

The Book of Revelation

GBPR 671

Intro

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Revelation has been called the most enigmatic book of the Bible. Believers have read it and some have been told not to read it, for they would not understand it. Many have read and studied it and come to different conclusions about its truth about the future. It is of Satan's devices to get people to shun this Book. Obviously, he does not want us to know of his imprisonment nor of his final end, the Lake of Fire. So it is that he casts doubt on Genesis by planting in men's minds the idea of evolution and seeks to have Revelation neglected.

We must realize that without the Book of Revelation, the canon of Scripture would be incomplete. The future is revealed in it, answering questions man has had since the time of Christ. Questions about end-time activity (eschatology) abound in the hearts of many. Speculation about the Rapture, Great Tribulation, Antichrist, and Millennium has run from one end of thinking to another. But the Book of Revelation fulfills the desire to know as it has been given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation is the Book of reintegration. The fact that humanity was separated from God by sin has been taken care of, but the finalization of the reconciliation has not yet happened. God has been and is to be in union with His creation. His number, seven, symbolizes the union and even the unity of God with His creation. God's number, three plus creations number, four equals seven, the number of totality. This is particularly important in a book such as the Apocalypse, for it is the Book of reintegration of God with His creation. Thus, in this Book, the number seven is of particular significance, with the number corresponding perfectly to the content of the Book, as well as expressing that content.

This Book affirms that Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church and of history. In the end it is "in Him" that all is recreated. What makes "the Kingdom has come unto you" and its being "in your midst" is not the fact that Christ is Lord, but the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection, that is, the historicity of Christ, the conjunction of Jesus and the Christ. On this axis is the rest organized. So the Apocalypse is oriented around the Incarnation of chapters eleven and twelve. It is of this terrestrial life the Gospels tell us. The Apocalypse is not another Gospel, relating other events of the life of Jesus, but we must not fail to comprehend the effects of His life and death concerning heaven. There is the darkness during the death of Jesus, the opening of tombs which cast out their dead. Paul tells us of the triumphant Christ over all the powers, thrones and dominions. He speaks of the decision which liberated us completely, the nailing of the condemnation against man to His cross. Yet the Apocalypse speaks of above, no longer except by allusion of the earthly life of Jesus. The Divine Mystery is the theme of the Revelation. Chapters nine and fourteen teach us that in reality, the terrestrial events provoke the celestial events. What happens in the Divine world is defined, determined, and provoked by the venture of Jesus on earth. From all evidence of the

Book, everything is oriented around the terrestrial crucifixion and resurrection on earth. Jesus, liberty for man Himself, determines upon earth what unfolds in heaven. The God of glory delivered Himself to mankind in the form of Jesus, keeping nothing of His power back. In unbelievable fragility He risked all in the moment and person of Jesus. The little child born in Bethlehem was born “crucified.” We must not consider the life of Jesus according to development of a normal life, for in the Apocalypse, “in heaven” the crucifixion comes first, and the Incarnation is defined by that.

The Apocalypse reverses completely the situation described by classical religions. In them, the “god” (of Chaldean religion, Egyptian, and Homeric) is seen in adventures, loving, hating, being jealous, making war, joining forces, experiencing fear, with the fallout being some slight impact on earth. According to these, the events of human history then are the reflections of “divine misadventure.” Israel had completely detached from this relation, coming to understand through the creation and God’s desire for man to be free from other men that He was indeed a liberator, because of His love for His creation. The Apocalypse goes even farther, it is what happens on earth, in human history, that becomes the source of what happens in heaven, in the world of powers and angels. History has become the affair of man in Israel, with the Apocalypse completing the begun in Genesis. The Apocalypse closes what Genesis opened. The crucifixion establishes a relation between the celestial and the terrestrial, but opposite to the other religions and mythologies. The Apocalypse therefore is completely different from other allegorical stories and imaginary deliriums of all the other apocalypses. It is not mythical because it is subordinated to a very definite history.

The Apocalypse is a Book of Hope. Hope is, when the human condition is without issue, when there is not, from the human point of view, any escape, no reasonable expectation of a positive result. It is the affirmation of “in spite of.” Hope is, in the face of death, that absurd affirmation of the reality of the resurrection. It is the affirmation of total risk, stepping forward into the void, the step of the bearers of the Ark crossing Jordan. It is in the desert of God’s silence, in the interval between faith and realization, the confirming of a promise already being fulfilled. When we have need of nothing, hope has no place. It is only in the interval of the already and the not yet that hope is situated. Job observed, “Nevertheless, my Redeemer liveth.” Jesus spoke from the cross, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” It was not in the question, but in the affirmation of God being His God that Hope was evident. Hope in the Apocalypse implies the total rejection of the confusion between the Kingdom of God and any kind of politico-social system. It demonstrates even incompatibility, which is the cataclysmic affirmation of the Apocalypse. The bearer of hope pronounces yes in the name of God, taking unheard of risk of speaking while God is silent. The witness, like the seer, actually engages God according to His promise. Faith participates in God’s “already done,” but hope participates in the real not concretely accomplished. It is the attestation of the last things in this present time. Hope affirms the impossible realized in a situation experienced as impossible by men, and it is this hope of the Apocalypse that supposes passage through judgment and the annihilation of the powers of seduction and aberration.

John the Beloved is the one who received the Revelation. He was one of the “sons of thunder,” the brother of James and the son of Zebedee. Besides the Gospel attributed to him, he also penned three Epistles. Visions were experienced by John, recording the hope of the Church and the renewal of Israel to her rightful place as God’s chosen people. During the reign of Domitian, early church fathers, such as Clement, Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian agreed with the conclusion that John was indeed the writer, though some had disagreed.

The series of visions began on the Isle of Patmos, where John had been exiled because of his testimony. Domitian was persecuting the Christians, and scholars conclude that about 95 A.D. were when the book was written. Patmos is little more than a rock, about 60 square miles in size, due west of Miletus, where Paul called the elders of Ephesus to meet him as he was traveling to Jerusalem, hoping to arrive by

Pentecost. Patmos was a prison camp, where the criminals of the empire labored to fashion materials for state and pagan buildings.

The “*Apokalupsis*” (Revelation) John received is the revealing of the glorified Christ. The Greek word translated as “revelation” is a combined word, “*apo*” meaning “from” and “*kalupto*” meaning “to remove the veil.” Thus we see that the visions of the Revelation show us the course and plan of the ages to come, beginning with the Great Tribulation to the Eternal Kingdom, when all things are turned back to the Father (1Co.15:28).

The Book is a symbolic Book, with more signs and symbols than any other Book of the Bible. The Book of Daniel is a forerunner to the Book of Revelation and should be understood in order to see what Revelation is all about. Daniel was told to “seal up” the words of his prophecy until the “time of the end,” that is, the end of the “times of the Gentiles” (Da.12: 4, 9). But, Good News, the writer of Revelation was told to “seal not” the sayings of the Book, for the “time is at hand” (Re.22: 10).

While the Epistle is written with seven (7) churches specifically mentioned as being in Asia Minor, it is to all the ages this Book is also written. These churches were where religious immorality had previously been established before the Gospel came there. Since there was also slavery and the persecution that the Roman Emperors were imposing, these churches had considerable problems to face. The message contained therein should have been of a comforting nature with the promises of God’s intervention.

Since Revelation is written in word pictures, we need some system of interpretation laid down, lest we go the way of many who have taken the words and skewed them to mean what they thought, rather than what the Lord intended. While the Book of Revelation is not a book that cannot be understood, we must clearly comprehend it with proper principles of interpretation in order to receive its benefit.

This means that we must follow some simple rules. First, we must not change the meaning of words of prophecy to something different from the words of history. Because it is prophecy does not make it mystical nor remove it from having a literal sense. There are types and metaphors used, but these are recognizable. For example, when Jesus said that we are “the light of the world,” He was not insinuating that our physical body is composed of light. He was simply speaking of our testimony in a dark world.

We must also not use spiritual or symbolic meanings when they are not called for. When the 6th seal was opened, the Scripture tells us that there was an earthquake (Re.6: 12-17). It would be wrong to call this the breakup of society, as some have taught. We must not seek to find hidden meanings in the words of Scripture, nor add to them what is not there. The same principle would apply to not seeking to find the numerical value of alphabetic letters to see if they total “666” nor take the letters “u.s.a.” out of Jerusalem so as to attribute something to the United States that has nothing to do with that nation.

Also, we must see clearly that prophecy can be understood. History written beforehand is what prophecy is, and it can be understood before it happens. (In fact, this Book is the summing up and consummation of all prophecy, the finality in prophecy until Jesus comes back. There has been no new revelation after this, contrary to some men’s words, such as Mohammed or Joseph Smith. This makes them imposters and false prophets.) We must give Scripture plain and literal meanings that God has given it, unless there is a double meaning to be understood and it is clear this is what God is saying. The Law of Double Reference

may be involved in some cases. This is where two distinct persons are involved in a Scripture. It is clear that although God talks to the serpent in Genesis chapter three, He is really talking to Satan (Ge.3: 14-15). When the kings of Tyre and Babylon are mentioned, it is referring to them, as well as to Satan who is behind them (Is.14: 12-14; Ezk.28: 12-17).

We must also understand that although two events may be in succeeding verses of Scripture, there can be hundreds and even thousands of years in between them. This is like being on a mountain top and looking to the next one. You do not see the valleys and streams in between, but they are there. This is called the Law of Prophetic Perspective.

When a person is seen as a prophet or is prophesying, we must understand that they not only foretell, but also forth-tell. The prophets of old spoke for God about immediate situations, declaring God's message to the people. This includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Not so with the Book of Revelation, for most of it is future, with events being both prophesied and revealed to us.

We will look at the Book of Revelation from three aspects, "Those things that were," "those things that are," and "those things that will be" (Re.1: 19). Thus we will see things that have already happened which is the past, things that are now happening, the present, and things that will happen, eschatology, the future. John spent 3-1/2 years walking with Jesus, eating, talking, watching Him, and now he sees Him as the Resurrected and Glorified Christ. The phrase in verse one, "... to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" could be better translated as "which when they happen will happen in rapid succession." There will not be hundreds of years of unfolding of the future things.

The second part of what we will look at is this Glorified Christ in the midst of the churches which were in existence at the time of the vision. While these commendations and corrections were for those churches, we see the same things in existence today and what will be until the Church is taken out of this world.

The last part, the future, is the message of the majority of the Book. It is a prophetic message to us for God's program "after these things" ("*meta tauta*" – literally "after these things"). Thus we are looking at what is after the Church Age. We could also break this Book down to see: 1) How the Lord deals with the Church on earth (Rev.chp.1-3); 2) The Church & the Old Testament saints with God in Heaven (Rev.chp.4-5); 3) How God deals with Israel as she is oppressed by the Gentile nations (Rev.chp.6-19); 4) How God relates to all three (Church, Jews, & Gentiles) in the future (Rev.20-22).

We could also say that there are two parallel themes in the Book, 1) Who Jesus is, 2) Where we are going. There are seven "sevens" in the Book. These include:

A. The Sevens

1. The Seven Churches (Re.2: 1-3: 22)
2. The Seven Seals (Re.6: 1-8: 5)
3. The Seven Trumpets (Re.8: 7-11: 19)
4. The Seven Personages (Re.12: 1-13: 18)
5. The Seven Vials (Re.15: 1-16: 21)
6. The Seven Dooms (Re.17: 1-20: 15)

7. The Seven New Things (Re.21: 1-22: 5)

In between the series of “sevens” and in some of the parts of a series are parenthetical statements and intervals.

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Part 01: Chapter 01

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PART I, THINGS THOU HAST SEEN

I. THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

A. Introduction

While this Book has been called the “Revelation to St. John the Divine,” the reality is that it is the revelation of Jesus Christ. We should be careful to not give “inspiration” to what men have written about it, but to what God says. The words “revelation” and “apocalypse” are synonymous, meaning to uncover or unveil. Revelation is a Book that reveals, not conceals. There is blessing to those who read it (Re.1: 3). This unveiling is not as much the Person of Christ, as it is the unveiling of those events that will precede and accompany His Second Advent. Certainly though, we can see His High Priestly and Kingly glory in Revelation, as well as the fact of a great Trinitarian affirmation (V.4-6), though there was not as yet a Trinitarian dogmatic theology. The Father is characterized as Life, Being: the One alone who fully IS. It is he who enters into relationship with man. The Seven Spirits are the totality of the Spirit, equivalent to the Holy Spirit. All that which is Spirit depends upon God; this Spirit is characterized by plurality, the diversity of His actions, interventions, and by the relation between the Creator and His creation, implying the number seven, which we will talk about later. The Son, Jesus Christ, is characterized as the Faithful Witness, which is to say Martyr, accepting death to render an absolute, irreversible testimony to God, while also being raised and glorious.

We should remember that which Jesus said about Himself in Matthew, “All things are delivered unto Me by the Father . . . to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him” (Mt.11: 27). Jesus makes revelation of the mysteries of God’s Word to the believer (1Co.2: 14). Jesus is the key to the understanding of the Book. While Jesus told His disciples that the “. . . day nor hour knoweth no man . . .” concerning His words about Jerusalem (Mk.13: 1-31), the Father, after His ascension gave Him the information about what the disciples asked and it was delivered before the end of the first century to John. So we see that Jesus is the Author while John is the “amanuensis” or scribe who wrote down what was revealed to him. Revelation differs from all other books, by its subject matter and in the majesty and sublimity of its language, which is in harmony with its contents. This reveals Divine authorship. This Book is the only one which Jesus gives His endorsement and affixes His signature (Re.22: 16). An “angel” delivered the message which is the reason we see a refusal to be worshipped (Re.22: 8-9). The Alpha and Omega is the designation of the beginning and end; Jesus Christ stood at the beginning of days and He is the one who closes His story (history). He holds the course of history in His hands, and is the witness of God for man.

The word “shortly” (V.1) is used in the same sense Paul used it in Romans, where it is an eschatological statement, promising the bruising of Satan’s head (Ro.16: 20). John saw what would “certainly” come to pass though it was 19 centuries or so future.

The first of the seven Beatitudes in Revelation is in verse 3. This Beatitude emphasizes the importance of the Word of God, that is, the reading, hearing, and keeping of the prophecy. The second Beatitude of Revelation speaks of the blessings of eternal life to those who die in the Lord (Re.14: 13). In the third Beatitude, the point is made of the blessed status of the ones who watch and keep their garments clean in anticipation of the Lord’s return (Re.16: 15). The fourth speaks of the delight of those who enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Re.19: 9). The fifth Beatitude talks of how blessed those are who are delivered from death and participate in the first resurrection (Re.20: 6). The sixth Beatitude tells of the blessing of obedience to the Word of God (Re.22: 7), while the last one talks about the blessing and result of washing one’s robes, having access to the Tree of Life, and the assurance of being sustained eternally (Re.22: 14).

B. John’s Salutation

The seven churches of Asia are whom John is addressing in this vision. These are not on the continent of Asia, but in Asia Minor, and only the western end of it bordering on the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. While this Book is written to those seven churches, there were likely many others there, of which we know Colosse, Hierapolis, and Troas (Co.1: 2; Co.4: 13; Ac.20: 6-7). These seven were chosen as typical of the character of the Church in that day, as well as down through the centuries, up to today. They also have been said to represent seven church periods, though we can see churches that are indicative of all seven representative churches today.

