has so deluded and entrapped them until they have been utterly destroyed with fire! Surely, her desolation will come swiftly, in one hour.

Revelation 18:20

“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

Now the angel turns his attention towards Heaven and cries out for all the inhabitants of Heaven to rejoice, for God has brought about His long-awaited vengeance!

Revelation 18:21

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.”

Jesus spoke out against one who causes others to sin using the imagery of a millstone as the instrument of their demise:

Matthew 18:6-7

“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

John is witness to the quick and violent destruction of the great city, Babylon. How is she brought down?

- We might answer in a way we can understand, such as a nuclear exchange that would bring a sudden end to this great city.
- Why not a supernatural means to the end? After all, God brought total destruction on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and He didn't rely on man's assistance. Right?

I don't think we should be so quick to take credit for helping God bring about His vengeance, do you? More importantly, it isn't the means by which destruction comes that's important, but rather the fact that it does come!

Revelation 18:22

The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

The culture of society at that time, will be utterly obliterated. What they perceive as “beauty” will all be destroyed. Any remnant of honorable trade, which may have survived from an earlier time, will altogether disappear. Life, as we know it now and as it will be known then, will be, no more at all!

Revelation 18:23a

The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore.

If there were ever a glimmer of hope in any human heart which served this insane society, that hope has now been completely extinguished.

Now we are left with three exclamation points as to the reasons for Babylon’s judgment:

EXCLAMATION POINT ONE:

Revelation 18:23b

For your merchants were the great men of the earth...

The old saying, “Absolute power corrupts absolutely,” will ring true all the way to the end. Will we ever learn? Apparently not. The Apostle James, speaks loudly and clearly of the abuses the prideful and arrogant rich dole out to the poor:

James 5:1-6

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you! ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. ⁴Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth ⁵You have lived on the earth in pleasure

and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. 'You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

EXCLAMATION POINT TWO:

Revelation 18:23c

...for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

The word “sorcery” comes from the Greek word pharmakeia from which we derive the English words “pharmacy” and “pharmaceuticals,” “Pharmakeia” referred to medicines, but later referred to mood-altering drugs and also to the occult and witchcraft. I believe that Babylon, in addition to other forms of organized crime, will be the world center for drug trafficking.

EXCLAMATION POINT THREE:

Revelation 18:24

And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

From the murder of Abel by his brother Cain to the multiplied millions murdered by the Antichrist, sinful man has been bent on destruction and murder. Sadly, most have been in the name of religion —ritually serving that roaring lion seeking whom he may devour! And now, Babylon goes down in flames with the blood of all mankind on her hands.

Revelation Chapter 19

Christ Comes Again!

Revelation 19:1

After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

“After these things...” After what things? After the seven Seal judgments, after the seven Trumpet judgments, and after the seven Bowl judgments, after the destruction of the “great harlot” — the world’s false religious system — and after the total destruction of Babylon — that great city of wickedness — the world has been decimated! Now, John is given a new and glorious vision which opens with an innumerable multitude of holy angels shouting, “Alleluia!” in an awe-inspiring heavenly choir. This mega choir of holy angels sings praises to God and gives Him all of His due glory, honor and power as they sing of God’s wonderful salvation given to His children!

Revelation 19:2

For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.”

There is so much celebration in Heaven as the heavenly hosts speak to John of God’s amazing righteousness. God has judged the great harlot and has at last avenged the blood of those whom she shed!

Revelation 6:10

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O

Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

THEIR TIME HAS FINALLY COME!

Revelation 19:3

Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!”

A second time they cry “Alleluia!” Why? They rejoice over the complete and eternal destruction of the “great harlot”. Her religion was so demented and so evil that she murdered rather than comforted. She condemned rather than set free. She replaced love with evil hate, and she made sure the “Long Black Train” to Hell was always loaded to capacity! And now those who cried out to God for vengeance will see the smoke of her torment rise up from the pit of Hell forever! Alleluia!

Revelation 19:4

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”

Joining this myriad of holy angels during this incredible choir of praise and worship are some familiar players: the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures. As you may recall, the twenty-four elders represent the redeemed Church and the four living creatures are a high-ranking caste of angels known as cherubim.

Revelation 19:5

Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!”

Likely this is another angel calling out to the other groups of worshipers to join together to “Praise our God!” He is crying out to all who serve and fear God with the animation of one leading a pre-game rally or government takeover.

Revelation 19:6-7

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

Picture it: There's one voice added to another until a great multitude of voices becomes an almost-deafening sound, a thundering chorus of worship celebrating the coming of the marriage of the Lamb!

HIS BRIDE IS READY....

Matthew 25:10

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

...AND SHE IS WED TO THE BRIDEGROOM!

Revelation 19:8

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The bride of Christ is clothed in the righteous acts of the saints. She is the saints! She is the redeemed Church . . . the twenty-four elders . . . the body of Christ!

Revelation 19:9

Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

WOW! BEATITUDES IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION!

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near...

Revelation 14:13

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...

Revelation 16:15

Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame...

Revelation 19:9

Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power...

Revelation 22:7

Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book...

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who do His commandments...

Those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb are a special group indeed. Not special due to personal achievements or great works, but they are the wise ones who are prepared with oil in their lamps when the Bridegroom arrives. These are the ones to whom the doors will be opened. The importance of these verses is found in the statement: "These are the true sayings of God"!

Revelation 19:10

And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant,

and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

John is so moved and overcome with the spirit of worship that he falls at the feet of the angel. I wish I could see this scene when it takes place: John falls at the angel's feet and the angel says, "Come on! Don't worship me! You must worship God and only God!" John snaps back into the reality of the moment, and here's the best part... John stands there next to the angel — two servants of God, an angel and a preacher — and together they worship the one and only true living God!

Revelation 19:11

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

In Revelation chapter four, John saw a door standing open in Heaven. In my mind's eye, I envision a doorway only large enough for John to pass through and access Heaven. Here in chapter nineteen, however, Heaven is fully opened — not a simple doorway, but a grand opening, as if the entire side of Heaven facing earth has been removed! This opening is large enough to allow Jesus and all of the armies of Heaven to come in a grand processional out of Heaven to earth!