It is evident that John had a personal relationship with the believers in these churches. He speaks to them about the One who “. . . is, and which was, and which is to come . . .”, that is, the eternal God the Father, who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable in being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Our God, we understand then to be “I Am was, I Am is, I Am will be” (He.13: 8). Then John adds “and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.” There are not seven spirits of God, but a seven-fold Spirit. The word “seven” here denotes spiritual perfection and completion. Hebrew *gematria* (study of numbers to give special meaning), says that this is the number of Divine completion, due to the creation being finished in seven days. This spoken of by John describes the fullness of the Spirit of God in Jesus, the fullness of Holy Spirit (Co.2: 7). The seven qualities of the Spirit of God are named in Isaiah. They are qualities of the Lord, and are namely: 1) of the Lord; 2) of wisdom; 3) of understanding; 4) of counsel; 5) of might; 6) of knowledge; 7) of fear of the Lord (Is.11: 2).

The grace that was coming to those seven churches was also from Jesus Christ, who proved Himself to be the Faithful Witness, the first begotten from the dead (Co.1: 15-18; 1Co.15: 20-23), and the Prince (ruler) as in the Book of Daniel (Da.10: 13-20). Jesus has repeatedly demonstrated His devotion to us. We are so weak and finite, so lacking and yet we are the delight of His heart. What no man could do, Christ finished a work for us and all mankind, in that He loves us, He loosed us, and He lifted us.

In this description of Jesus, we see that no one who had gone on before, not Enoch, Elijah, Moses, nor any other had received a glorified body through resurrection before Christ. John goes on to describe three things about this one called Jesus: 1) He loves us; 2) He washed us from our sins in His own blood; 3) He has made us kings and priests unto our God.

In this three-fold office of Christ, we see that He is Prophet, Priest, and King. As the “faithful witness” He is a Prophet. As the “first begotten from the dead He is the Priest, carrying His own blood into the True Temple in heaven to sprinkle on the mercy seat. As the Prince of the kings of the earth, He has now taken the Throne, and is King. He demonstrates the Word as Prophet, the Lamb as the Priest, and Lion as God’s King.

In the statements that He “loved us . . . , washed us . . . ,” and “made us . . . ,” we can see that:

1. It is a confirmation of God’s Word, for from front to back the Book shows God not to be what some have claimed, one who creates problems and sickness in this world. No bad thing does God send us, not sorrow, not sickness, not evil things. Satan does, but not God
2. The blood of Christ cleanses us from all spiritual sin. It is He and He alone that can make us fit to enter the Father’s presence; 3) He regenerated us and is recreating us. We became new creations in Christ (2Co.5: 17), and we will become pillars in the Temple of God as we live for, love and worship Him (R.8: 14-23).

Jesus makes His first declaration in the Book of Revelation by referring to Himself as the Alpha and the Omega (1st and last letters of the Greek alphabet). Jesus was saying He was (and is) everything from A to Z.

Jesus is part of the Triune Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father and the Holy Ghost. John simply credits the Trinity as being the source of all he is writing down. He confirms to us that he is only an instrument writing down what he is instructed to write (Re.1: 11).

C. Revelation's Theme

Christ's Second Coming is the main theme of Revelation. This is His appearance visibly by all humanity, not the rapture of the Church (not mentioned specifically in the Book). The Seals, Trumpets, and Vials are preparatory to His return. This return is spoken of three times (1: 7; 11: 15-18; 22: 20), and is vividly described using the word "see." Here the word see means "to gaze or stare with wide-open eyes at something remarkable, or something absolutely horrifying to the beholder, producing fear, hatred, or reverence." He is coming crowned as He is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Jews will look upon Him whom they have pierced. Thus we can take the view that the Book of Revelation deals mostly with events after the "rapture." There will be great grief at this event, for the one whom they "pierced" was rejected by their ancestors and by themselves in principle for 20 centuries (Jn.1: 11-12). Zechariah described it as a time of bitterness (Ze.12: 9-14). Not only will it be cause wailing among the Jews, but of all men as they realize He is not coming as Savior, but as Judge. This world of agnostics, atheists, infidels, and Christ-rejecters will finally weep the tears they should have shed at their own sins when the Holy Spirit convicted them.

To wail is to "beat the breast in grief." Many will see Him then for whom He really is. Jesus claims equality with the Father in eternity by the statement that He is Alpha and Omega; that is, equal in state of being, power, and Lordship (1: 4; 11: 17; 16: 7; 19: 6). We see here the title of God as Creator ("*pantokrator*"), and it expresses His relationship to all of creation and His power over all His works. It has been translated as "almighty" and "omnipotent."

D. John the Prophet

John gives a brief account of his relationship with the seven churches of Asia, as a fellow partaker of the persecution that was coming from the Roman emperors. He had been sent to the Isle of Patmos, for the "*. . . Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ...*" It was for the "Word" and the "witness" that John was a threat to society. The Patmos experience will come to all who purpose to live a Spirit-filled life. John found himself in conflict with the world of his day and was banished to this lonely island which was little more than a rock. Certainly it was lonely there, but he was learning more about the Lord as he worshiped the Lord on "His Day." Being quickened by the Spirit on the Lord's Day (Mt.28: 1; Jn.20: 19), he was worshipping the Lord.

The Church probably used the word “Lord’s Day” in protest to Caesar worship. “The Augustean Day” was a day dedicated to honor Caesar worship. Under the Old Covenant, the Jews worshiped on Saturday. However, with the New Covenant, the believers now worshiped on Sunday, the “Lord’s Day” or the day of His resurrection. While the Ten Commandments were valid under the Old Covenant, Jesus called for a new commitment, giving greater and fuller understanding in the expression of compliance to love in relationships (Mk.12: 29-31), which 9/10 of the Ten spoke of. Only the commandment concerning the day of worship did not come over to the New Covenant (Co.2: 14-17). The Ordinances Christi nailed to His cross and blotted out with His blood included that keeping of the old Sabbath Day. We are not judged by holy days and Sabbaths according to Scripture. We can worship every day. In fact, it is not sufficient to keep only one day while not living for the Lord the other six (Ga.2: 20). We are to allow Him to live through us every day. John’s worship was interrupted by a voice “. . . as of a trumpet . . .” “instructing him to write to the seven churches.

E. Vision of Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ was the One John turned to see. Here His title is “Son of Man” (used eighty five [85] times in Scripture). When it is used to refer to Christ, the definite article is always used. Yet in the Old Testament it is used without the definite article (over 100 times). This denotes the “Last Adam” who took the place of the first Adam over the works of God toward the human race. Though Satan had gained the dominion, Jesus came and redeemed us and did what the first Adam should have done.

We see the position of Christ as being in the midst of the seven churches, of which He is the Head (Ep.1: 20-23; 5: 21-32). While they were not the New Testament ideal, Christ knew well what was occurring and how they were responding. Candlesticks here would be better translated as “lamp stands.” This would correspond to the “menorah” of modern Israel. The lamp-stand is filled with oil and is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Without oil, it may be beautiful, but will remain dark. So it is with the well organized and mechanically perfect church that has no Spirit power.

There is no symbolism in the things we see about Christ, but there are three symbols here: 1) candlesticks, 2) stars, 3) sword. We will deal with these later. There are eight things we should note about the Lord here (V.13-16).

1. Christ is clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. This is the vestment of the priest for the sacrifice of expiation, while the girdle of gold is a royal emblem.

2. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow (Da.7: 9; 10: 5-6). This whiteness is the mark of the Word of God.

3. His eyes were as a flame of fire (He.4: 12-13). The glance of the eyes of fire is the sign of the light that penetrates and discloses everything, penetrating to the bottom of the human heart.

4. His feet were like as unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace (Da.10:6). The brass or bronze is the sign of power and eternity.

5. His voice was as the sound of many waters (Ps.chp.29; Ezk.1: 24; 43: 2; Je.25: 30; Re.19: 6).
6. He had in His right hand seven stars (Ps.17: 7; 20: 6; Is.41: 10).
7. Out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword (Re.2: 12; Ep.6: 17; 2Th.2: 8; He.4: 12). This sword is the Word that separates, divides, and judges. This brings together the signs of authority and of the Word, with the identification being on the plane of, "Behold the Man" (Jn.19: 5).
8. His countenance was as the sun shining in His strength (1Ti.6: 16; Da.10: 6). While His sight is unbearable and provokes prostration of John, He says, "Write what you see . . ." It is a command to bring the direct revelation to men who are new creations (2Co.5: 17).

While Jesus is now a High Priest in heaven, John does not see Him engaged in High Priestly work. He is clothed in a High Priest's garment, but there was no miter on His head, or a Kingly crown. In this appearance He appears more of a judge. The girdle about the chest (paps) and not around His waist indicates it is between His High Priestly work and before His assuming His Kingly Office. The girdle or sash around the breasts and over the shoulder is an insignia of the Magisterial Office.

Jesus hair like snow, or wool, corresponds with the English judges and corresponds to Daniel's vision (Da.7: 9). All judgment has been committed to the Son by the Father (Jn.5: 22). This white hair was symbolic of His antiquity, to His Patriarchal dignity, not to age, for He never grows old. It reflects on wisdom, experience, and His deserving of respect because of His character. This description of His hair reiterates the sinlessness and purity of the Lord.

Jesus eyes burned with an omniscient flame. These eyes read the innermost thoughts of men. Even hardened soldiers would avert their eyes before His penetrating gaze. As He sits as Judge of all men, nothing will be withheld, but all will be open and naked before His eyes. The fires of Judgment will examine the daily living of every person. His feet, like brass burned in the furnace, will tread out the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Re.19: 15). Brass here is symbolically used to convey the idea of judgment, as is true in verse fifteen also. His voice was like the thunder of water cascading over a falls, drowning out every protest of any man who foolishly rejected His offer of salvation. While the criminal fears the judges words of his guilt, that is but a whisper compared to the Son of Man who in the Day of Judgment will pronounce to those who did not believe, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Mt.25: 41).

The seven stars in Jesus right hand are the messengers or ministers of the seven churches. They derived their power and authority from Him, He holds them, and no one can pluck them from His hand. He is the One who puts in office, and He is the only One who should remove them. None can deliver them from His power if they should prove false or unfaithful to Him, just as no one can harm them if they are loyal and true.

His mouth had a sharp two-edged sword going out of it. The Greek words translated as such are "*distomos*." They literally mean, "two-mouthed word." This sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, which is quick and powerful (He.4: 12). The Holy Spirit alone wields this sword. This is the sword of justice of the "white horse rider" (Re.19: 11-15). It is for protection of His people and destruction of the enemy. As

started in Matthew, through the Book of Revelation, so the word of God will be revealed as the ultimate weapon.

The countenance of the Lord was like the sun shining in its strength. On the Mount of Transfiguration Christ's face did shine as the sun (Mt.17: 2). In the New Jerusalem, there will be no need for a sun, for the Lamb is the light in it (Re.21: 23). Malachi calls Him the "Sun of Righteousness" (Ma.4: 2).

The statement of "Fear not" is bound up in the fact that Christ is alive, not dead. While His death was the point of departure, the decisive moment, yet His resurrection brings such hope to us. There is nothing to fear, for He is alive, and because He lives, we shall live with Him also (2Co.13: 4). Death and its kingdom all belongs to Him who holds it. The whole Apocalypse can be summed up in, "Fear not."

This vision had an effect upon John. It was fresh and new, for he had seen even the miracles Jesus did, but now there was a fear that came upon John as He was in the presence of the Son of God. Jesus is alive and has all authority. He conquered death, indicated by Hades which generally refers to the realm of the dead.

Click [Modules](#) to return to the module list or click [Quiz 2](#) to take the quiz for this unit.

Part 02: Chapter 01

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

PART II – THE THINGS WHICH ARE

I. THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCHES

Immediately following John's vision of the Lord and hearing His directions, the messages start that were given to each of the specific churches of Asia Minor. The Church is a section of society; the history of the Church is presented in the general history of men. The Revelation is conveying to us that there is a relationship of the Lord to His Church. It is His presence in the Church that dominates the whole of human reality. The Lord is not Himself present in this history, for it is the Church which participates in history. However, the Church would be nothing more than an ideology or sociological component of society if she were not bound up in Her Lord. Christ is Lord over all of history, but in a different manner with general history, as is obvious.

All the letters are constructed with a specific designation of the Lord of the Church, a body, and a conclusion. The conclusion contains a summons to combat with a promise of victory and affirmation of the necessity of the Spirit. The titles of Jesus at the head of each churches message, except for the seventh, gives a reminder of one of the attributes of the Son of Man described in chapter one.

For Ephesus, He is described as the one who holds the seven stars, walking among the lamp-stands. For Smyrna, it is the First and Last, who was dead and is alive. For Pergamum, it is the One with the sharp sword. For Thyatira, it is the One whose eyes are a flaming fire. For Sardis, it is the One who has the seven stars. For Philadelphia, it is the One who holds the key of David, opening and shutting, who is faithful and true. For Laodicea, the title is not in reference to chapter one, but the proclamation that Jesus is the faithful and true witness. So, Christ is not in heaven, but in the earth, acting upon and acting by His Church's request. In His acting, it is to judge and even destroy if necessary (2: 5), punishing certain ones (2: 16, 22), judging uniquely by His Word which separates what is living from dead (2: 12), and transmitting His own life to them.

At the conclusion of each letter there is a promise and warning. The warning reminds the church that judgment is exercised constantly upon that church. The history of the Church is the history of judgments executed by God, even as upon His people, Israel. God always warns before judging, which is the role of the prophets. God places man in a combat situation, but tells the church that the victory is already won. It is by receiving the assistance of the Word of God that a person engages in and wins in each combat situation. It is first of all a spiritual victory, which will then be inscribed on all human forms. It is a victory won on our level, going towards eternal life, communion with God, victory over death, lordship and victory over the destructive powers, and in all cases the affirmation of the triumph of life.

We should understand that a universal application of the messages to the churches should be used today, for conditions of the seven churches described continues to exist in churches of this day and will apparently exist as long as the Church is on this earth. God addresses each church with a special message, for all these churches are put into question, some by temptation, others, by persecution. While we can see certain aspects of the Laodicean church in this age, we must remember that where we live has something to do with what we see. While the local church condition may be cool here, it may be red-hot and on fire in a city or village on the other side of the world.

Those who contend for seven church ages from these messages can see several things about it. For instance, at the close of the first century, the leaven of "false doctrine" was at work in the churches. The churches are thus given in the order named, for the peculiar characteristic of that church applied to the period of church history to which it is assigned. Yet we must not forget that the characteristic that was distinct to that age did not disappear with the passing of that age, but continued on through the church ages. The visible church then increases in imperfections until it ends in open apostasy.

These letters could be taken as personal admonitions. Many personal pronouns are used in them, indicating a rather direct message for "*He that hath an ear . . .*" (Re.2: 17), and as in "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*" (Re.2: 29). Another way we can look at these messages is from a practical standpoint. Each message has tucked into it some pertinent doctrine, both for churches and individuals. They are not relics of the past, but applicable to Christians of every generation. Bible doctrines are for our personal lives, bringing change in us.

We can see that there are several things spoken of in the messages to the churches. There is commendation, complaint, exhortation, possible judgment, and promises. There were only two churches that did not receive a complaint or threatened judgment, Smyrna and Philadelphia. Also, we see that only

one did not receive a commendation, Laodicea. To be sure, there was likely enjoyment over the compliments given to the church as the letter was read, and likely a bit of rankling at the criticism. Jesus was in authority over them, so His words of remonstrance were as sharp as His words of praise were sweet.

We should also note that in each salutation to a church, there is a reference to some characteristic of the Son of Man as described in chapter one. Since chapter four contains a vision of the Glorified Church with the Lord, after it is caught up (1Th.4: 13-17), we see now the second division of the Book, the “things which are,” inclusive of chapters two and three.

However we might look at the messages to the Seven Churches, we must remember that there are local diversities which are evoked by the names of the churches being addressed. This is seen today in parishes or geographical places. Also there are doctrinal diversities (denominations) which are noted in the letters. We must remember that the Church is composed of various elements and we should not be troubled by all of this. Each separate church has a part of the truth, a part of virtue, a part of light, and each has a special vocation with the Lord, a unique relationship. In this, we see that all are represented symbolically the lamp-stands. There is no manifestation of Divine light outside of the Church. This must certainly be why the revelation is addressed to the Church, for it is the determining factor in history. God has chosen to have His Light shine in the Church, being borne by the church. If the Church today is diversified, if she is indeed the Lamp-stand, she is still in the hands of the Lord. She may be diversified, but she is also unified in that He holds her entirely in His hand.

A. Letter to Ephesus – The Backslidden Church

Ephesus sat on the Cayster River, on a major trade route, with a commercial site and cosmopolitan flair. It contained one of the Seven (some say eight) Wonders of the World, the temple of Artemis (Diana). Worship of Artemis was shameless and vile, with prostitution and mutilation in its rituals. Destruction came to the city and temple in 252 A.D. According to Halley’s, the “candlestick” has been removed. Paul, Timothy, and Apollos were among its past pastors. It had been spiritually power-packed and without flaw theologically, yet problems had come. Only by the people in the pew keeping their eyes on the Lord will the church not fall, no matter the power from the pulpit. It was a terrible insult to the pastor to know that his noble efforts, in leading his people are falling short, because their lives were not as productive and holy as they should. Paul gave timely advice to this church (Ac.20: 28-30). Paul’s warning was to feed the flock, to watch for false doctrine entering the church, and to make sure that any internal strife would likely bring a breach in the fellowship as pretenders of the faith struggled to gain positions of leadership.

The outline of the letter to Ephesus is:

1. Salutation
2. Commendation

3. Complaint

4. Warning

5. Praise

6. Promise

This church would seem irreproachable, being a church of works, capable of perseverance; one that was enduring persecution and watching over the moral life of her members and its doctrine. This is the sight of men in judgment. Yet we see the church at Ephesus had a problem, for she had left her “first love.” Christ admonishes them to remember from where they have fallen and repent and do the first works, lest He remove their candlestick. The first works were the fruit of her first love, of the joy and enthusiasm of the discovery of love. She had lost her spontaneity of relationship with the Lord. Jesus said He had “somewhat against them.” Many Christians have done and today do this, letting go and relaxing. They had become cold and flat. They had an institutionalized Christianity, exact theological understanding, rigorous, and moral, but ceasing to live by the impulsion of a force ever new. (This does not mean that an exact theological understanding causes the love of God to disappear) Excellent works that are done outside this love count for nothing. The forgetfulness of love is so dangerous that they were in danger of having their lamp-stand removed. They were a church apparently alive but in reality empty. A marvelous promise is to those who follow His admonition. They will get to “. . . eat of the Tree of Life . . . “

The Lord’s warning gave great significance to Ephesus. The Ephesians should hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes” which should mimic the Lord for he also hated their deeds. While there is a Divine difference in positions within the local church, it is because of God’s distribution of gifts and His calling to office, not to talent or charisma. The Nicolaitanes wanted their ego to be satisfied because of the status of a “ministry.” These are Paul’s “wolves” (Ac.20: 29). They were not a sect, but a party in the church who wanted to establish a priestly order, thus to model the church after the Old Testament order of Priests, Levites, and common people. The very name, “Nicolaitanes” describes this. “*Nico*” means “to conquer or overthrow” and “*laos*” means “*laity*.” This process of establishing Clergy, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, and Popes started the dogma of “Apostolic Succession,” which separates the people from the Clergy.

Our Lord’s compliment to the church at Ephesus was that He “*knew their works . . . labor . . . patience*” and their intolerance for false teachers. Some will proclaim entering the race with grand announcements, run a sprint, and then disappear. Not so with the Ephesians, for they continued zealously from beginning to the timing of the letter. But there was a problem. Their freshness and vitality which was there at the beginning of accepting the Lord had become a thing of the past. Many great characteristics accompanied this church, but we must learn the lessons that love for Jesus must exceed love for the church or any of its activities. Organizational greatness can extinguish fervency of affection for Christ. Love for Christ is the only acceptable motive for service. Some Bible teachers teach because they just love to teach the Bible,

but that is not enough. Our love for the Lord must supersede our love for anything else. Jesus said to “remember” and “repent” or else He would “remove.” By those who teach church periods from these messages, this is a fair outline of A.D. 70 to A.D. 170.

B. Letter to Smyrna – The Persecuted Church

Modern Izmir is where ancient Smyrna stood, a beautiful city and the center of the worship of Caesar for Asia. Jesus knew their works and exhorted them to be faithful unto death. The crown of life was to be their reward for faithfulness. The Lord also warns them to not turn their back on Him. The implication is that the one who does not overcome will be hurt by the second death and eternal judgment. We cannot earn our salvation, but we do have an obligation to keep our heart and life committed to the Lord. Inasmuch as the one who overcomes is the one who keeps on trusting in Jesus.

The outline of the letter is:

1. Salutation
2. Persecution
3. Exhortation
4. Promise

Here is a church that has no other virtue than its poverty and condition of persecution. There is a line established between poverty and persecution. This is one of two churches not threatened with condemnation, not warned, but encountering only the love and tenderness of the Lord. She was being subjected to the false accusation and attacks of the Jews who were not condemned as Jews, but as persecutors. While these are Jewish people, they have ceased to be spiritually. Jews were about 5% of the population at this time in the Roman Empire, and well accepted. But now they are combining with the government against the believers in Christ. They did so in order to separate people thought to be dangerous, which put the church in a difficult situation. They are then called the Synagogue of Satan, as they have become accusers of those who should be their friends.

This church is declared to be rich, though poor. She is rich in truth in a way ignored and unknown by men. These persecutions were not outside the knowledge or hand of God, as He limited them, though He did not will them. God respects the will to persecution, which is an example of the independence of man. This church would have to fight against more than flesh and blood, for the persecution was not just an affair of prison and torture. The “do not fear” is that you can endure this in the reality of the Word of God. They were to be “faithful unto death,” the faithfulness which is the limit God asks. It is the “all or nothing” of

Abraham, risking life as in Isaac, so as to find it again in the God provided sacrifice. This church, in the threat of death, is spoken to and encouraged by the One who has passed through death to live again. While they will die in this persecution, enduring only physical pain, they are assured of rising again (2: 11).

While the church, in its “Ephesians’ Period,” lost its first love, now the Lord is going to chastise it so as to get its return to Him. Smyrna’s root meaning is “bitterness” and also means “myrrh.” This was an ointment associated with death. It represents the prophecy of persecution and death that would befall many members of this church. Myrrh yields its fragrance only when it is crushed. Tribulation is the crushing that they went through. They were told to not fear, but be faithful unto death. It would not be a natural ending, but a martyr’s death. Faithfulness unto death would bring relief from their suffering. The “crown of life” would be a martyr’s crown.

The ten days refers to the “Ten Great Persecutions” under Roman emperors, beginning with Nero in A.D.64 and ending with Diocletian in A.D.310. It could also refer to the ten fiercest years of persecution under Diocletian. By those who teach church periods from these messages, the timing of the period would be from A.D. 170 to Constantine A.D.312. The suffering of this church was almost unbelievable. Some were boiled in oil, others burned at the stake. There were other ways they tortured those who refused to bow the knee to worship the false gods. Polycarp was probably the most well known of the martyrs of this church. He was an outspoken witness for the Lord and that was the reason for his arrest. Cruel and false accusations were made at his trial, with death as the sentence at his conviction. However, it seemed that they would not be able to kill him, for the flames, kindled at his feet, simply bypassed his body and joined together again above his head. Finally he prayed and said, “It’s all right. Let me burn if I can burn into the hearts of these soldiers.” With that prayer, the flames consumed him. It was a triumphant death, and symbolic of the faith of those at Smyrna.

Resorts and spas were prevalent in Smyrna, as well as marketplaces. There was a boulevard of solid gold that stretched through the temple of Zeus at the heart of the city. Smyrna is one of two churches that the Lord did not criticize. Though there was wealth there, the believers were apparently poor in this world’s goods, but rich in the Lord. Evidently there were some who claimed to be Jews in this congregation who were false religionists, and of the “synagogue of Satan.” Modern examples of this heretical doctrine is found in cults that believe the throne of England is actually the throne of David and the descendents of Anglo-Saxon forebears constitute the lost tribes of Israel (Herbert Armstrong, World-Wide Church of God is a strong proponent of this belief).

C. Letter to Pergamos – A Licentious, Compromising Church

The Lord deals with each church in a similar manner. He has something good to say about them (most), then He deals with a problem or fault, then He lets them know there is blessing for overcoming that problem or fault. So it is with Pergamos, as He tells them He knows their works and even where Satan’s seat is. This is an indication that Satan’s seat was not permanent and his control over believers would not last.

Pergamos was the capital city of Asia and the site of a famous temple for the Greek god of healing, Aesculapius. Thousands of harmless snakes inhabited the area, and people came from everywhere to seek healing in this pagan temple.

The outline of the letter to Pergamos is:

1. Salutation
2. Commendation
3. Complaint
4. Warning/Exhortation
5. Promise

This church was in the problem of the truth of confessed doctrine. The emperor was possibly proclaimed god here. The capital of Asia Minor, an essential center of Greek and oriental civilization which Jesus called the very throne of Satan. They rejected the Imperial cult worship, refusing to compromise the Lordship of Christ. Yet they are judged severely because of toleration of false doctrines. Balaam is the one who knew the will of God but taught others how to oppose it (Nu.chp.22). The discussion here is probably having to do with food sacrificed to idols (Ac.15: 20; 1Co.chp.8, 10). This consumption implies a mystic act of communion with idols and a social act of participation in religious ceremonies. The prostitution is either sacred or the image common to the Old Testament in which going toward idols was considered prostitution. With the Nicolaitans, it is an accent put upon doctrine and the way it was practiced. They were also confronted here with the difficult duty of excluding from the church those who had a theology of compromise with the world; so do we today. The hidden manna and the new name come from Christ, and the name is Christ which we take on. The manna is what the conqueror will receive, celestial food that contrasts with the food sacrificed to idols.

Pergamos was commended for holding fast to the Lord's name and not denying the faith, but there were also some faults. Some held to the doctrine of Balaam, coming from one of the most shameful events in Israel's history (Nu.chp.22-25, 31:15-16). Balak, king of the Moabites, was counseled to have the Moabite women seduce and intermarry with the men of Israel. Pergamos had some people who were involved in sensuality and were opposed to holy living. The Lord said that to the obedient and victorious, there would be the privilege of eating the hidden manna and receiving a white stone with their new name in it (Is.62: 2; 65: 15).

Satan's capital was shifted from Babylon to Pergamos because of Attalus III who was of the Chaldean Hierarchy fleeing there, due to the Persians conquering his army. He first persecuted the believers, with Antipas being one of the martyrs (V.13). With the understanding we have of the Greek word "*martus*" and its progression in meaning, we can assume that Antipas chose death rather than agree with the world. Tradition says he was taunted with the chant, "Antipas, the world is against you" to which he replied, "Then tell the world that Antipas is against the world."

Since Attalus could not overcome the church, he changed tactics and then through Constantine, united the Church and State, offering all kinds of inducements for the world to come into the church. Constantine had a political motive, to weld all the people into one Empire. This union brought two false doctrines to the front, the Doctrine of Balaam and the Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Paralysis through compromise was the result of this union, bringing the progress of the church to a snail's pace.

The foothold of the latter doctrine was strong, for at the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325, there were 1,500 delegates, and the laity outnumbered the Bishops five to one. Full of intrigue and political methods, the supremacy of the Clergy over the Laity made it evident that this doctrine was well entrenched.

The Doctrine of Balaam comes from Numbers chapters 22-25. Balak, king of Moab, sent for Balaam, son of Beor, to come and curse the Jews. The Lord would not permit him to do so (Nu.22: 22-35, 23: 7-10). God was angry at Balaam, for he was so ready to sell his God-ordained authority to a heathen king. Balaam lost his focus on the Lord, and would have sold his authority for money. Without the ability to curse them himself, Balaam suggested calling the men of Israel to the licentious feasts of "Baal-Peor" and cause them to make God so angry that He Himself would destroy them. The result of the men of Israel coming to the feast was that they committed whoredoms with the women of Moab and the Lord destroyed 42,000 of them.

The church at Pergamos, in like manner, allowed itself to fall in love with the seductive society and lost its sense of supreme devotion to the Lord. Pergamos means "marriage," and it was here that the church entered into a union with the state and was guilty of spiritual fornication, or "Balaamism." Nothing less than a total rejection of the world would the Lord accept from them. Absolute repentance is the only measure that would take care of the problem. When God is forced by our procrastination into the role of Disciplinarian, it is much harsher than if we would judge ourselves (1Co.11: 28-32). We cannot have prestige if we repent, but we will not have power if we do not do so.

Constantine gave the Bishops of the church a number of fine buildings called Basilicas that were to be converted to church buildings. He also gave lavishly for their redecoration. Superb vestments were given to the clergy, and soon the Bishop found himself clad in fine garments, seated in a lofty throne in the apse of the Basilica, with a marble altar in front of him with gold and gems adorning it. A sensuous form of worship was introduced, Pagan Festivals were adopted, preaching was changed, and the pagan members of the world came into the church. Holidays in the pagan practice began to be "Christianized" with December 25 being a prime example, the "Winter Solstice" which was on the 21st of December, being celebrated as the birthday of the "Sun God," was a high festival, celebrated at Rome with Great Games of the Circus. The birthday of Jesus, then celebrated in April, was moved to Dec.25. After all, He was the "Sun of Righteousness" so what more appropriate date to celebrate His birth than near the date of the "Sun-God?"

“Post-Millennial Views” came about at this time. Since the Church and State had wed, with the church being rich and powerful, a condition of affairs would soon exist whereby the Millennium would be ushered in without the return of Christ. Since there needed to be Scriptural proof, some brought up a doctrine that the Jews had been cast off “forever,” and that the intended prophecies about Israel in the end times was meant for the Church. The period this church covers runs from the ascension to the throne by Constantine, 312 A.D. to A.D. 606, when Boniface III was crowned the Universal Bishop.

Overcoming always has its “Victors Reward.” The Lord promised “hidden manna” for the ones who overcome. Manna can be compared to Jesus, for both were: 1) Miraculous in nature, 2) The whiteness of the manna wafer compares to the purity of Christ’s character, 3) The roundness of the wafer compares to the perfection of Christ, 4) Both came from heaven.

The promise of a “white stone” which contains the new name of an individual probably refers to the *Urim* and *Thummim*, two stones carried in the High Priest’s Ephod. One was black, while the other was white. Contemplating a decision or a question, it is thought that the priest would reach into his garment and pull out one of the stones. The black one was a negative response, with the white one giving an affirmative answer. To protect the stones from men of a wicked nature, the wise priest would mark his stones with a “name” that only he knew, thus serving as an identifying mark.

D. Letter to Thyatira – The Lax Church

Thyatira, a small outpost town approximately sixteen miles from its capital, Pergamos, was of little importance compared to the other six in Asia Minor that John wrote to. Outside of what we learn in the Bible, there is little known about the city. We do know that a lucrative fortune telling business was run by a woman by the name of “*Sambathe*” there. This female religion may have been the impetus for Jezebel corrupting the ministry of this church. The church’s work was strong, and they performed it from beginning to end.