The first to make an appearance is a rider on a white horse. There was also a rider on a white horse in Revelation 6:2. Although the riders are very different — in chapter six, the Antichrist, and here, Jesus Christ — in both cases, the white horse symbolizes victory.

Jesus is called "Faithful and True" because He has been faithfully true to His Word, demonstrated by His

long anticipated return. He has now come to bring a final judgment upon His enemies!

Revelation 19:12

His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

His eyes are the eyes of a discerning God — all seeing, all knowing, and penetrating to the uttermost depths of every human heart!

Having “a name written that no one knew” is evidence that we simply cannot know all there is to know about Him. Perhaps He will reveal this mystery to us at some point, either at His second coming, or sometime afterward. Certainly, this anomaly leaves something more to the imagination to those who “love His appearing” (cf. 2 Timothy 4:8)!

Revelation 19:13

He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

This blood is not His own. Rather, it is the blood of His righteous slaughter of His enemy!

Isaiah 63:1-6

Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah,

This One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? —

“I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

²Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

³I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me.

For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury;

Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have

stained all My robes.

⁴For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come.

⁵I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold;

Therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me.

⁶I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, Made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.”

HIS NAME IS THE WORD OF GOD.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the Father's expression of unconditional love to all mankind!

Revelation 19:14

And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

It may surprise you to learn who has been inducted into the “armies” of Heaven. There are four groups. They are the:

1. Testament saints;
2. Redeemed Church or, New Testament saints;
3. Tribulation saints; and
4. Multitudes of holy angels.

These four groups ride in together behind Jesus in what I affectionately refer to as the greatest day of horseback rid-

ing in all the ages! They come, not to fight, but to peacefully observe what Jesus has come to accomplish.

The saints being clothed in “fine linen, white and clean” refers to their robes that have been “washed . . . in the blood of the Lamb” (cf. Revelation 7:14).)

Revelation 19:15

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

In Ephesians chapter six we learned about the Sword of the Spirit, which is the only offensive article found in the armor of God. The Greek word for “sword” is machaira. It is a short sword used in hand-to-hand combat and symbolizes the spoken word of God, or Rhema, the Greek word for “word”. Here, we see a large sword protruding from the Lord’s mouth which may be known as rhomphaia or mega machaira, a very large weapon. The imagery here clearly refers to Christ’s judicial utterances which He employs to speak judgment on His enemies.

Jesus will rule in the Millennial Kingdom with a “rod of iron” because there will still be the presence of sin during those one thousand years. Although He will share His authority with believers during this period of time, His rule will not tolerate sin. He will judge sin quickly and without question. Gone are the days where the guilty will argue their way out of a just judgment and punishment for their sins.

**THE “WINEPRESS OF . . . GOD’S WRATH”
SYMBOLIZES GOD’S TOTAL AND FINAL
JUDGMENT.**

Revelation 14:19-20

So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

Revelation 19:16

And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:

**KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.**

He has a name that only He knows, He is also called the Word of God, and now a third name. It appears He is wearing a banner or sash that hangs from His robe to His thigh which reads “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”.

John has now witnessed this great army in heaven to be led by Jesus Christ Himself, all mounted on horses and ready to ride. Now, back to earth...

Revelation 19:17-18

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, ¹⁸that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.”

Here is another angel with an incredible announcement — an announcement not to John or the peoples of the earth, but to every bird of the air. The angel invites them to gather together over the valley of Har Megiddo and prepare themselves for the supper of the great God.

Revelation 19:19

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

Here they are! The Antichrist, the ten kings of the world, more than two hundred million from the East, and many others from surrounding nations have all come to wage war against Christ and Israel. For some, they have come to wage war against Antichrist. But as they look up, it is all but over. Jesus returns and with a word from His mouth, it is finished . . . again!

Jesus cried out from the cross, “It is finished!” when He conquered sin for us by His death.

Now, He conquers His enemy Satan when He returns as conquering King. With one word, He defeats the world’s political and false religious systems as He crushes the Antichrist, the false prophet, and all who have gathered at the valley of Har Megiddo to wage war against Him!

After one thousand years, Jesus will complete the victory when Satan is loosed from his prison and Jesus casts him into the “lake of fire”, finishing at last!

Revelation 19:20

Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Both the beast and his false prophet — both mere men with no powers of their own — are cast into the lake of fire, which was created for Satan and his angels (cf. Matthew 25:41). Satan is not among these two as he no longer controls

the beast or the Antichrist. God has something else in mind for him, as we shall see in chapter twenty.

Revelation 19:21

And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Jesus opens His mouth and utters a word that secures His victory, and the birds of the air enjoy a supper of the great God! Amen and amen!

1 week — n. 1 a period of seven (7) days. 2 occasionally in Bible chronology, a week of years or 7 years, seventy weeks, or 490 years as in Daniel's prophecy in chapter 9.



SECTION VII

THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM

Revelation Chapter 20

The Great White Throne Judgment

Revelation 20:1

Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

The identity of this angel, although not disclosed, is most likely the Archangel Michael. He is surely the same angel from Revelation 9:1 who was given the key to open the bottomless pit at the Fifth Trumpet Judgment.

The angel also comes with a “great chain” — an understatement, considering who must be bound with it — and for what length of time this unfortunate prisoner must be bound!

Revelation 20:2

He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;

At last! The answer to so many prayers, Satan has finally been arrested and locked away. This event takes place just after Jesus’ second coming and just before Jesus sets up His thousand-year kingdom on earth.

Revelation 20:3

and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The thought of a “bottomless pit” has always both frightened and intrigued me. It speaks of falling forever!

Although Satan will be bound for one thousand years, the term “bottomless” conjures up the idea of eternity.

“The term ‘bottomless’ is used seven times in the book of Revelation: 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1, 3. It is the Greek word *abussos*, and is used as a noun denoting the abyss, ‘bottomless pit’. It describes an immeasurable depth, the underworld, the lower regions, the abyss of Sheol. It also refers to the lower regions as the abode of demons, out of which they can be let loose; (Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).”

Satan is bound and a seal is set at the entrance. The seal of God will absolutely lock Satan away until God lets him out. He will be unable to influence the world as long as he remains in his prison cell. What this means to those humans living in the Millennial Kingdom who have not yet been glorified, or those who have not yet accepted Christ, is that sin will be mostly restricted and very limited in its ability to influence the hearts of people. It is almost unbelievable to think that there will be those who will be born to the believers who entered the Millennial Kingdom from the Tribulation without dying, who will know Christ as their ruler and yet still reject Him as Lord and Savior!

Satan will be released at the end of the thousand years and he will cause trouble once again. Those who have rejected Christ as Savior will be led astray and into sin, but Christ will quickly squelch their rebellion. Satan’s short rebellion may only be weeks or a few months, but Jesus will effortlessly stop him and all of his followers — be they human or demon — and cast them into the lake of fire where the smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever (cf. Revelation 14:11)!

Revelation 20:4

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

There are many ideas as to who these two groups of people are. I believe they are the raptured Church and the Tribulation saints.

- Each has been promised that they would rule and reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.
- Each has been given authority to help keep the peace during the thousand-year reign. You could say that they have all been deputized by Christ to enforce righteousness as Christ rules with a rod of iron!

Revelation 20:5

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

The “rest of the dead”, or the unbelieving dead, will remain in Hades (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol), the abode of the lost dead. They not enjoy the first resurrection to eternal life with God. Rather, they will be resurrected to judgment and eternal damnation, everlasting separation from God! This is the “second death” referred to in Revelation 2:11 and subsequent texts.

Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

There's a saying: If you are only born once, you will die twice; but if you are born twice —born again — you shall only die once.

Hebrews 9:27-28a

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.

The great privilege of ruling and reigning with Him throughout the Millennial Kingdom is a great reward for all who have been faithful to Jesus Christ, either before the Rapture, or during the Tribulation period!

Revelation 20:7-9

Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.

The millennium is complete, Jesus is about to finish a third and final victory, thereby finalizing the saga of sin and Satan. His first victory was on the cross, wherein He won for us a way back to the Father in Heaven by becoming sin in our place! His second victory was at Armageddon, where He claimed a decisive victory over Satan and cast him into the abyss as a prisoner of war, his final fate yet to be fulfilled in one thousand years.

Satan is now released from his prison of one thousand years. A vast number of people have been born during the past thousand years, all descendants of those believers who survived the Tribulation and lived on into the Millennial Kingdom. Although sin has been restricted, and its influence

diminished, there are still people who, unbelievably, reject Jesus as their King and Savior! Their number is “as the sand of the sea”. Satan will gather them together for a final battle and he will have only one goal in mind: destroy Jesus the Christ!

The names “Gog” and “Magog” may be confusing to some who think this battle is the same as the battle prophesied in Ezekiel 38 & 39. I believe God allowed the use of the same names, in reference to both prophesied events, because both evoke a deceptive satanic spirit. However, the battle spoken of in Revelation 20:8 is different than the battle prophesied in Ezekiel 38 & 39. I personally believe the battle of Gog and Magog prophesied by Ezekiel will take place just before the temple is defiled at the mid-point of the Tribulation, rather than at the second coming of Christ, or the end of the Millennium.

God intervenes and protects Israel, just as He has intervened in other attacks:

- Gog and Magog: God destroys the armies on the mountains of Israel with fire and brimstone from Heaven.
- Armageddon: Christ destroys the attacking forces with the Word of His mouth.
- End of the Millennium: Christ crushes the satanic rebellion with fire from Heaven and casts Satan into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

A fitting end — or better yet, a fitting beginning for Satan’s eternal punishment! Of all the lost souls who must spend eternity in this hellish nightmare of torment and eternal isolation, the lake of fire was not created for mankind. No. It was created for Satan and his fallen angels (cf. Matthew 25:41). How truly sad that people continue to reject the truth of Jesus Christ for the lie of Satan!

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”

Revelation 20:11

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

This is truly an amazing event! I’m not at all sure if we can even begin imagine the scene that is taking place, except by looking ahead to the outcome John describes in chapter 21:1. He will write about “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away”. It seems that Jesus is “un-creating” everything. All that has ever been tainted by the presence of sin has to go! Out with the old and tainted and in with the new and pure!

Revelation 20:12

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

In verse five of this chapter, we read that the rest of the dead would not live again till the thousand years were finished. Remember, eventually everybody will be

resurrected — some to eternal life in Heaven and some to eternal judgment and damnation. The resurrection we see in verse twelve is the latter.

Daniel 7:9-10

*“I watched till thrones were put in place,
And the Ancient of Days was seated;
His garment was white as snow,
And the hair of His head was like pure wool.
His throne was a fiery flame,
Its wheels a burning fire;
¹⁰A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was seated,
And the books were opened.*

The “books” that were opened contain a record of everything every unsaved person ever thought, said or did. The unsaved will be judged according to the things written in the books. The other book is the Book of Life; it is opened to confirm that the person’s name is not written in it. When a person receives Jesus as their Lord and Savior, all of their sins are forgiven and their name is written in the Book of Life!

Revelation 20:13

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.

Not one of the unsaved will be able to escape their appointment with the Lord as their Judge. Understand that every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (cf. Philippians 2:10-11)! There will be so many lost souls who will be resurrected to eternal damnation, many like the rich man in Jesus’ parable who pleaded with

Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brothers of the reality of Hell (cf. Luke 16:19-31).

Revelation 20:14

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

There will no longer be any death and there will be no more need for Hades — the place of disembodied spirits of the wicked. The lake of fire will ultimately be the final and eternal place for every association of sin.