While the Lord had some good things to say here, He also had a very bad thing to say because they allowed that woman Jezebel to seduce His servants and to commit fornication. The Lord’s charge is toward “that woman Jezebel.” Today we see a call for toleration from those who do not want to follow the Lord with their whole heart, or even at all. As admirable as the attitude of tolerance may be by the world’s standards, the endorsement of sin by the Church will not go unnoticed by the Lord. His statement of killing her children with death was directed toward those who were influenced and controlled by her. It was at Thyatira that Lydia, the seller of purple was met by Paul. Manufacture of dye was peculiar to that city, especially the purple color, and probably was a sizable industry in that city.

Whether there was a woman named Jezebel there or not we do not know. The name Jezebel is suggestive of Ahab’s wicked wife. The subsequent seduction and fornication taught by her was more spiritual adultery than anything physical. Today no church would allow sexual promiscuity to be taught, even though laced with modernism. Yet liberal theology often aligns itself with the support of anti-scriptural social issues like abortion and social drinking. This makes the unchaste bride of Christ have an affair with the world, and even teaches others to do the same. “Jezebel” here represents a system and that system is

represented in the PapalChurch. When the PapalChurch introduced images and pictures into its churches, the people began to bow down to them and that is idolatrous. When the PapalChurch set up its claim that its teaching was superior to the Bible, it was assuming the role of a “Prophetess.” If we were to study the Papal system from 606 A.D. to the Reformation in 1520 A.D., we would see the sway of Jezebelism by its institution of the “sacrifice of the mass” and other pagan rites. Jesus spoke in the Parable of the Leaven directly to this. If we examine this parable, we can see that the “Woman” of the parable corresponds to the “Jezebel” of the church at Thyatira, and it was she who inserted the leaven of false doctrine into the meal of the Gospel.

The major concern of allowing a spirit of control to function there would cause a negative influence to the work of the church at Thyatira. This woman was allowed to teach false doctrines. While the church allowed this ungodly woman to teach, God would not “suffer” it, for He despises toleration of this kind. She claimed to be a prophetess (an avenue of control), telling the believers there that it was okay to fornicate and eat what had been offered to idols. The pastor of this church was allowing such ungodly activities. Authority over the nations was the promised reward to the ones who overcame this influence (Re.19: 15; 20: 4-6; Da.7: 18).

The outline for the Thyatiran letter is:

1. Salutation
2. Commendation
3. Complaint
4. Promise

Thyatira cannot be criticized for her practice of love, for the truth of her faith or the purity of her doctrine (2: 24). But, a woman who calls herself a prophetess, Jezebel, is the queen of all who extirpate (destroy utterly) the worship of God by supporting idolatry. Two categories of condemned are here: 1) the disciples of Jezebel (those who commit adultery with her); 2) her children (those who are defined in contrast to the preceding verse as those who are outside the possibility of repentance, whose spiritual pride forbids returning to Jesus Christ).

Here is the desire for knowledge of mysteries (2: 24) for the Gnostic search, Christian esoterism (secret doctrines only for the initiated), a passionate curiosity for the “problem of evil” as well as spiritual power. Jesus clearly condemns any need of exalted mystic knowledge. We are to retain what has been given to us. We do not have to conquer hell or heaven. The prophetess will be thrown upon a bed (showing impotence) of distress (recognition of failure) and her children will be put to death. It is another spirit than that of

Jesus that is operating. Consequently Jesus requires of this church that she exercise the discernment of spirits, expelling the false spirit which is an imitator.

The Lord will rule with a rod of iron, imposing discipline in the face of spiritual excesses and exercise His complete authority. So we could say that the theme of this letter is to know who has authority in the Church. There are members here who Jesus does not recognize as being His own (partisans of false doctrines, inspired by a false spirit). Each person has a responsibility for the totality of the Church, and for all the other members of that Church: each is responsible for what happens in his church and for the orientation that it takes. In crisis, all are to act and called to repent for the evil committed by some.

The emphasis of Christ to this church was for their works. But, the complaint was a terrible one. We might examine the Jezebel a bit. She was Ahab's wife. She was not of Jewish descent, but was a princess born of the idolatrous "Tyre," at a time when this royal family was famous for its cruel savagery and intense devotion to Baal and Astarte. Eth-baal, her father, a priest of the latter deity, murdered the monarch Phales, and succeeded him as king of the Zidonians.

Ahab, as some other kings in Israel and Judah, wanted to strengthen their kingdoms, so he took Jezebel in marriage. It was through Jezebel, with Ahab's agreement at the least, that Baal worship was introduced into Israel, with the prophets of the Lord being killed by her. She influenced not only her husband while alive, but also Ahaziah and Jehoram, her two sons. The marriage of her daughter Athaliah to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, brought this idolatrous worship into Judah also. It was not long after its introduction that a temple for Baal worship was erected in Jerusalem. So it was that Jezebel caused all Israel to sin after the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat (1Kg.16: 29-33).

Dispensationalists say this period extended from A.D. 606 to the Reformation, A.D. 1520. The Churches influence in this period was very small. Man's inhumanity toward his fellow man was at an all-time low here, and the church's vertical reach toward God and horizontal reach in evangelism was almost non-existent. The three "I wills" indicate confirmation to the Lord's warnings" 1) Liberal churches are headed toward a crushing tribulation (insurmountable problems and subsequent death, 2) Liberal churches whose theology takes them away from evangelism and honoring of the Word are placing gullible individuals who accept these doctrines in a position to spend eternity in hell, 3) Individual members of a church will not have their sin excused when they blame the church for their sin.

To the remnant of faithful followers, the Lord says He will not put any more burdens on them. Many who have been a part of a vibrant church have seen it grow cold and die in bloodless religion. Staying true to Him is enough.

E. Letter to Sardis – Alive in Name Only

Sardis was the wealthy seat of Lydian government, ruled by the Monarch Croesus. It is situated in a nearly impregnable location, on the slopes of Mount Timolus, about thirty miles southeast of Thyatira.. The land

was fertile. From evidence existing, it seems that it was an entertainment center with crowds coming from miles away. There were pleasure places that catered their sensual wares. Music was the cities claim to fame. There were innovative styles and usages of music to entice seekers of worldly pleasure to its confines, just as today in certain American cities. Sardis, though seemingly impregnable, fell to invading armies twice as the inhabitants were overconfident, leaving the walls undefended. The Greek philosopher Thales lived here.

The Lord said to this church to “... *be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die...*” There was an apparent lack of watchfulness in the church also. Every church must remain alive by the power of the Word as applied to them by the Holy Spirit. To the one who overcomes, a promise is given to be clothed in white raiment and to not have his name blotted out of the Book of Life. This person’s name shall be confessed before God and the angels of heaven perpetually.

Though appearing to be successful with much prosperity of the times, and perhaps the envy of the six churches also written to, it was in reputation, rather than character that she excelled. As the cities reputation grew, so did the churches. Yet, character is the Lord’s measurement of a person or church. In name, Sardis was doing well, but the Lord said, “... *thou ... art dead.*” While the world will look on our appearance and decide a reputation for us, the Lord looks on the heart where the true seat of affections is. The Lord thundered to this church to:

1. Be watchful

Single mindedness is critical to the health of a church or a believer. The center of our attractions must be Jesus. We can become allured and distracted by what the world puts before our eyes. But, like Peter, we will fall if we do not keep our focus.

2. Strengthen the things that remain

Not all things are apparent. We can see some things easily, but we must be able to see beyond the apparent to the hidden to be able to obey this command. Since we have the promise of our Lord on the endurance of the Word of God, it is there we must focus if we are to strengthen what remains. It is those activities which are Bible centered that are the things that will remain. If those areas are weak, then they must be strengthened.

The Lord said He did not find their works “perfect before the Lord.” This is to say that immaturity was a problem. The Lord was more concerned about “why” they did what they did than the result of what they did. So it is today, for the Lord judges the motives and intents of the heart in our activities (He.4: 12).

3. Remember

The strange thing about prosperity is that it can destroy a ministry or church where poverty could not. When a church is a single-room storefront church, it tends to depend solely upon the Lord. But let a little prosperity come and a nice building be built, and if great care is not taken, there will come independence in how things are operated and the heart of the people will get lifted up in an “Look what we have done” attitude. When churches come from moments of birth to times of a multitude of complex church leadership positions, it is easy to forget where we came from. It is time for that church to go back to the time when they first heard the Gospel and remember.

4. Repent

How often do we hear the same thing from the Lord, “Repent?” No individual, church, society, or nation will escape if we do not repent. “Is there sin in the church?” someone asks. “YES!” the Lord exclaims. Everywhere Jesus went He preached the same message, “Repent.” Of twenty-three cities or villages in the Galilean area during Christ’ ministry, only one was not recorded of having a visit from Him, and it is the only that exists today. “Repent” was the message to the other twenty-two.

The outline of the letter to Sardis is:

1. Salutation
2. Condemnation
3. Warning
4. Promise

Life in Christ is the central theme of this letter. It is a church which had a good reputation, but was dead before God. The problem lies in the contradiction between “you are dead” and “nevertheless there is a remnant” (3: 2-3). In the terrible discernment of God’s glance, they were really dead. There was no participation in the life in Christ, and their works were not found to be perfect. It is not a matter of the “Christian life,” for this church leads just such a life, as everyone knows. The problem is no life in Christ. It is still a church, and a letter written to her. Consequently, that means that in spite of her death there is still a reality of Church which can revive. On the basis of this remnant all can be reconstructed, fortified, and built up. This remnant must not form a sect (separate from the church in reproving it), nor harden into a closed core. The church is being called to regroup around this remnant collectively (those in communion) which is the part that is ready to die (3: 2). This remnant cannot survive if the church is not

reconstituted. The mass in decomposition ends by killing that which still lives. God is giving the very creative force of His Word to the one who must transform the situation by certain decisions:

1. There must be repentance.

A change of direction must take place.

2. There must be remembrance.

None of us have a permanent and immediate relation with the Lord. We have had some personal encounters, to be sure, experiencing some interventions of god in our life. We have received the revelation of the truth of His Word. At the moment of our conversion, we now draw on by memory, which is a living thing because the One we experienced is living. Our memory is past, but the actual present of God and the memory of deeds enable us to live, which essential. It is not a purely subjective experience, an illusion which has been erased. The past undergirds our present, helping guarantee the fidelity of our present. This church must not seek extraordinary things, but return exactly to what she had received from God at her origin.

3. There must be a keeping or conserving.

We must keep the “good deposit of faith” that we have received. This will tend to provoke modern theologians. To “keep” the Word of the past is not to prevent it from being active. This is not a question of fashion, but a whole attitude of life. To keep the Word is to respect it and not to violate, waste, or disperse it. We must consider the Word as exterior to us, measuring us, instead of in us which we measure as to its fitness or efficacy. We do not give life to the Word, it gives life to us. If the Church does not therefore keep the Word, She is surely to die. This happens to churches today, who feel they must modernize it, actualize it, and furnish it with new cultural context.

4. There must be vigilance.

Vigilance is a manifestation of life. It is a matter of not being lulled into security, neither of faith received in times past, or of judgments and values of the world. Watch and pray is the expectation of the Lord. Vigilance is most essential in the time of the Apocalypse. While God judges and even condemns, He also exhorts and appeals to live. The one who is dead receives the Word to live, but he must also make the decision to do what is commanded him.

Sardis was called a “dead church” though it had a name that it was alive. There had been a spiritual deadness of about one thousand years, during the ecclesiastical lifelessness. While the church moved to an apparently healthy state, it was in appearance only. So it is today that some that appear to men to be alive are actually not alive. The formalistic church is one of these. With its ritualistic worship, it has a form of godliness but denies the power of God to work in it. The name “Sardis” means “escaping one” or “those who come out.” This makes it an example of the Reformation Period.

The Reformation Period began about A.D. 1500. Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 Theses to the door of the Church in Wittenberg, Germany, is credited as the start of the Reformation by many. There were a number of other reformers who were critical of the Roman Church’s false teaching, tyranny, and claims of that period. When the situation became intolerable to leaders, Luther acted. However, this was more of a move for political liberty than being purely Christian or religious movement at that time. The church, at least externally, enjoyed acceptance and influence in the various political systems. Yet in the Sardis letter, we see that there is not one word of compliment. It was the largest, most influential of all seven churches, with widest acclaim of all, yet the Lord was certainly not pleased with her.

The Reformation was a wonderful advantage to the normal believer, for it encouraged and aided in bringing Scriptures into their hands. With the circulation of Scriptures, the Doctrine of Justification by Faith was revived, and there was a move back to the more simple modes of worship. This also brought about a multiplication of sects, which led to many controversial contentions, but also threw much light on the Word of God. It actually interfered greatly with the spiritual state of the Church, leading to the statement of Revelation, “. . . she had a name to live and was dead....”

Reformers swept away much ritual and doctrine that was false, but failed to recover the promise of the Second Advent. They turned from idols to God, but not to wait for the Lord’s return from the heavens. The Sardis Period extends from A.D. 1520 to approximately A.D. 1750.

God is certainly aware of man’s propensity to sin. We are each personally known to God by name. This church was reminded that the Father knew them. As vile as Sardis was, there was a faithful remnant. Here “garments” is used as a symbol of a man’s testimony. While there was corruption that was known in the assembly, some had taken great care to protect their integrity and testimony against the filthy influences around them. They were not among those who would have their names blotted out of the Book of Life, as long as they continued in their integrity and walk with the Lord.

F. Letter to Philadelphia – A Faithful Church

Philadelphia was located in an area prone to earthquakes, and had been destroyed by them several times. Volcanic activity precipitated this, and yet the city survived. To live in a city that had this kind of problem, and to know that they would dwell in a city where they did not have to flee must have been comforting. Modern history notes a single pillar still standing, as if to illustrate verse 12. This pillar was erected by the Romans in a rebuilding project, to help move the rebuilding along at a faster pace. The Romans appealed to national pride, saying that any person who contributed to its rebuilding would have their names inscribed on a pillar inside the temple of Diana that they were erecting. Jesus took this

opportunity to remind the Philadelphians that faithful followers had a secure position in the Temple of the Living God.

This church existed in John's day, suffering tribulation by the persecution of the Roman government. The Lord's commendation was that the one's who overcame would indeed become a "... pillar in the temple of my God" (V.12). A "little strength" indicates some strength in the Word of God. While a church can be strong, many neglect the very thing that will strengthen them. The problems in Philadelphia were very minor compared to the others.

To be a pillar (one who overcomes) is to have authority (Ga.2: 9; Re.10: 1); the word "write" here is literal, not just a spiritual engraving on the heart (Re.13: 16; Is.62: 2, 65: 15). This church is considered by many to be the finest of the seven churches. Smyrna alone approached her spiritual quality. Tradition says this church had great zeal for missions and outreach ministry.

The outline of the letter to Philadelphia is: 1) Salutation, 2) Commendation. There is no condemnation or correction to the church at Philadelphia. The central theme is faithfulness to the Word. It is the second of seven churches not condemned by the letter addressed to her. She has little power, both according to men and the spirit of power which brings about the absolute enemy of God. Those who have power, of whatever kind, turn away from God. Today's society, with money, science, quantity, etc. has done so. Though lacking power, the church at Philadelphia was faithful. She desired nothing more than Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. She had not exchanged the Word of God for some kind of power. This faithfulness is the essential work of the church, more than political or evangelical or moral action.