Revelation 20:15

And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

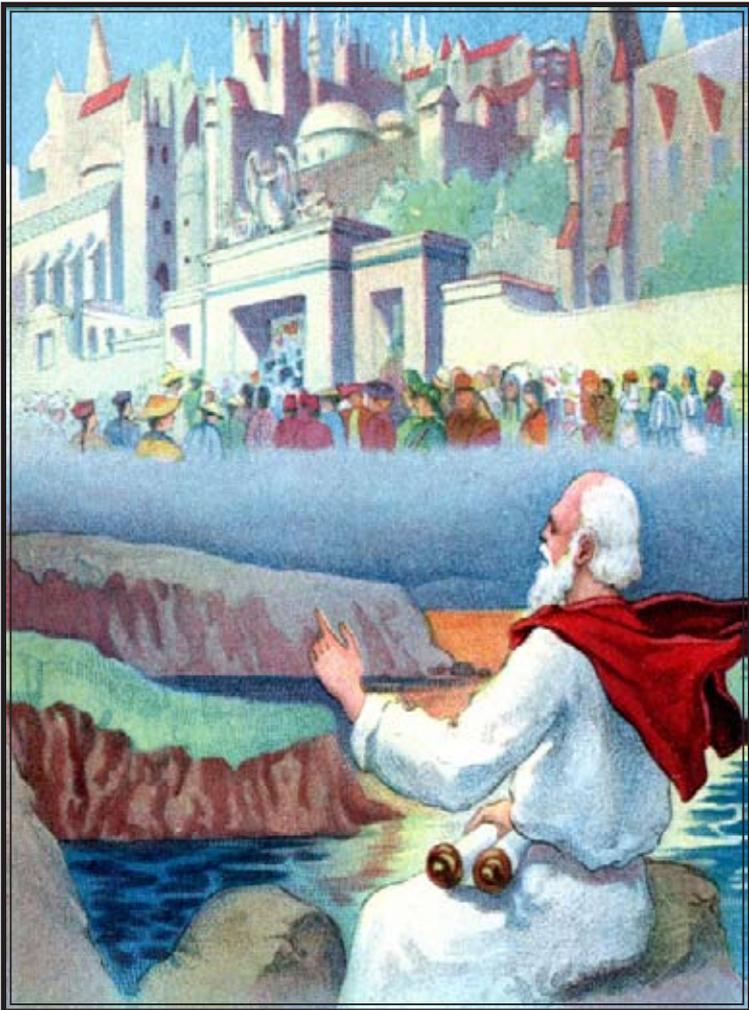
Although the lake of fire was created for the devil and his angels, it will be the final place of unrest for all who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior!

Matthew 25:41

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels...’”

John 14:6

Jesus answered [Thomas], “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.



SECTION VIII
THE ETERNAL AGE

Revelation Chapter 21

I Make All Things New!

Revelation 21:1

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

The thought of a new heaven and a new earth intrigues me, but the thought of no sea puzzles me. I believe “no more sea” will be consistent with God’s original creation of “Paradise”, the Garden of Eden. God’s Word tells us that before there was ever rain, the ground was watered by a mist which came up from the earth.

Genesis 2:4-6

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; ⁶but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

Apparently, the hydrological cycle¹, which is facilitated by the oceans, is no longer needed. God’s new paradise may be a more lush, more beautiful tropical environment than has ever been imagined, a planet kept luxurious by a mist from the ground. What a wonderful possibility!

ANOTHER THOUGHT IS INSPIRED BY THE CREATION RECORD:

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

²The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

In his work on “Dispensational Truth”, Clarence Larkin describes the earth in Genesis 1:2 as the “Chaotic Earth”, a world of disorder. Verse 2, of course, describes the earth as “without form”, void, dark, and covered with water. The vast ocean, which apparently covers this entire formless world, appears dark and foreboding, this being in stark contrast with the newly created world of Revelation 21. ¶

In another reference to the seas, Revelation 20:13 lists three locations which must release the lost dead that are in them: the sea, Death and Hades. It is well known that many lives have been tragically lost in the depths of the sea. I recently watched a terrifying documentary which revealed many deadly properties of the sea, something I couldn't imagine existing in the new earth!

Revelation 21:2

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

This is an amazing event! When Jesus told the Disciples He was going away to prepare a place for us, He wasn't kidding!

John 14:1-4

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ²In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

This “New Jerusalem” is huge! We’ll look at some detailed dimensions later as we move through this chapter, but for now just understand that this city is roughly fifteen hundred miles (2414 kilometers) in every direction, including up! How will God recreate Heaven and Earth so as to accommodate a structure fifteen hundred miles high? When you consider our current atmosphere and the saying, “The sky’s the limit,” we are referring to the 99.99997% of the atmosphere that by mass is less than 62 miles (100 kilometers) high My point is that the New Jerusalem would not fit very well on this old earth!

The city descends to the new earth as a bride adorned for her husband — in other words, the Bride of Christ. All the redeemed from all the ages are in this great city. This event looks much like the third part of the three parts of a Jewish wedding:

1. The first part is the betrothal when God pledged to Christ a redeemed people.
2. The second was a time of celebration as the bride was presented. following the Rapture of the Church.
3. Finally, the third part is the actual consummation as the bride meets Christ at the Eternal Kingdom. This began at the “marriage supper of the Lamb” (cf. Revelation 19:9) and continues through the millennial reign.

Revelation 21:3

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

At last! The long-awaited proclamation that the tabernacle, the tent, the dwelling place of God is once again with man! From this moment forward, God will dwell among

His people and He shall be their only God. It is so exciting to know that God's promises all point to this amazing point in time — the end of time and the beginning of an eternity with our God! Amen!

Zechariah 2:10

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst,” says the LORD.

Ezekiel 37:27

My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Jeremiah 30:22

“You shall be My people, and I will be your God.”

HIS PROMISES GO ON AND ON, AND HE KEEPS EVERY ONE!

Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

This is a promise that many in the world view as wishful thinking. It is not simply wishful thinking to understand that God has promised to restore mankind back to what He originally created us to be: eternally perfect in Paradise! God will glorify our new bodies at the Rapture/Resurrection, and then finish the promise when He creates His/our new Heaven and new Earth. Sin and every single unredeemed person and thing that has ever been tainted by it will be gone, cast into the lake of fire! All things will be made new. In an eternal paradise, there will be perfect love, perfect relationships, and perfect bodies that will live in perfect health. Our perfect bodies will never suffer any sickness or injury. Our perfect

minds will never be lost in the darkness of depression or other mental illness. We will simply be perfect, created in the true image of God!

Revelation 21:5

Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” And He said to me, “Write, for these words are true and faithful.”

“He who sat on the throne”, of course, is none other than Almighty God. He was described in Revelation 4:9-11 and 20:11 as the One “who sits on the throne”, “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away”.

John must have been rocked to the core! He is witness to God Himself declaring that He has made all things new! Can you even begin to imagine the awesome privilege that God has bestowed on John at that moment? Here we have an ever-increasing crescendo of activity — when God brings His plan of the ages to glorious completion — and John is there to witness it firsthand! Wow!! God commands John to pick up his pencil and write, !! I can almost hear John as he is snapped back into focus, “Yes Sir!”

Revelation 21:6-7

And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.”

Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman about this water in the Gospel of John:

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water

springing up into everlasting life.”

John 7:37-38

On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.”

The phrase “living water” surely symbolizes eternal life for all who thirst after it.

Psalms 42:1-2

As the deer pants for the water brooks,

So pants my soul for You, O God.

²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

Just as I have stated earlier in this study, the person who overcomes is one who places his/her faith in Jesus Christ.

1 John 5:4-5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith.

⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

We have inherited all that God has promised: eternal life in Heaven, a perfect, eternal body, and all that is mentioned in Revelation 21:4. There is a perfect and imperishable inheritance for us in Heaven that cannot be put into words. The most wonderful of all is that the Father will be our God and we shall be His children forever!

1 Peter 1:4-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁵to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Revelation 21:6-7

presented the promises of God given to the faithful overcomers. However, the following verse also contains a promise, but for those who hated the truth and rejected Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Revelation 21:8

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

The “second death” is for the “rest of the dead” spoken of in Revelation 20:5. All who have hated the Son of God are judged at the “Great White Throne of Judgment and cast into the lake of fire!!”

If you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior . . . If you have not received forgiveness of sin because you have not believed the words of Jesus spoken in the gospel records, then the verse above pertains to you! Please consider the following truth spoken by Jesus:

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Revelation 21:9

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

I believe this is the same angel as mentioned in chapter 17. There is a sharp contrast between the destruction of the “great harlot” in chapter 17 and the arrival of the great city, the holy Jerusalem, which is now descending out of Heaven. The angel in chapter 17 carried John away in the spirit into the wilderness to view the “great harlot”. The same angel (I

believe) now carries John away in the spirit to a great and high mountain to view the great city.

Verse 9 introduces the Lamb's wife, the bride of Christ. Who is she? There have been several false teachings which have suggested that Jesus was married. A popular book-made-movie called the "DaVinci Code" put forth one such teaching. The fact is that Jesus was never married during His earthly ministry. However, Jesus does finally consummate His marriage to His bride as we see in chapter 21. His bride? You and I! All believers! The body of Christ! The Church! You and I, brothers and sisters, You and I!

Revelation 21:10-11

10And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

What a glorious vision! As John witnesses this great and glorious city descending from Heaven, he must surely be mesmerized by the glory of God shining out of her, giving the city the appearance of a perfect gem, radiant and crystal clear.

Revelation 21:12-14

12Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.14Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

In the past, a "great and high wall" surrounding a city would have been there to protect the city from being invaded

by enemy forces. In this case, the city needs no protection, for all evil and enemy forces have been cut down and cast into the lake of fire. This great wall, which is anchored to twelve foundations, displays the magnificence of the place Jesus went to prepare for us.

John 14:1-4

1"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. 4And where I go you know, and the way you know."

The great wall with its twelve gates and twelve foundations will forever celebrate all whom God loves and redeemed throughout the Old and New Testaments. The names of the twelve tribes of Israel from the Old Testament are on the twelve gates, and the names of the twelve Apostles of Jesus from the New Testament are on the twelve foundations.

Revelation 21:15-16

¹⁵And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal.

SIDEBAR: A reed was used as a measuring device. A standard reed was about six cubits in length. Since one cubit is approximately 18 inches in length, then a standard six-cubit reed would be about 8.9 feet (2.7 meters) long

Also, there is a royal cubit, which is approximately 21 inches in length. It is reasonable to say that, since the angel gave John a golden reed, it could have been six royal cubits in length, or 10.5 feet (3.2 meters) long. These are just some interesting facts as we study the verse. Since a furlong

equals approximately 62.85 reeds, or 660 feet, then 12,000 furlongs would equal 1500 miles (214 kilometers). Thus, the city measured 1,500 miles (214 kilometers) in its length, width, and height.

It is a commonly held belief that the actual city is shaped like a cube measuring 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles by 1,500 miles — a very large city!

There is a prophecy found in the book of Isaiah that lends itself to a very interesting theory put forth by Dr. Patrick Heron, author of “The Nephilim and the Pyramid of the Apocalypse”, regarding the actual shape of this great city. Let’s take a look at this most intriguing prophecy.

Isaiah 19:19

In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the LORD at its border.

The verse presents a bit of a riddle. The terms “altar” and “pillar” refer to the same thing. An altar is typically for sacrifice; however, when used with the term “pillar”, assume that the altar is an altar, or monument, of worship. The riddle is; the altar is said to be an “altar to the LORD” and lies in the midst (center) of the land of Egypt, as well as on its border. The answer to this riddle is found in an understanding of ancient geography. Ancient Egypt was divided into two sections — Upper and Lower Egypt. The great pyramid of Giza is the only monument that fits the mystery of this prophecy because it sits precisely on this ancient border. In modern-day geography, the border no longer exists, so the pyramid now sits in the midst, or center, of the land of Egypt — just as Isaiah prophesied.

What makes this prophecy all the more interesting is the discovery of certain hieroglyphics found in the Edfu Temple in Upper Egypt. Ancient Egypt preserved complex beliefs

regarding the creation of the world in the Edfu building texts carved in the walls of the Edfu Temple. The hieroglyphics depict giant builder gods which put forth the plans for all future pyramids. A closer look at these “giant builder gods” might suggest a connection with the giants (nephilim) found in Genesis and Numbers:

Genesis 6:1-4

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ³And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” ⁴There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

Numbers 13:33

“There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

The word “giant” also translates nephilim. It is suggested by the hieroglyphic record in the Edfu Temple that these builder gods, or nephilim, led the construction of the great pyramid of Giza, the largest and oldest of the three pyramids in the Giza Necropolis which borders what is now El Giza, Egypt. It is the oldest of the “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World”. According to the hieroglyphics carved in the wall of the Edfu Temple, these giants built this great pyramid as an altar to the LORD. This was possibly a replica, or counterfeit, of the altar in Heaven, yet constructed for their own evil purposes. Of course, we have no way of knowing if there is a pyramid-shaped altar in Heaven.

What is even more interesting is that the only other geometric model that fits the criteria of the glorious New Jerusalem, other than a cube, is a pyramid.

Leviticus 26:30

I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you.

It would seem, after all, the cube may be God's choice as a shape for His eternal city as it was for His Holy of Holies.

1 Kings 6:19-20

And he prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. ²⁰The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar.

As fascinating as this theory may be, we must remember that God is not, nor will He ever be, the author of confusion. The Tower of Babel was a monument to man's own greatness; yet, it became a monument of confusion. Its purpose was to glorify man and evil. For centuries the great pyramids of Egypt have been a source of mystical intrigue. Obviously, if a race of fallen angels, or demons, were the "builder gods" behind the construction of a wonder given to so much pagan worship, mystical intrigue and false teachings, God would be wholly opposed to such an idol as this!

Revelation 21:17-18

Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. ¹⁸The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.

Most likely, this measurement was of the wall's thickness which, according to the measurement of 144 cubits, would be seventy-two yards or 65.8 meters. That is one thick wall! Again, let us observe that the extremely fortified wall is not

to protect the city from invading forces, because there will be none. I believe the extreme size of the wall is to glorify the magnificence of the one true Builder God Almighty!

The translucent nature of the materials used in the construction of the wall — as well as the city itself — would cause the city and wall to shine with the wonderful glory of God!

Revelation 21:19-20

The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

In my introduction of this study on the book of Revelation, I wrote these words in an attempt to describe what John sees: "...he is taken into heaven to witness, firsthand, God's plan for the future of the entire human race as it unfolds in brilliant, dazzling works of art that only God Himself could create and put into motion! He is dazzled by imagery so wonderful, so awesome, that mere words cannot describe in full glorious detail all that his eyes see but his mind cannot begin to comprehend!"

John's attention is now turned to the foundations of the wall surrounding the city. There are, of course, twelve foundations, each one bearing the names of each of the twelve Apostles of Jesus. Each of the foundations is studded with beautiful gems, eight of which were found mounted on the high priest's breast piece in the Old Testament.

Exodus 28:15-20

"You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall

make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, you shall make it. ¹⁶It shall be doubled into a square: a span shall be its length, and a span shall be its width. ¹⁷And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; ¹⁸the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; ¹⁹the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; ²⁰and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings.”

The foundations will be as brilliant and beautiful as the wall which they support. What a wonderful metaphor of the brilliant beauty of the One who is the Foundation and Cornerstone of our faith!

Revelation 21:21

The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

Ever hear of the “Pearly Gates”? How appropriate that Jesus used a single pearl to frame each of the twelve entrances to the city. As you know, a pearl is formed when the flesh of the oyster has become wounded by some foreign object, perhaps a grain of sand. Just as the oyster surrounds the irritant and, in so doing, creates a beautiful pearl, Jesus surrounds us with His cleansing and healing blood, making us into something beautiful!

These gigantic pearls may very well be the most fantastic of all the gems and stones found within the foundations and wall of the city. They may reach upwards to one thousand five hundred miles, creating a magnificent sight as one would stand at the wall entrance to this great city.

The streets of gold remind me of the story of a man who insisted on packing his suitcases with bricks of gold before he died. He had the idea that he could bring his great

wealth with him to Heaven. As he arrived at the magnificent “pearly gates”, he was informed by an angel that he would not be allowed to bring his suitcases into the city with him. After very much protest he was asked to open the suitcases, exposing all of his gold. Puzzled, the angel asked the man; “Why are you bringing pavement?”

Heaven will hold every treasure we could ever hope for or imagine. There is nothing in this world, with the exception of relationships, that we would ever want to bring from our lives on earth. God will surely give us the desires of our hearts!

Revelation 21:22-23

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

There will be no temple because God and the Lamb are the temple! We will forever be in the presence of God. The glory of God will be a constant presence and we shall exist eternally in them. The universe, as we know it, will be completely different. There will be no need for the greater light to light the day (the sun), or the lesser light to light the night (the moon), for there will be only day, always lit by the brilliant glory of God!! There will be no more need for a moon to control the tides, for there will be no more sea, thus no more tides to draw us under.

Revelation 21:24

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it.

The “nations” translates peoples. There shall no longer be the governments of men, but all people, Gentile and Jew as one, walking in the same light! The idea of the “kings of

the earth bringing their glory and honor into it” emphasizes the absolute equality in heaven. No more two- or three-class systems! No more rich or poor, for all will be rich in God’s great glory! All will bring honor to God because they believed!

Revelation 21:25-26

25Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.

There will be no need to ever shut the gates. (In fact, I’m not even sure if there are doors to shut!) for there will be no night or evil of the night to shut out.

Revelation 21:27

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

All that is evil, all that defiles, all that is an abomination, or all that lies, have all been cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. I have no idea where this place will exist — outer darkness I suppose — but I do know that we will be where God is, and the burning lake, or outer darkness, will never ever find us!

Because our names have been written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, we have an eternal place in Heaven while all unredeemed sinners and everything that has ever been tainted by sin, have been cast into the lake of fire, never to be seen again!