To this faithfulness there is a promised recompense. First, she shall receive from God those who will be drawn out to her from the Synagogue of Satan, for He will cause them to recognize the love of God. Secondly, the door of the Kingdom will be opened to those who acknowledge her as subject to this King and claims nothing more. Lastly, He will keep her, for there is always reciprocity – keeping her because she kept His Word – and there was a great trial coming. Whatever their situation, there is an exhortation addressed to her which is, "hold fast what you have." This admirable church can still lose everything and become involved with power or security. To the one who overcomes is given here a triple name: 1) the secret name of God – probably the unpronounceable Tetragrammaton, which supposes absolute revelation; 2) the name of the New Jerusalem, the new creation in which the faithfulness of man participates; 3) the new name of Jesus, which is to say, the *Kyrios*, the Risen Lord (3: 8).

The name "Philadelphia" means "brotherly love," and describes the fellowship that occurred here rather than the bitter personal animosities that were characteristic of the disputers of theology of the Sardis period. With this charity came the evangelistic and missionary activities of the 150 year period ending at the start of the 20th century.

Philadelphia was said to have a "little strength." This is like a person who is very weak after a bout with sickness that took them near death. While the church was "dead" at Sardis, it was coming to life at Philadelphia. Revivals were very characteristic of the Philadelphia era, in America as well as on the European continent. The Lord had set an "open door" before the church, and many found it open.

William Carey went to India in 1793 and found it to be so there. China, Japan, Korea, Africa, and the islands of the sea were found to be “open” to the Gospel. We need not fear the opposition and tactics of this world as it attempts to block the opportunities the Lord places before us. God opens doors and no man can shut them.

The statement of having a “little strength” seems a strange commendation, but when used by God from His reference point, it is a great commendation. We can appropriate the power of God only as we recognize our desperate need of it. Two other words of commendation we see in the statements, “. . . *hast kept My Name...*” and “. . . *hast not denied My Name...*” This demonstrates three attributes that the Lord loves:

1. Recognition of total dependency upon God and lack of power in themselves

1. Reliance upon the Word of God

1. Refusal to deny the life-changing name of Christ

There were a few of Satan’s followers there, but the Lord exhorted Philadelphia to not be afraid. The statement that they would be made to come and “worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee” is an indication of its fruition during the Millennium when we reign and rule with Christ. Then the ungodly of this world will be forced to pay the homage due to the Father and His followers.

Another thing to note is that the promise they received was to be kept from the “hour of temptation” that would come upon all the world.. God has a continual principle of protection, and never pours out His judgment upon believers. The “hour of tribulation” appears to be still future as of this writing, which will occur just before the setting up of the Lord’s Millennial Kingdom. Some teach that this is an additional indication the Church will be caught up before the Tribulation.

The good effects of the Philadelphia period is that it carries on into the 21st century, with evangelistic and missionary movements ongoing. Though some have become mechanical and based on business methods, there is an ever livening in nations outside the United States that show the same kind of life as was generated in this period. The older, more organized efforts tend to have less spiritual power, which will continue on until Christ returns.

The Lord’s counsel to this church is to “. . . *hold that fast which thou hast, that no man takes thy crown...*” (V.11); this warning is not about the loss of salvation, but of rewards. There is sinister and devious guile at most every turn, but the wise believer makes certain his faithful service to God is not apathetic or treasonous, resulting from the acquiescence to the whims of sinful men.

G. Letter to Laodicea – The Lukewarm Church

Banking and commerce were what made Laodicea famous. It was also a tourist attraction having hot mineral baths. There was a particular breed of sheep with raven-colored wool on the hillsides that was of the finest quality and beauty known. Laodicea also produced an eye ointment which was widely sought. It is interesting that the Lord counsels us to purchase of Him “eye-salve” that we may see” (V.18)

Laodicea was about 45 miles from Philadelphia. There is nothing there today but ruins. Garments and fashion were causing an increase of wealth in John’s time. Yet this increase of wealth did the opposite of what it came into their hands for. Apostasy, not the work of the Lord was the end of Laodicea with its blessed commerce.

This church is symbolic of the Church age of the end time, approximating the start of World War I to the present. These have been years of spiritual decline for the most part, with a turning from the basics of Christianity by many a denomination as well as some great independent churches. Evangelism has cooled in them. Social restraints, which once held high in them is now loosened.

The most widely remembered thing of the Laodicean Church is Jesus key expression about the “temperature” of this church age, being neither “hot” nor “cold.” It was a tasteless and powerless church. It looked good, but was powerless. He desires us to be one of the other, rather than lukewarm. This serious warning of spewing the “Christian” out of His mouth indicates His being “sick at the stomach” at the condition of His children. We are not to be half and half, part in and part out, but all the way, one way or the other. Real commitment to the things of God is the exhortation. That is, He expects us to be studying His Word and praying and worshipping Him with fervency every day. It is a commitment to Him that precludes any commitment to this world. This battle has continued throughout the ages, the word of man versus the Word of God.

The outline of the letter is: 1) Salutation, 2) Complaint, 3) Counsel, 4) Chastening, 5) Promise. There is no commendation to this church. This last letter’s central theme is hope. It contains details unique to the city itself. Considered very rich, she rejected help from Rome to bring about her reconstruction needed because of an earthquake in A.D. 40. The city had a school of medicine and thermal springs.

The Lord makes a strong complaint about the church. Tepid water is nauseating, and that is the implication of a lukewarm church. The lukewarm is the one who desires nothing, feels no lack, senses no absence, do not understand that anything is missing, does not aspire to anything, and as such do not hope for anything. A frozen church is to be desired over a lukewarm one, and a boiling church is the best of all. The hot church moves and acts. The lukewarm is led to do nothing for change. The current situation appears okay to them. They do not see their real situation before God. The “chilly atmosphere” of the Church of England (Anglican) drove John Wesley to start outside meetings which were noted as “red-hot.” The same type of atmosphere drove William Booth to leave the Methodist Church and become a “Red-Hot Salvationist.”

This church did not know her truth or herself. This is actually the evangelical definition of hypocrisy (not a conscious lie). From the moment there is nothing more to hope for, there is nothing more to receive. The opposite of hypocrisy is hope. The hypocrite does not act out a comedy. He does not know who he is and because of this always shows only a false appearance which he believes to be his truth. He deceives in being deceived, shutting himself up in a situation that he does not try to leave. To see the reality of this is to launch out to leave it. God pronounces judgment, making the diagnosis known, and immediately appeals to them to “buy of me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich.” This is to give up “our” riches for His riches.

To buy the truth, to remedy the sight, is to see ourselves as we truly are. This is to receive deliverance from hypocrisy and commitment to the way of hope, to receive from God purity; life purified as refined gold and white garments. Jesus is harsh here, intending to lead this church to awareness and hopefully conversion. The judgment is to bring about a wholesome and beneficial reaction. Jesus shows some severity, even with His great love (Mt.19: 21). He would strike because He loves her. He knocks so that He may enter, and have communion with her. The one who has no hope closes his door to the Lord. Hope is the waiting Lover, desiring to come in and sup with this church. It is to the most lamentable church that the Lord announces His visit to have the solemn Meal with. In no other letter does He speak with such tenderness and emotion.

The church today, for the most part, in what has been considered the bastion of Christianity (America and Europe), is not really warm-hearted spiritually. The mechanical activities belie its social character. While many serve on committees, societies, and clubs, there is little spiritual heat. “Revival meetings” are scheduled and held, but they are meetings of men with men, not men with God. Evangelists and singers are hired to perform, with soul winning now a business. Self-deception perpetuates this activity as if God is in it.

The Laodicean Church thought it was rich and without anything, but its true condition the Lord knew. There was poverty in their hearts. More than any period in history is this true. Cathedral-like buildings dot the landscape of many large cities, having stained glass windows, preachers with impressive rhetoric, paid singers, and many in attendance. Yet there is something missing that is barely missed. They have large land endowments, but are poor. Worldly activities cut into the activities of the church, or worse, are brought into the church. No poor here, for their presence would taint the “reputation” of the church.

Visit one of these churches and the first thing they would desire is for you to see their facility. Pride would show as they talk of the character of their congregation, who is who in attendance each Sunday. Yet there is no effort to deepen the spiritual life of the attendees. No conversion of the unsaved, for they have “need of nothing.” It is a greater problem to be burdened with wealth than to be burdened with poverty, but that was the Laodicean Church.

Money is necessary, and the Lord uses us to give to accomplish His efforts. But money does not convert the lost. Gold of the wrong kind will never convert the man who is without Christ. Gold that has no taint upon it, is not cankered by fraud or withholding of a wage is the gold that God wants us to have. Gold tried in the fire is purified by the intense heat, with its impurities coming to the top to be skimmed off. Persecution and suffering is an example of this fire. Patient suffering brings purity. There was little true value in the flourishing banking industry the Laodiceans thought so much of. We see a description of the

Laodicean Church in James Chapter 5, when he warns those who are controlled by riches of the dangers to come in their lives.

Laodicea was not only poor, but blind also. Near-sighted is a better understanding of what the Lord was saying. It is near-sighted to see what God has blessed us with, but not perceive why God has blessed us with it. The Laodiceans had no spiritual perception of their eye condition. While the Laodiceans recommended the eye-salve manufactured there, they needed to apply some of it to themselves. Eye-salve was the remedy they needed. Impaired spiritual vision can be healed by the Lord alone.

Besides poverty and blindness, there was also nakedness. While those who attend the fashionable church “uptown,” having the finest of suites and dresses that money can buy, their raiment was not of the type Christ would want them to have. “White Raiment” is opposite of the raven black wool that their garments came from. Expensive and fashionable attire are but rags when worn with pride. It is far better to be clad with humble garments here and have the royal robes of the next world on our hearts.

A revelation that is often misused then comes from the Lord: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” This is not an appeal to sinners, but by the Risen Lord to what was supposed to be His Church. He had stood in the midst of the Church, but was now outside, trying to get in. Churches can be outwardly prosperous, but inwardly, Christ is not there. This is a shocking description of a Christ-less Church.

Christ had been within the Church, so how did He suddenly come to be outside? The Church did not thrust Him out, for it does not have the power or authority to do so. Not only that, the church does not seem to have even missed His presence from their midst. All manner of Christian service seems to be going on, but He has withdrawn. Worldliness is the reason. Only by opening their hearts to Him will He return to sup with them.

Our Lord rebukes those whom He loves. He uses the Word of God as planted in the heart through the conviction of the Holy Spirit to awaken us to problems in our lives. He chastens us then, which can be so severe that death is the result (1Jn.5: 16; 1Co.5: 1-5). The Lord then says to come to a boil - that is, become zealous. Getting serious is His recommendation. Lastly, He calls for repentance. He is serious, and repentance is the only remedy.

Clearly the messages to the seven churches teach us of a decline in the last days. Instead of increasing in spiritual power, there is a worldliness that takes away that power, with the church becoming lukewarm, faithless, and Christ-less.

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Part 03: Chapter 01-04

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

PART THREE – THINGS THAT SHALL BE HEREAFTER

I. A DOOR IS OPENEDwar

The first words of the 4th chapter, translated as “After this” would be better translated as “After these things.” “Hereafter” could permit a time space, while “after these things” refers to what shall immediately follow the completion of the “church age,” indicated by the messages to the seven churches. While the position of many is that the Church will go through the Tribulation, others say that here is when the Church is “raptured” out of this earth. There has always been “tribulation” on planet earth. Tribulation, according to Webster’s dictionary, is “severe affliction, great suffering.” Jesus used the words “great tribulation” in His statements in the Book of Matthew (Mt.24: 21), concerning “. . . *the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?*” Jesus prefaced His statements about what would happen with the caution, “*Take heed that no man deceives you.*” The Great Tribulation will be a time of the outpouring of God’s wrath and anger upon a sinful and wicked world. We should point out that trouble, war, and difficulties we face in this life do not prepare us for His return. Only faith in Christ, trusting and obeying the Word of God, can do that. The Holy Spirit is readying the Church now through this process, *the “. . . washing of the water of the Word....”* Some face difficulties with a turning to God, while others curse Him. Tragedy and chaos cause some to pray, while others become embittered.

There are a number of Scriptures that relate to the “rapture” of the Church, as well as how She will be removed (Lk.21: 34-36; Jn.14: 1-3; 1Co.15: 23, 51, 58; 2Co.5: 1-8; Ep.5: 27; Php.3: 11, 20, 21; 1Th.2: 19, 3: 13; 4: 13-17; 5: 9, 23; 2Th.2: 1, 7-8; Co.3: 4; Ja.5: 7-8). While we could point to many reasons for saying the “rapture” of the Church is at this time or that, let it be sufficient to say that there is no reference to the Church in the Book of Revelation after chapter four, verse one, until the 19th chapter (Re.19: 7-9). This can be taken to mean the catching away of the Church, as well as that John was to see the things that would be “hereafter,” or after the resurrection.

We should also point out that there are other “raptures” mentioned in the Bible, namely of:

1. The man-child (chp.12)
2. Two witnesses (chp.11)
3. Tribulation saints (chp.7)

No matter when the rapture is to take place, there are some Christians that are not ready for it. The last of chapter three of the Book of Revelation indicates that the lukewarm will be “spewed out of the Lord’s mouth.” Since it is the church He is addressing, they would seem to be in no condition to be taken out of

the world to escape the troubles that are coming. A second group is noted in Second Corinthians. This group is called to come out of the world, and be separate from the world system, so as to be received (2Co.6: 14-18). A third group is involved in religious activity, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power of it (2Ti.3: 5). To be assured of the catching away, we must be: 1) In Christ (1Th.4: 16; 2Co.5: 17; 2) belong to the Lord (1Co.15: 23; Ga.5: 24; 3) made holy and ready through Christ (Re.20: 4-6); 4) worthy in Him (Lk.21: 34-36; 5) purified and ready for it (1Jn.3: 2-3; 2Co.7: 1; He.12: 14; Ep.5: 27).

The “removal” of the Church now allows for the dealings of the Lord with the Jews. Chapter 4 through 19 deals with several symbols of the Old Testament, such as the Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, Altar, Censer, Elders, Cherubim, Seals, Trumpets and Plagues. These things indicate that the chapters mentioned are dealing with the Jews, and that Daniel’s “Seventieth Week” is not moving toward fulfillment.

John’s sight now changes locations, from Patmos to Heaven. It was not a vision, for he says, “I looked.” After his vision of Christ in the midst of the candlesticks, with the accompanying messages to the churches, he sees a door opened in Heaven. The same voice is speaking to him to “. . . *come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter...*” John’s experience relates to Paul’s out-of-body experience (2Co. 12: 2-4). However, while Paul was told not to speak what he heard, John was told to write and preserve it for us today.

When Peter made his confession about Christ, (Mt.16: 13-28), Jesus told them that “. . . *some standing here . . . “would not taste death till they saw the Son of Man “. . . coming in His Kingdom.”* Just six days later, Jesus took the Inner Circle with him into a high mountain and was transfigured before them. Coming to this transfiguration was Moses and Elijah. The transfiguration is a picture of the Second Coming of Christ, with Moses a type of the “resurrected saints,” and Elijah of the “translated saints.” John being “caught up” in Revelation and beholding before his death what he would have witnessed if he had not died until Christ came again relates to the statement, “If I will that he tarry till I come.” A trumpet-like voice summoned John and like so will summon the dead in Christ and those who are alive and remain.

A. The Throne is seen.

Verses 2 and 3 give us the center point of heaven, the Throne of God. This throne is “set,” and nothing disturbs it. Time, storms, imaginations, the economy, dreams of power-hungry men, nothing disturbs the Throne of God. Though the world may seem to teeter on the edge of self-destruction, God’s authority is unchallenged and undiminished by anything.