Revelation Chapter 22

The Eternal Age

Revelation 22:1

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The water that flows in this river is like no river that has ever flowed on the old earth. With no sea, there will be no rainfall to supply a river as we know it. This is literally the “living water” Jesus spoke of to the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well. It freely flows directly from God’s throne, symbolizing the continuous flow of eternal life!

Revelation 22:2

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

One can picture a river gently flowing through the new city of Jerusalem with streets of gold on either side as well as throughout this paradise. There is an abundance of these trees along the banks of the river as well as in the middle of the streets of gold. I imagine a beautiful and peaceful scene as one strolls down the street, or along the bank of the river, eating of the unlimited supply and abundant variety of heavenly fruits.

The tree of life was mentioned twice in Genesis. Man was able to eat of its fruit until, in disobedience, he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. After man had originally

sinned, the right to eat of the tree of life was revoked so man would not live forever in sin.

Genesis 1:1-2:9

And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:22

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"

John mentions that the tree of life bears twelve fruits, one for each month. The problem in interpreting his statement lies in the fact that there is now no passage of time!. I believe John is speaking metaphorically when he states that there will be twelve individual fruits, one for each month. I interpret his metaphor of the twelve fruits means there will be an amazing variety of fruit, an abundance to entice the tastes of all. As for his symbolism of the twelve months, this must mean that the fruit will never be depleted., There will be an abundant variety, enough for all, all the time!

I believe another symbolic statement was that the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. The question is: Why, at this point, do the nations still require healing? The word for "healing" in this case is therapeua, or "therapeutic". I am taken back to my childhood where I grew up surrounded by eucalyptus trees. Even as a child, I was aware of the calming effect of those leaves. I now know they held therapeutic properties. I imagine that the trees of life, which will fill this heavenly city, will truly be good for food and pleasing to the eye, as well as all of our other senses. These trees will promote an eternal sense of well-being and peace.

Revelation 22:3-4

And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.

The curse which originated in the Garden of Eden — when in disobedience to God, Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil — will be totally lifted with the final judgment of the lost and the creation of the new heaven and new earth. God's plan from the time of original sin was to send His son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be a sacrifice for sin. The process, from Genesis 3:15 to present times has taken about six thousand years. It will take at least one thousand years longer before we reach the time written of in Revelation 22:3, when the curse will be completely resolved.

With the lifting of the curse, redeemed man will live eternally in the presence of the whole tri-union of God. We will see His face and not die!

Exodus 33:20

But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

The fact that God writes His Name on our foreheads is a sign of ownership. He declares to His whole creation that we are His!

Psalms 100:3

*Know that the LORD, He is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*

Revelation 22:5

There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.

As we learned in chapter 21, the glory of God will light His whole creation, as it was on the first day of the creation record when He announced, “Let there be light!” There will be no need for a sun or a moon, which according to the creation record, God created on the fourth day of creation.

Genesis 1:3-5

Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

Genesis 1:16-19

Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. ¹⁷God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. ¹⁹So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

We shall reign with Him in the eternal kingdom . . . eternally. This amazing privilege is not the same as the time of our millennial reign with Christ. The eternal kingdom will follow the millennial reign.

Revelation 1:5-6

To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, ⁶and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 3:21

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 22:6

Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true.” And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place.

“These words are faithful and true.” The angel echoes the words spoken to John in Revelation 21:5 by God Himself. “Faithful and True” is also one of the many names ascribed to Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:11

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True...

“The Lord God of the holy prophets...” John attests that it is the one true God, the God who inspired the prophets to write the Old and New Testaments, who now is inspiring him to write the full and complete testimony of Jesus Christ, the Revelation of Jesus Christ!

Revelation 1:1-2

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.

The angel was sent by God to tell His servant all that will take place through the end of God’s plan of the ages.

Revelation 22:7

“Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

The One speaking now is not the angel, but Jesus Christ. He declares the sixth of seven “Revelation Beatitudes”. This sixth beatitude sounds much like the first:

Revelation 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

In both cases, we are taught that the prophecy is to be read, understood and kept close to our hearts. In the first, we are told the time is near, but there is a season of tribulation to come first. In the sixth, Jesus says He is coming quickly, or that the time is very near!

Revelation 22:8-9

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

Now John tells us a bit of his own feelings and testimony. He is overwhelmed to the point of falling before this messenger and worshiping him. There was a similar scene in Matthew, chapter 17, where Peter, James, and John witnessed Jesus in His glorified state conversing with Moses and Elijah. Peter expressed the desire to build altars to all three, worshiping Moses and Elijah along with Jesus. When God spoke to them and said that they should listen only to Jesus, they fell on their faces in overwhelming fear!

We are often warned not to listen to false prophets, and not to be carried to and fro on the winds every doctrine. It is relatively easy to be taken off track and look to the wrong person or thing. Even the Apostle John found himself worshiping the messenger rather than the Lord. The angel strongly rebukes this action and redirects John’s attention and worship back to the One True and Faithful Lord!

Revelation 22:10

And he said to me, “Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand.

It is so exciting to me that, although the prophecies found in the books of Daniel and Revelation have not been clearly understood or taught for many centuries, in the past few decades there is greater understanding and these books are now being taught regularly. For such a time as this, the last days of the end times, God is revealing His final plans for the ages!

Revelation 22:11

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still.”

I see these words as a confirmation of mankind’s rejection or acceptance of the Gospel. If one hears the truth and denies it, they will determine their place in eternity. Conversely, if one hears the truth and responds to the Holy Spirit and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, they also determine their place in eternity. It is the simplest of truths, but sadly for some, the most difficult of decisions...!

Revelation 22:12

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to everyone according to his work.”