John saw also the Father, “like jasper and a sardine stone.” The sardine stone is semi-transparent, of a red color. John saw a rainbow circling the throne which was green like an emerald. This Throne is a literal one, for Heaven is a real place, or perhaps we should say “dimension.” It is a spirit world, but not a place of disembodied spirits. To say we have “seen” something is not as the Scripture here, for here it means “to comprehend” or understand everything about Him. We have not seen Him in all His glory (comprehended). We do learn more and more about Him today and will do so through out eternity. We will see His face in the New Earth forever (Re.21: 3, 22: 4). Ezekiel described his vision of the Throne of God in a most vivid way (Ezk.1: 26-28).

John’s sighting of God indicates the form of God was not clearly distinguished or described, but that He was resplendent with light, which veiled Him. Also, there was the rainbow around the Throne. God was thus veiled in a glory that can only be compared to the shining of a beautiful gem. The “jasper” stone has a glass-like quality that withstands the most detailed examination for flaws. Hiding blemishes is impossible in it, just as God is absolutely sinless and as transparently clear as jasper.

While the rainbow on earth is semi-circular, the one in Heaven was a full circle. Here we see the half of things, but then the whole. Noah's rainbow was of seven primary colors, namely:

1. Red
2. Orange
3. Yellow
4. Green
5. Blue
6. Indigo
7. Violet

However, God's Throne was circled by an Emerald Rainbow. This full-circle Rainbow indicates God as a Covenant-keeping God. That is, even though He brings judgment upon earth, He will not destroy it. Earth will be redeemed, to bring forth its fruit for the eternity of eternity's generations.

B. Elders Are Seated

The word translated throne in the previous verses is now translated as "seat." The elders are seated on thrones. This suggests status and responsibility. The white clothing speaks of purity, and they have received victors' crowns. These twenty four men are normal humans who have been raptured and seated in places of special responsibility. To sit in the presence of royalty indicates authority and favor of that royalty. Angels are never called elders, nor do they ever have crowns, but men do (Mt.19: 28; Re.3: 21; 1Pe.5: 2-4). Their position, dress, and song indicate clearly their being responsible to operate in the capacities of the priest.

This is the position of the future for these elders, as the writing is in the future tense. They are redeemed men of Old Testament and New Testament saints, representatives of the raptured and glorified saints. The Cross of Calvary splits time and history. The Crucifixion is the pivot point of all the eventualities of life. So it is that the Old and New Testaments are represented by these twelve elders. It is likely that they will be men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and even possibly New Testament saints like Martin Luther, John Wesley, or Billy Graham. We do not know who they are, but we do know they are granted positions of responsibility.

There are five crowns mentioned in Scripture:

1. Incorruptible Crown (1Co.9: 25-27)
2. Crown of Life (Re.2: 10)
3. Crown of Glory (1Pe.5: 2-4)
4. Crown of Righteousness (2Ti.4: 8)
5. Crown of Rejoicing (1Th.2: 19-20)

The word translated as “crown” here is “*stephanos*,” indicating a reward for faithfulness in service, dedication, and commitment. These 24 gave unflagging allegiance to God who sits on the central Throne.

That these elders are redeemed men is further proved by the song that they sing. Since it is about the redemption by the blood of God, it cannot be angels. The raiment of the elders is not a royal robe, but “white raiment.” They are members of the Royal Priesthood (1Pe.2: 9), but they are not yet reigning. They have golden vials, that is, the prayers of saints in their hands. These are not the saints of the Church, but Jewish saints on earth during the Tribulation Period whose prayers come from the Psalms. The elders have the right to judge (1Co.6: 2-3). John is indicating that the time of judgment is after the binding of Satan, just before the Millennium (Re.20: 4).

Elders in Scripture were representative heads of a city, family, tribe, or nation. So the 24 elders represent the human race that has been redeemed. The number of 24 follows the Priestly courses of Chronicles (1Ch.24: 1-19). David, distributing the work of the Priests into courses found 24 heads and he made them representatives of the whole priesthood. Since elders represent both New and Old Testament saints, the representatives of the Old must be from the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the New must be from the Apostles. The foundation stones and gates of the New Jerusalem indicate the same (Re.21: 10-14). Yet these 24 do not represent the Church, for it is composed only of New Testament redeemed persons.

C. Living Spirits, the Sea, and Creatures

John next speaks of the seven-fold Spirit of God that is before the Throne of God. Before the throne is a “sea of glass” that appears as crystal. It does not represent water, but is a part of the Heavenly Tabernacle which appears as crystal. This relates to the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the Temple, which had a brass laver filled with water. The priest, in performance of his duties made regular stops there to wash his hands and feet. Water externally always represents the Word of God, and internally it represents the Spirit’s presence within us. While there is nothing occupying this area, there will be in the future (Re.chp.15).

This sea is vast in dimension, for there is a multitude there no man can number. The word crystal is used here to mean “perfection.” The “sea” is pure at last, without the stain of sin on it, and the redeemed stand there, never again to need to say, “Forgive me.”

The word translated as “beast” in verses 6-8 comes from the Greek word “zoon.” Properly, it is “living ones.” While chapter thirteen speaks of two beasts, it is the Greek word “*therion*,” indicating a wild, untamed animal. The creatures in Ezekiel’s vision are nearly identical (Ezk.10: 20). He calls them “cherubim,” which is an order of the angelic beings. No creature on earth resembles them. When Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God, it was Cherubim God placed at the entrance of the Garden to guard man from partaking of the Tree of Life and being forever in his lost condition. The Ark of the Covenant was overshadowed by two Cherubim. The number of “living ones” around the throne is four, the number of earth, and has to do with the “re-gensis” of earth (the returning of earth to its condition before the fall). Eyes “before, behind, and within” reveals intelligence and spiritual insight of things past, present and things to come. Tireless service is their stock in trade, “*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*”

Moses was instructed to make a Tabernacle, with the Ark of the Covenant with two Cherubim upon it. They guard the Mercy Seat or where God’s presence was at that time. Not until Ezekiel had his vision do we know what they looked like. Notice the writers statement in Hebrews (He.9: 5), not being able to speak of particularly.

Animate creation is represented here is the living ones, by their four faces. These faces are indicative of living things we know on earth. The “calf” (young ox) face represents domesticated animal life; the “lion” face represents the wild animal life; the “eagle” face pictures the fowls of the air, and the “man” face represents God’s highest creation. The royalty of God is shown by the lion, the sacrificial meekness of God in the calf, the supreme intelligence of God in the man, and the swift and all seeing judgment of God in the flying eagle.

John’s living creatures had six wings, while Ezekiel’s cherubim had only four. The “wheels” of Ezekiel’s vision indicate they were with the Holy Spirit on a mission, while the scene in heaven is of the permanent home of the Throne of God. Cherubim are God’s agents which carry out His decrees. “Full of eyes” speaks of spiritual perception, insight, and knowledge.

The twelve Tribes of Israel had a particular camping and marching pattern in the Wilderness as relating to the Tabernacle. When at rest, the Tabernacle had Judah’s Camp, composed of three tribes, on the east, with its standard bearing a flag with the Lion figure on it. Ephraim’s Camp was to the West, with three tribes, and a standard bearing a flag with the figure of an ox on it. Reuben’s Camp was to the south, with three tribes, and its flag had the figure of a man on it. Dan’s Camp was to the north, with three tribes also, and the figure of an eagle on its flag. With the Tabernacle in the middle, the center of God’s presence, surrounded and protected by the standards that had the figures of Ezekiel’s and John’s Living Creatures on it. The differences of John and Ezekiel’s living creatures is likely that there are different orders of Living Creatures or Cherubim, each adapted to the service they are to perform. These attendants to the Throne summoned the four Horsemen (Re.6: 1-8), and one of them handed to the Seven Vial Angels the vials filled with God’s wrath (Re.15: 7).

D. Worship in Heaven

There is reverence, yes, glory and honor and thanks to Him who sat on the Throne. The Living Creatures are carrying out their assigned duties, but not out of duty. It is for a reverence to the One who is their Creator as well as ours. When this takes place the elders fall down and cast their crowns before Him. There is no egotistical boasting of what man has done here. The entire assembly gives Him who deserves what is due Him. It is because of the Worth of Him who sits on the Throne that they worship Him. It is not because of what He has done, but because of who He is. Worshipping God is our ultimate response to our Creator.

This scene speaks of the angelic messengers and redeemed and resurrected humanity worshipping the eternal God day and night. Their cry of worship is “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” That is one “Holy” for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit.

II. THE SEALED BOOK

The Seven-Sealed Book in the hands of God contained the future events of planet earth. But, there had to be one worthy of opening it in order for those events to take place. As the seals were removed, the contents of the Book (scroll) in that area were revealed. The “Strong Angel” cried with a loud voice, looking for one worthy to open the Book. No man in heaven or earth is worthy to open the Book, and John weeps profusely over it.

A. Holy Spirit of Promise

Paul tells us that we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise (Ep.1: 13-14). There will be redemption of the purchased possession according to these Scriptures. The Holy Spirit seal is an earnest of our inheritance, till the time of the redemption. Paul says that the whole creation is groaning and awaiting this event (Ro.8: 22-23). It is the redemption of our bodies, which will occur at the First Resurrection that causes us to groan in ourselves for, as well as all of creation.

Something was lost at the fall that is to be redeemed. The inheritance of the earth and immortal life was given up by Adam in that fall. This caused the disinheritance of all of Adam’s seed. The forfeited Title Deed of earth was recaptured by Jesus Christ, and is now awaiting redemption in God’s hands. This is a legal repossession of what Adam lost or forfeited by heeding the words of the Enemy of our soul. Adam could not gain it back, but Jesus did as a kinsman redeemer. He became a part of the human race through Mary to become that kinsman redeemer, a near relative of the human race. By His own blood He paid the redemptive price, but it has not yet been reclaimed (1Pe.1: 18-20). The Seven Sealed Book is the Title Deed of planet earth and all of its creation. The Book of Ruth gives us a beautiful picture of this, when Boaz took ten men (elders) as witnesses, and advertised his purpose in the gate of the city. He was the “*goel*” or redeemer of the property that was rightfully Ruth’s by inheritance (Ru.4: 1-12).

B. The Lamb Who Opens the Book

The strong angel, crying with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?” was the advertisement for the Kinsman Redeemer to appear. No man who had been redeemed was able, but the One who had done the redeeming could. The defeat of Satan on the Cross had qualified

Jesus to be able to open the book and loose the seals. Not Michael, not Gabriel, but Jesus was/is the one who was/is worthy. He fit the man needed. An Elder spoke to John about weeping no more, for the “. . . *Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the Book, and to loose the ‘Seven Seals’ thereof.*”

John saw Jesus, personified figuratively as a lamb, spotless and as if it had been slain, who was worthy. There is an apt representation here of all the animals that were sacrificed in Old Testament as sacrifice for sin, etc. The lamb is a significant choice to represent the Crucified Lord. For all of the animals which were sacrificed, the lamb and the ewe were the only ones who did not struggle when struck. At the moment that the knife cuts the jugular, the lamb relaxes and does not try to flee or kick. It gives way perfectly, dying with an acceptance of its fate. No other animal found signifies the same way the acceptance of death, which is the reason and confirmation of Christ being called the Lamb of God. He spoke of it (Jn.10: 15).

Here He is not seen as King of kings and Lord of lords, but as the sacrificial Lamb, the crucified, stripped, annihilated, weakest of all, having neither beauty, honor, or power. The idea of a paschal lamb resumed here is not at all the idea. The death of the lamb in Egypt, bringing about the exodus, is not the only thought here. The diverse representations of the Messiah in the Old Testament converge in the Revelation, both as Lamb and Victorious King, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. It is not that Christ is revealing what could be a cinema, for He is the one closely involved in Israel’s history, and the One who was plunged into history and is, as well, the heart of that history, in order to give it meaning. The axis of history is in the unheard-of event of the God who became man in the victory of life over death, in His willingness to bear the evil of man, the slaughtered Lamb, who also is raised up. It is the celebration of liberation which comes in the form of that slaughtered Lamb, who has brought about the final liberty of man. Liberty is the plan of God for man, which can come only by the means of recognition of the sovereignty of the Lamb.

The Lamb had been seated with the Father before, but preceded from that Throne when the Elder spoke. All of heaven breaks forth into praise as He takes the Book from the Father’s hand, and surely a shudder passes through the demonic realm as He begins to unroll God’s final judgment. It is not the egotistical statements of those who try to convince God of their worth, but of humble ones who know of His (Mt.7: 21-23). Many angels join in this heavenly choir, but by proclaiming with a loud voice. It seems redeemed man is the only one who sings, but all of creation will recognize Him as Lord.

Notice that though the Elder called Him a “lion,” John saw a lamb. The Lion reigns with kingly power. The Lamb, the Spotless Son of God was not in a figure of a lamb, but is as a lamb, innocent, and slain (better translated as “butchered”). The taking of the Book is the change from the Mediatorial work of Christ, to His Redemptive Work. Our Kinsman Redeemer will take the Book, break its Seals, and claim the Inheritance and dispossess the present claimant, Satan. The claim of Jesus is contested, but it is sure. After a conflict, the Enemy is finally dispossessed and eventually cast into the Lake of Fire, his final destination.

Seven horns were seen by John on this Lamb. The horns in Revelation mean “kingdoms,” while the number seven speaks of God’s completion or fullness. Thus the seven horns indicate His total power and omnipotence. Seven eyes show God’s vision into all things. He sees and knows all. The seven spirits display God’s primary attributes as discussed before.

There are titles given to Jesus Christ in the Gospels:

1. Son of David
2. Son of Abraham
3. Son of Man
4. Son of God

These titles designate His right to claim what He has redeemed. As the Son of David, He has title to the Throne of David (2Sa.7: 16; Lk.1: 32). As the Son of Abraham, He has title to all the land of Palestine that was included in God's grant to Abraham (Ex.32: 13). As the Son of Man, He has the title to earth and the world (Ge.1: 1; Jn.1: 1-3). As the Son of God, He is heir of all things (Ep.1: 20-22; He.1: 2).

C. Title Deed of Earth

Property was highly valued in the Old Testament. It could not be removed from its rightful owner or his heirs for a period of longer than fifty years, at the Year of Jubilee, when it reverted to the original owner without cost to them. If an owner had to sell it, due to indebtedness or other cause, the next of kin could redeem it by payment of a proportionate amount of its value due until the next Year of Jubilee. Ruth 4: 1-12 and Jeremiah 32: 6-12 both demonstrate this. The "deed" to the land was on a parchment roll, printed inside and then outside when the inner part was filled up. However, there was never anything written where it could be read when rolled up and sealed. The seal served as a lock. Ancient scrolls could only be unrolled to the first lock, and then one in authority would have to break the seal for any more information to be divulged. In the area showing, when it was rolled up, was the Title of the Deed, and names of witnesses to the transactions. Two copies were made, one sealed, while the other was left unsealed so that it could be read. These deeds were handed to the purchaser in the presence of witnesses, and either kept by him or by a custodian. In Jeremiah's case, we see that it was in an earthen vessel, so as to preserve it.

Scrolls were used to document contractual agreements. Judicial statements that contained a verdict within, and sometimes their resulting sentence were placed on the inside of the scroll, while the outside listed easier and less painful ways to have the verdicts met.

This method of making title then speaks to us of the Seven Sealed Book, that John saw written on within and without. The seals were not along the edge, but on the end of the roll, so that when a Seal was broken, it could be unrolled a portion of the whole, to the next Seal. The content of the Book is not revealed to us, but the results of the Seals being broken is; certainly information discovered by John from the systematic opening of the seals, the seven years of Great Tribulation and its judgments. These activities are most likely preliminary to the Lamb's taking possession of the Purchased Possession. As the Mighty Angel of Acts ten set his right foot on land and his left foot on the sea and declared that there would be no longer delay, he is taking formal possession of the Purchased Possession.