This verse certainly stirs the proverbial pot of controversy. Are we saved by works or by grace? There are two passages that answer the question completely.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

In this passage of Scripture, we learn that works don't really play a part in our salvation. This is the grace of God, His gift to us, which we neither earn nor deserve. However, good works are a big part of our Christian walk. God has ordained that we serve Him by the works He has predetermined for us. So, why is Jesus apparently placing a priority on our works? Let's look at the second passage of Scripture which I believe closes the argument:

1 Corinthians 3:9-15

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. ¹⁰According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. ¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Here we see that there are two types of work that we will give ourselves to:

- The first is the works of this world. These are the self-serving endeavors that feed our selfish ambitions — the lust of our eyes, the lust of our flesh, and the pride of our lives.
- The other type of work is kingdom work — the things we do for others. We often refer to these works as the “Great Commission”. The good works referred to in

1 Corinthians are included in the “Great Commission”, as are the good works found in the gospel of Matthew:

Matthew 25:35-40

”for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.” ³⁷Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, “Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?” ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

We may also observe in 1 Corinthians 3:15 that our commission, or omission, of kingdom work does not affect whether or not we are “saved” — if in fact, we have a genuine profession of faith and in fact, have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The verse says the person “will suffer loss”, but it also promises that the one whose work will be burned up is will still be saved!

It is correct to assume that if you are even at this piteous state of inactivity, salvation is not a question. However, what will it mean to “suffer loss”? I believe it is simply this: During your Christian walk, if you ignored or missed opportunities to perform the works God prepared for you, you will experience great disappointment when you face Jesus and realize you did not do all you could for Him. You may not receive a crown, and you may even shed a tear, but God promises to wipe away every tear! What really matters is what you did with the Son of God!

Jesus is coming quickly! He could return at any time! When He comes to rapture His Church, there will be a time known as the Bema Seat² of judgment. This is when Christ

will judge each Christian's work and reward crowns to those who were obedient to God's Word:

Ephesians 2:10

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Revelation 22:13

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

Jesus is making a definitive declaration of His deity! In chapter one, verse eight, Jesus makes the same claim, yet He includes “The Almighty” at the end of the verse. I guess the best word on this subject is found in 1 John:

1 John 5:7

For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

In some other versions of the Bible, verse 14 reads: “Blessed are those who wash their robes...” So, to “do His commandments”, or to “wash their robes” means the same thing. It means those who have been obedient to the Gospel and have been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb will have the right to enter through the gates of the city, as well as eat from the tree of life. Only those with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will go to heaven!

Revelation 22:15

But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

This is a sobering list of sins that God considers abominations of the fallen human condition. If left unforgiven, if the sinner's heart is not changed through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, these sinners will be left outside of the city, not lurking in the shadows, but cast into the lake of fire!

- Dogs were considered unclean animals. So, the terms “dogs”, “dog head”, or “dead dog” are used here as terms of reproach, or of humiliation.
- The word “sorcerers” refers to those involved in occult activities. Since the word also translates to the Greek pharmakeia, or the English word “pharmacy”, the implication has to do with the inappropriate use of drugs, legal or illegal.
- The “sexually immoral” are those involved in pornography, prostitution, homosexuality, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, and any other illicit sexual activities.
- The term “murderers” may refer only to those who murder another, or it may refer to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:22 when He spoke about being angry with another and holding onto offense. He said that person “shall be in danger of hell fire”.)
- Idolaters. are also mentioned. Obviously, this refers to those who worship false gods. But before we dismiss this too quickly, let's think about what God might consider “false gods” to be. What about our jobs? If we spend all of our time trying to earn money instead of focusing on our relationship with God, does that make our job a “false god”? What about the computer, email, social networking, etc.? How much time do we spend on those compared to the time we spend in God's Word or prayer or fellowship with other saints? Might God consider those to be “false gods”? The fact is that anything

that comes before Him is a “false god”. We must always be on the alert to allowing anything or anyone to be more important or urgent in our day-to-day lives.

This also includes adultery and other forms of spousal abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, etc..

- And finally, “whoever loves and practices lies” refers to those who habitually lie.

It’s important to remember that none of the above-mentioned sins are unforgivable. Obviously, God is referring to the habitual, chronic sins of unrepentant sinners who have rejected Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Revelation 22:16

“I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.”

Jesus sent His angel to John to testify to the seven churches of Asia Minor which represent the whole Church and the “Church Age”. Jesus teaches that He is the source of David. Jesus will rule from the throne of David, a promise given to David in 2 Samuel, chapter 7. Jesus also indicates that He came to us in the line of David.

Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star! His arrival was heralded by a bright star in the sky which the wise men, or kings, followed to find and worship Him. He is the brightest star in the morning sky that announces the new day! Jesus is our New Day today and everyday!

Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires let him take the water of life freely.

**ALL WHO THIRST FOR HIM . . . WHO DESIRE HIM
. . . WHO LONG FOR HIS COMING . . . WILL HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE WITH HIM!**

Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

This warning has my attention! As I have studied the book of Revelation, my heart is to share its meaning correctly. Jesus' warning should cause everyone to seek God's direction and the Holy Spirit's teaching that we may rightly divide God's Word — in Revelation and every other book of the Bible. To add or subtract from it would be the ministry of a false teacher, or a false prophet.

Revelation 22:20

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Since sin first befell mankind, God has promised a way back to Him through a coming Savior. Jesus, the Son of God, came to us as one of us, to die for the forgiveness of sin. He conquered sin and death through His death on the cross. Having returned to Heaven, mankind has been eagerly awaiting His return for more than two thousand years! I believe His return is very soon, perhaps today!

REVELATION 22:21

THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL. AMEN.

1 hydrologic cycle (also known as the water cycle or H₂O cycle) — the journey water takes as it circulates from land or bodies of water to the atmosphere and back again. It's the continuous movement of water on, above, and below the surface of the earth. The water changes states

among liquid, vapor (steam), and solid (ice) at various places in the water cycle.

2 Bema Seat — The concept of the Bema Seat — or Judgment Seat of Christ (not to be confused with the Great White Throne Judgment) — comes from the ancient Olympics, where a judge would sit on the Bema Seat at the finish line. The judge's purpose was to determine what position the runners came in — first, second, and so on — and then to give out the appropriate rewards. That is the imagery behind what we commonly call the Bema Seat.