III. DANIEL'S SEVENTIETH WEEK

While this is not in Revelation, it relates directly to what we are studying. The events of Revelation 6: 1 through 19: 21 are in the Seventieth Week of Daniels' writings. Daniel had studied the prophet Jeremiah, and knew the time of the Jews captivity was about up, and set himself to fast and pray till he got the answer of when that would happen. He received much more from Gabriel who came to enlighten him (Da.9: 20-23). Gabriel was telling Daniel that the end of the captivity would not end Israel's troubles, for there would be a longer period to elapse before the Kingdom would be restored to them, a period of Seventy Weeks.

Gabriel told Daniel that "Seventy Weeks" had been set by God upon the Jews and Jerusalem to "*... finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy....*" This Seventy Weeks would come after the rebuilding of Jerusalem and Messiah being cut off. Gabriel told Daniel that the Romans would destroy the city and the Sanctuary again, and that wars were determined upon Israel from that time to the end, with much desolation.

Then the Antichrist would "*... confirm the covenant with many for one week...*" which is the last or Seventieth Week, and then in the middle of that week he would bring about the abomination of desolation (Mt.24: 15). That abomination includes causing the "*... sacrifice and the oblation to cease...*" The Antichrist will make things desolate during this time, until the "consummation, (Da.9: 24-27).

This vision of Seventy Weeks is a critical vision, for it is determined upon Daniel's people. That means that the idea of the British taking Israel's place is wrong. It means that Seventy Weeks has nothing to do with Gentiles, but God dealing with His own people. It could not happen until His own people were in their own land, which has taken place (May, 1948).

The Seventy Weeks has a six-fold purpose: 1) To finish the transgression (of Israel, turning away ungodliness from Jacob [Ro.11: 26-27]); 2) To make an end of sins (of Israel); 3) To make reconciliation for iniquity (rejection of the Messiah – Zec.12: 10); 4) Bring in everlasting righteousness; 5) Seal up the vision and prophecy (no prophet or vision needed with uninterrupted communion with God); 6) To anoint the Most Holy (Place). This last is critical, for there was no anointing of the Temple of Solomon or the Temple of Zerubbabel, which were simply continuations of the Mosaic Tabernacle. In this Temple, there will be no need of a Mercy Seat, for the Merciful One will be there in person. It will contain a Royal Throne on which the King-Priest will sit (Zec.6: 12-13) which is referred to here.

IV. OPENING THE SIX SEALS

The six seals that are about to be opened address events to come, seemingly after the rapture but before the setting up of the Millennial Reign. Seals play an essential role in society and in symbolism. It is the seal that at once forbids knowledge and what guarantees it. It is what closes the letter addressed to a single person, the one who has a right to the information contained therein. Seals assure the permanence of the document. Symbolically, it is the expression of the secret of God and of His veracity. The sealed Book, as long as it is sealed, is the sole property of the One who closed it. The seal cannot be broken except by the one to whom it is written and addressed. At the moment He opens it, He becomes the owner, and keeper of the secrets contained therein, except He decide to reveal it to those He wills to reveal it to.

It is evident since He is handing it to a Man that He intends for man to have the understanding, the Revelation of Himself to His whole creation. This book/scroll contains the secret of the history of men. It

is inevitably the disclosure of profound forces of this history, and the action of God in the history of men. Only a Perfectly Obedient One can open the seals so that the history is not transformed into a destiny. While it is judgment upon the actions of men, that judgment falls back on Jesus. That fact that only the Lamb can open the seals is essential to the reading of all the rest. The calamities we see are the judgments of God upon history which would have had to be, if man were left to himself. That is, if God judged this history and man in themselves. Then it would be better to not disclose the judgments, but allow man to see them only as natural disasters. With the understanding that the judgment of God falls back on God, upon His Lamb, the meaning is that the creation and man are really spared. The judgments can be disclosed without them becoming abominable and man being without hope. We then perceive the universal love of God, with the presence of a people of God as part of the secret meaning of history.

There will be six seals opened, with specific events associated with each. Then the seventh seal is opened, with seven trumpets being sounded, with more judgment punishments poured out. Six seals furnish us with the meaning and profound matter of history; the seventh is the ultimate secret. At the seventh trumpet there is seven bowls then poured out. This period, known as the Tribulation Period, is divided into two parts, first half and second half. Most scholars concur that the last half of this seven year period comprises what is known as the Great Tribulation. The judgments of seven seals and six trumpets take place during the first half of the Tribulation. Chapters four and five have occurred in heaven, and now our attention is drawn to earth.

The “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” have been glamorized by the entertainment industry, but are anything but entertaining. Apocalypse means “end of time” and brings to us the idea of an awful judgmental horror in that climactic day. This is a world devoid of the “salt” and “light” Christ said that believers are (Mt.5: 13-14). Without the Church’s influence, the tribulation (“time of Jacob’s trouble”) begins (Je.30: 4-7; Da.12: 1).

A. First Seal – Rise of Antichrist

The word “come” commands the riders to ride forth. The last two words of the text of Revelation 6: 1 (“and see”) is not in most texts. The riders came so John could see them. It is not Christ who is riding, for He is opening the seals of the Book. This Book contains things not revealed before, but Christ will open for man to see. The “white horse” is not the same as in Revelation chapter nineteen. Christ is symbolized as a Lamb here, not on a horse, and He is not going forth at the start of the Tribulation to conquer, though He will in due time. The rider of the horse is Antichrist. Satan is a master at deception and one of his most successful ploys will be to attempt to duplicate what God does in order to confuse man. This person has a bow, is given a crown later, and goes forth to conquer. The rider, interestingly, has no arrow, a sign of bloodless victories. This last great world ruler will be embraced because of his peace proposals.

It is a picture of a brilliant and irresistible conqueror, with victories that will dazzle the world, elevating him to the position as head of the ten nations of the Old Roman Empire. He will come peaceably, like Antiochus Epiphanies, and obtain the Kingdom by flatteries. God will send upon the earth a strong delusion and they will be ready to receive him. This fulfills Daniel’s vision (Da.7: 8, 24-26; 8: 8-10, 20-25; 11: 35-45) concerning the rise of the Antichrist with ten kings of the revised Roman Empire. He will be supreme over them by the middle of the Tribulation period.

It is not said who gave the crown to the Antichrist, but it is clear of the rise of the Antichrist to power as king among ten kings because of satanic powers (2Th.2: 8-12; Re.13: 1-4; Da.8: 25, 11: 36-39). This rise necessarily takes place preceding the Week, for he must have a position of power and influence to make a

covenant with the Jews at the beginning of the Week. He does not become the “beast” until the middle of the Week, as he is incarnated by Satan. The establishment of his power will be peaceful, but that peace will be short-lived as we can see in the breaking of the Second Seal. The covenant he will make with Israel allows for the rebuilding of the Temple and the instituting of sacrificial worship without the current Palestinian problem that Israel faces from Muslim followers. The trade-off will be for a control of the banking system for commerce that will result in a cash-less world, requiring the “mark of the beast” to transact business. Manufacturing will prosper in his hands, at an awful price (Da.8: 23-25).

This rider, Satan’s Superman, will be the cause of much disaster, namely, wars, famines, death, and pestilence. He will be the czar of czars, with no respect for sacred things or places. Seating himself upon the throne he causes to be put in the Most Holy Place of the Temple the Jews have rebuilt, he will require men to worship him as he proclaims himself to be God. Ambitious conquerors always have disaster following them (Da.chps.7-9, 11), and the Antichrist is the only one who it was prophesied that he would go forth “conquering and to conquer.” It will be as the false messiah that the world will be deceived, but they await his arrival with his vast power. Millions will be deceived into thinking he really is the Lord.

B. Second Seal - War

The second horse went forth at the breaking of the second seal. He had a great sword, and brings war upon the earth. False peace, riding a white horse, will always be followed by war, the red horse rider. There is no question about symbolism here; the natural result of the first rider’s going forth. There is peace promised, but war is what comes. The “Red Horse Rider, wielding a great sword, brings a blood-bath of great magnitude (Mt.24: 6-7). The decisions of man and the political factors do not complete war, for a power symbolized and personalized here, though secret and immaterial, acts also, determining the rest. The fact of a sword shows power, likely political, which ultimately the state. He uses the sword to his own will. Allowed by God, it is judgment upon rebellious humanity launched into evil and violence. The ultimate goal of this rider is to be dictator, not of a nation, but of the world. The autocratic methods of the Antichrist here will lead to insubordination and civil wars among the nations who come under this leader.

Human history is filled with the bloody path of a man in conflict with his brother. In his mad dash toward the fulfillment of greedy goals and selfish dreams, with his brother in the way, he kills him. Since the murder of Abel by Cain, man has resorted to killing to achieve resolution of differences with his fellow man. The entire human race would have been long ago destroyed by the stubborn idiocy of man if the Spirit of God had not held him back. Strange decisions, weather changes, and military breakdowns have thwarted the most vicious of these men in every significant war on record. With the Church gone, there will be unrestrained liberty for men to take their blood-thirsty plans to fruition.

“Peace and safety” will be the cry of many (1Th.5: 3), but it will be sudden destruction that comes upon them. There will be no peace until the Prince of Peace comes (Is.2: 2-4; 9: 6-7). The United Nations nor any other organization man concocts will take care of the real problem. Wars and rumors of wars will be climaxed at the Battle of Armageddon in the valley of Megiddo. War at this time will be the same as before, with the motive of taking control of that which does not belong to them, the entire world.

C. Third Seal - Famine

The rider of the black horse has a strange thing in his hand, a pair of scales. He measures, rations, sells, and weighs. The natural result of war is famine, for men cannot till the land while fighting. We can see,

with the denarius being the wage of a worker for a day, and the measure of wheat meeting the physical need of a man for a day, this is a time of the “vital minimum.” Since he cannot hurt the oil and wine, it appears that his power is limited, and he cannot dominate and master all. However, some say that since the olive tree and the grapevine do not bear at the time of wheat, but a few months later, it is possible that the statement about not hurting them has to do with the invaders not destroying them. This was the attitude of Titus during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Matthew speaks of this great famine (Mt.24: 6-7). Millions of those who did not die in war will die of a lack of food. Horrible blood-shed is followed by horrible famine as the Antichrist conquers great nations and empires.

Industries converted to war machines will cease to produce that which conserves life through food production. Shortages always manifest first in the scarcity of food. The rider of this horse is the conserver of food. A hard day’s wages will buy only about a quart of wheat, the amount to maintain life for one individual in Bible times. Family members who cannot work will starve without help. No plan for distribution of the meager food supply will suffice to maintain life for all. Three and a half million starve each year today, so the deaths by starvation then will be unprecedented.

D. Fourth Seal – Death and Hell

While the riders of the first three horses are not named, the actions certainly give us an indication of their purposes. Now we see a great toll taken on human life as the Antichrist conquers. The “pale” horse could be translated as “yellowish-green” (Gr. “*choleros*”), suggesting a death-producing disease that always follows famine. There is question whether there is a fifth horse here, with “Hell,” (actually Hades – the grave) following after “Death.” Was “hell” riding double with Death? Whichever, it is evident that the habitation of the dead gathers up the work of the pale horse rider. The great pestilence that comes upon the earth because of the first four riders will certainly sweep over most of the Eastern Hemisphere covered by what was the Old Roman Empire. Death will ride over the earth, collecting humanity for its torture and the grave is the end result, with one-fourth of planet earth dying at this time. Notice that it is not just the wicked that are subjected to them. It is the sin of all that brings, without discrimination, destruction upon all.

The “beasts of the earth” mentioned here are likely not lions and such, for there is not a population of those in the geographic areas of these events. More likely, it is rats and rodents, scavengers, which feed upon the decaying carcasses of the human race. What an end to those once-proud rejecters of Christ. The previous three rider’s actions will be culminated with the grave. Most of the people dying at this period will be lost and going to hell. While the first three and a half years were bad, it has been nothing like it will be in the second half of the Tribulation. The destruction is so great that Hades has to enlarge herself to accommodate the unregenerate dead (Is.5: 13-16). Ezekiel’s “four sore judgments” upon Jerusalem take place at this time (Ezk.14: 21). Yet this is only the beginning of sorrows (Mt.24: 6-8). These will be “hardening judgments” with the people not seeking God, but calling for rocks to fall upon them so as to hide (Re.6: 15-17).

The “four horsemen” are the four chief components of history. It is the intermingling of political and economic power, with forces of destruction and death, as well as the Deceiver. These same forces are at work in all epochs, affecting all of man’s history. History is not a series of accidents, nor some rational and mathematical combination of de-limitable and coherent factors. There is no explicit causality or system of history. These “horses” run through the whole earth, here at one time, there at another, with no apparent logic in their acts. Or is it? Perhaps there is, in the combination of the four unchained forces, with their diversity of action registered in an undetermined duration, the production of such a great number of possible configurations that we only have the impression of chance.

Interestingly, all history depends upon them. All events can be analyzed, yet we always return to economic power, to work and commerce, to political power, to war and justice, to the influence of death, epidemics and demography. Since the horsemen are always the same, we can conclude that there is no progress, nor deterioration of history and civilization. While everything happens on the human plane, we must then admit that if war breaks out, man is the one who unleashes it. If we looked at all the facts of psychology, we can say that no man ever clearly and consciously wants war, or its devastating after effects. Men wish to prevent war, at any price (see the Allied Powers in World War II). Yet these same men will become the very factors of war's declaration. They are not strictly the masters of circumstances. Men are moved, often against their own wills, to declare and actuate war, because of the intermingling of the power of the horsemen and their inspiration of men. Samuel says that the famine and sword are active by the mediation of men, while the pestilence and mortality acts by itself (2Sa.24: 14). The unleashing of these "forces of history" is the expression of the judgments of God, and yet it is not He who evokes them, but simply discloses them. It is man, because of his refusal to follow his Creator, which has unleashed them.

E. Fifth Seal – Tribulation Martyrs

The fifth seal is the fifth component of history. History cannot occur independently of prayer. Martyrs, witnesses who have maintained their testimony at the price of their lives, are shown to us as accelerating the course of history, leading to its end and fulfillment. Their attestation of the truth brought the world's judgment upon them, and it will cause them to judge the world. These martyrs are not demanding satisfaction or personal vengeance, but the triumph of the justice of God. Our work to establish justice on earth always implies the condemnation of the "wicked." The vengeance here required falls upon all that is included in the "world" and consequently the powers of evil and any opposition to God.

The prayer of martyrs is a force of history. They have been justified by grace, indicated by the fact that the robe of white is given to them, not "bleached" by them. Their martyrdom corresponds to their exemplary witness. It is as witnesses that they are a power in history. They bear the Word of God before the world and before God. They have experienced the truth and the lie of this world. Absolutely credible, their word becomes credible by their giving proof in bearing the Word of God. They are a pivot of history, being patient until the Word of God is completed in the world. The testimony of these martyrs, being rooted outside the system of the world, is an expression of the freedom of man in history. It is indeed this testimony that he testifies of his freedom. He points to what is exterior, and makes it actual and present, based upon remaining tied to that which he bears testimony to, as the past and the eternal present. He speaks to this world while pointing to the Lord, and prays to the Lord while pointing to the world and its bearing with and upon him.

These Tribulation Martyrs will be persons who were saved after the rapture of the Church. Great revivals will occur during the Tribulation. Who else could they look to but the Lord? Many who were not right with the Lord, but who had heard the message before the rapture of the Church will be converted at the death and destruction that they see upon the earth. There will be then as now, only one hope for them, and many will grab at it. Their martyrdom will be because they refuse to serve Antichrist or the world system. They will die, perhaps by the millions.

The "altar" John sees is the "sacrificial altar" which corresponds to the "burnt offering altar." The souls of the martyrs under the altar are proof that they have been offered as a sacrifice. It is at the end of the Great Tribulation that these "tribulation martyrs" will be raptured. They will not go through "soul sleep" as some teach, for there is no such thing. Also, there is no "purgatory" for these martyrs. It is not a pre-preparation place, but going into the presence of God (2Co.5: 8). A saved person's soul goes into the

presence of the Lord and lost persons soul goes to hell immediately. The body stays on earth and does “sleep,” but not the soul or spirit of either the lost or saved.

The persecution they will face is due to the preaching of the Word of God. When a person is born again, even today, they become an irritation to the unbelieving world around them. These people will be a constant irritation, so much so that their unyielding position will be written with their blood. The preaching will be that of the Gospel of the Kingdom, not the Gospel of grace that we now hear. It is the Gospel that John the Baptist preached, “Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (Mt.3: 1-2). Elijah the prophet will preach the same message while he is here as one of the two witnesses (Ma.5: 5-6).

This message will be preached by Jews and will be the announcement for Christ to come back to set up His Earthly Kingdom during the Millennium. The kings of the earth, the Antichrist, and the kings of the Ten Federated Nations will hate the message, and a great persecution will break out against both those who preach it and those who believe and obey it. The cry of these martyrs is expressed in the Imprecatory Psalms (35, 55, 59, 94, etc.). These are the saints of the Most High Daniel saw which would receive the Kingdom (Da.7: 27).

This preaching is really antagonistic to unbelievers, for they have been battling the Word of God since the time of Adam. In today’s western civilization, persecution for believing the inerrancy of the Bible does not result in beheading or burning at the stake. Physical torment has given way to mental anguish in this era. Professional ostracism and public embarrassment awaits the Bible teacher who stands for the veracity of the Word. But in some areas, simply owning or having in ones possession a Bible will take a person to prison. This pressure is rising against what “God said.”

F. Sixth Seal – Wrath of God

The wrath of God is revealed when this seal is opened. While there is great trouble during the first five seals, it is not the wrath of God, but the natural outcome of the rising of a conqueror. Persecutions and tremendous problems will punctuate that time, but not the wrath of God. Absolute chaos breaks out here. God will begin to send His wrath upon the persecutors of those who will not follow the world system during this seal opening. Earthquakes and the darkening of the sun are part of the events of this wrath outpouring. Perhaps, as some scientists state, the violent earthquakes mentioned will cause particles of dust and hot ash to flow from far below the earth’s surface through present volcanoes to darken the sun and change the moon’s color at night.

While the sun has been darkened three times in recorded history (Ge.1: 2; Ex.10: 21-23; Mt.27: 45), this will be a total blackout, with the sun becoming as black as “sackcloth of hair.” These are physical convulsions, not the overthrow of earthly powers as some teach. This blackness has happened before (Mt.27: 45; Ex.10: 21-23), and even in the 18th century. It was recorded in New England on May 19, 1780 of a “dark day,” not an eclipse of the sun, but dark enough that the moon could be seen in broad day light and chickens went to roost. This has never been explained. Joel prophesies of events like this (Jo.2: 30-31). Isaiah says that the “Day of the Lord” will manifest the stars and constellations not giving their light nor our sun or moon shining (Is.13: 9-10).

Blood will be the appearance of the moon, which actually happens five times during the Great Tribulation, in response to the sun’s refusing to shine. Another disturbance will be the stars of heaven falling to earth. These are likely meteors which shoot through the heavens now, and have struck the earth before.

However, this will be an unprecedented meteor flood, not just a “shower.” The largest recorded meteor to hit planet earth was estimated to weigh about thirty tons, but in this time huge bodies will come from the heavens and strike earth with such force it will seem atomic bombs have gone off. Meteors hit earth with such duration that many thought the end of the world had come on November 13, 1833. The meteors struck earth that day for over three hours. During this event the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Ep.6: 12), that is, the principalities and powers of the heavenly places (between the Third Heaven where God dwells and earth’s atmosphere).

A fifth thing that happens is that the heaven departs as a scroll. It does not pass out of existence, for it is seen after this event (Re.8: 1, 10, 13; 9: 1). Another thing that happens is that geography as we know it is changed. Mountains and islands will be moved from their places. This great earthquake will move massive mountains and islands about, because of the wrath of God hitting the earth. The seventh thing is that the heaven will be opened (depart as a scroll) so that the thrones of the Father and the Son can be seen. Disarray will be the condition of the heavens. It will bring a realization that the wrath of God is coming, and the men of earth will cry out in fear and dread. No more mocking and laughter at the things of God. Terror will grip them. With such catastrophic events taking place, man’s puny philosophies will not bring him peace or rest. Financial security and false religions will not be sufficient to calm the unbeliever in these events. The sophisticated man in his condominium will feel the same panic as the lost man in a cave. All men, regardless of class, will be able to approach the level ground at the foot of the cross. The rejecters of salvation will stand together on level ground at the judgment. There will be a global prayer meeting as man tries to escape the “wrath of the Lamb.” Yet there is no escaping this appointment, the Great Day of His Wrath.

It would be beneficial for the student to study the following Olivet Discourse in Matthew for a striking similarity to the six seals (Mt.24: 1-30). Since Christ spoke these things in exact order in the “Days of His Flesh” as to what would happen in the “Day of the Lord,” we can be assured that He is Deity.

Part 03: Chapter 05-06

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

V. REDEEMED COMPANIES

Chapter seven is parenthetical to this Book. None of this chapter is addressed to the Church. It actually happens between the sixth and seventh seals. It contains some explanations and clarifications of what is happening. It is a detail giver for us to better understand what is going on. For instance, the trumpets and vials, not revealed in the seals, are brought to light. This breaks up the natural order of the events. No seals are broken in this parenthetical chapter. Chapter seven is actually one of the greatest revivals in the history of this world. Here more people come to the Lord than has even been known to do so. Habakkuk prayed for this to happen (Ha.3: 2). The holding of the wind represents the requirement of peace, the holding of catastrophe back until the people of God can be assembled completely. There are two courses of history we see here, not immediately or visibly evident, but occurring one inside the other. There is the gathering, progressively, of the people of God while the catastrophes and calamities are taking place.

When the one part is withdrawn, then there is nothing but terror and disorder for the other part. Sacred history we can see here, the surgical removal of the man who is removed from the one who is not helped in his calamity. The seal of God here is as the blood upon the lintel in the times of Israel coming out of Egypt. Even as that time, this will be a constitution of the holy people in the midst of cataclysms.

A. First Redeemed Company - Jews

There are two companies of the redeemed. Revelation chapter seven, verses one through eight bring us explanation of the first group, the one hundred forty four thousand Jews. These are reserved by God, as He did the seven thousand in Elijah's time. They are a ". . . *remnant according to the election of grace*" (Ro.11: 4-6). While some suggest this is the church of the end-time, there are no direct or indirect references to the church, and the church has not been mentioned since chapter three. They are not "Sabbath-Keepers" of the end time as one denomination says, for there is nothing said about a "Sabbath" here.

Sloppy theology causes a claim by the Jehovah Witnesses that these are the 144,000 of that group that are taken to heaven. They had to revise their doctrine, for in 1931, when their membership reached that number; they then began to say that the balance of their membership would have to stay here on earth, without the blessing of going to heaven. They also fail to explain the twelve tribes involved in this first of the Redeemed Companies.

Still another false interpretation was taught by Herbert W. Armstrong (deceased) that these 144,000 are of Anglo-Saxon decent in England and America. He also taught that the Queen of England sits on the Throne of David. Amazingly, those who want the promised blessings of the Old Testament to the Jew desire to leave out the curses that were also promised if they were not obedient.

Another teaching is that the number is not a number, but an expression of twelve times twelve, a limited number, which is to say a total figure, a totality without any lack. The Tribes (absent the unfaithful Dan, replaced by Manasseh), they say denotes the first people of God, composed as this people has been, with a specific election. Their statement claims to be the teaching of Paul (Ro.11: 26). This Scripture is simply saying that all Israel will be brought into the way of salvation through the acknowledgement of the Messiah. The term "saved," as applied to the Israelites in different parts of the Scripture, signifies no more than their being gathered out of the nations of the world, separated to God, and possessed of the high privilege of being His special people. Those who promote this teaching say that all of Israel, from all time - indicated as totality by twelve times twelve - shall be saved. This is a variation of the teaching of some, even in the 21st century, who say that "ultimate salvation" is the end plan of God, bringing in ". . . *the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars . . .*" to the eternal presence of God instead of where the Scriptures say they will reside eternally, the lake of fire (Re.21: 8).

Four angels of God stand on the four corners of planet earth and hold back the four winds. They are caretakers of this planet, with the power of good and bad on the planet, namely the weather systems. These are the first of the seven "trumpet angels" who are given power to hurt the earth and sea and trees

(Is.11: 12; Mt.24: 31; Re.20: 8). Wind can be seen here as the judgment of God as well as mentioned above.

God will have a remnant in this day, just as in Elijah's day. There will be 144,000 who are not following this world, but the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of the twelve tribes of Judah will have twelve thousand sealed for the express purpose of being kept through the trumpet judgments. This is not a sealing of believers as in the New Testament believer, but a sealing by the angels (Mt.24: 31). The Father's name is written in the forehead for others to see. They do not experience a "secret discipleship" as some try. The angel from the east is in charge of sealing, and this speaks of the ones sealed as looking toward the "sun-rising" or the fulfillment of Malachi (Ma.4: 2). Special direction is given to not hurt these representatives of the Lord (Re.9: 4). At the seventh trumpet they will be caught up to heaven (Re.14: 1-5).

In naming the tribes, there is a significant difference between the 12 sons of Jacob and this list. Dan and Ephraim are omitted and Joseph and Levi are substituted. Moses wrote the reason in Deuteronomy. Any person or tribe who should introduce idolatry into Israel should have their or its name blotted out and separated from the Tribes of Israel. Dan and Ephraim were guilty of this as they permitted Jeroboam to set up golden calves (1Kg.12: 25-30). Since Dan and Ephraim are listed in the tribes which shall occupy the Holy Land in the Millennium, this sealing must be for preservation rather than inheritance (Ezk.48: 1-7, 23-29). The Tribes of Dan and Ephraim will pass through the Great Tribulation without sealing.

A partial spiritual blindness has been upon the Jews since their rejection of Jesus as Messiah. It has not prohibited individual Jews from accepting Jesus, but for the most part they have rejected, or at least seemed to ignore Him. This blindness will be lifted as the "fullness of the Gentiles" comes about, and there will be a sweeping revival in the Jewish peoples.

The trumpets begin immediately after the seals and continue to the middle of the Tribulation Period. The seal is thought to be a literal mark upon them which can be seen. The locust of the abyss will be able to see it (Re.9: 4); the seal of the Abrahamic Covenant was literal (Ro.4: 11); the sign of the Passover was literal (Ex.12: 13); the mark of the beast will be literal (Re.13: 16-18, 14: 9; 20: 4). The Word specifically says that they are "sealed" in their foreheads (Re.7: 3, 14: 1). Revelation 14: 1 tells us that the seal is God's name written in their foreheads.

Now is the play for world domination by Antichrist. He will be likely angered by the seal of God in the foreheads of the believing Jews, which represents His possession, protection, and preservation of the believer, and will try to destroy them. We can see this in the rainbow after the flood, the circumcision of Abraham, the blood on the doorposts in Egypt, and the scarlet thread dropped from the window of Rahab at Jericho.

While not explicitly expressed in Scripture, it is likely that the seal or Mark of The Beast is as an identification of Antichrist's people. The people of God sealed with His mark will be protected from the trumpet plagues, just as His people were protected during the bondage of Egypt (Ex.9: 6, 26; 10: 23; 12: 12-13). Of course, the greatest seal is the Holy Spirit who provides us with the assurance of possession, protection, and preservation (2Co.1: 21-22). This indicates that God's power is able to keep us no matter

the power of influence outside of us. There is also His protection (Ep.1: 13-14; Ps.84: 11-12) and preservation (Ep.4: 30; 2Co.5: 17).

B. Second Redeemed Company – Great Tribulation Saints

The second company, of redeemed saints (Gentiles) is seen here after the rapture. These are from all nations and are a great multitude that “. . . *no man could number.*” Some teach here that it is the Church that is being raptured out at Mid-Tribulation. The martyred Tribulation saints have been resting for a “little season” until their brethren that should be killed are martyred. They will join all other martyrs of the Tribulation (not necessarily the Great Tribulation), making one company. “Red and yellow, black and white” are they who stand in His presence, dressed in robes of righteousness, praising God. Unashamedly, they worship Him with exuberance, not following the path of the “frozen chosen.” They praise God’s grace by speaking of His salvation, God’s government by speaking of His throne, and His gift by speaking of His Lamb (Re.7: 10-11). The angels and elders join in by giving back to Him what we, the redeemed, have been given, namely, “blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power and might” (V.12). It is a place of honor and exaltation they have before the throne.

They have white robes as Jesus and redeemed humanity are depicted in heaven. They also have palms in their hands, rejoicing in the total victory that they have finally achieved through Christ. Lukewarm and backslidden Christians will remain on earth. Many of these latter will turn to Him as the Tribulation heats up. It will be death to do so, but this salvation can still be had. Interestingly, verse sixteen tells us what happened at the end of these saints lives. They shall “. . . hunger no more.” Yet the compassion of God has taken care of them (V.17).

VI. SEVENTH SEAL - SIX TRUMPETS

A finalization of the seal breaking (the seventh) now comes into view, as well as the beginning of trumpets being sounded. With the seventh seal we see that God is closing the book of history. It here consummates history, marks an end to it, and permits the Book to be opened. Only by the breaking of this seal can the Book be read. So it is that beginning with the Incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that history becomes readable.

The trumpet is the instrument which sounds before the king, before the powerful. It calls and musters, and concentrates forces in a particular place, mustering soldiers and signaling decisive action to be taken. It is also a transmitter of information, but of a different order, since now it sets in action more than just the transmission of knowledge. The trumpet is also a proclamation of glory. It sounds to mark the victory after the combat (Co.2: 15; 2Co.2: 14).

This part of the Book is the launching of violent action, concentration of powers, a decisive combat between the woman and the dragon, and the gathering of all the factors of the rupture with God. That includes both the combatants against God (the dragon and beasts) as well as all the combatants for God

(Michael, heaven and earth, and the two witnesses). This is what manifests the glory of the Lamb. The trumpet here plays its role perfectly.

This central part of the Book is the heart or axis to which the rest is ordered. Here is the affirmation of the first two parts being validated: that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Church and of history. Finally it is here that we situate what follows, the particular judgment. This judgment and the end of the world cannot be understood except in terms of the judgment which has fallen upon the Son of God.

Perhaps we should insert here that judgment has already happened, that is, upon sin. God's judgment fell upon God, God condemned God, and God has taken upon Himself that totality. This may be strange sounding, but there is no other judgment that amounts to anything without the judgment of sin that fell upon Jesus Christ. God has taken upon Himself the totality of evil, which was exerted against Jesus; He accepted and assumed that totality. There cannot be a "more" to this judgment. Because of this judgment, the Kingdom of Heaven has been planted in the midst of the world and it never ceases to grow, even if we do not see it. That resurrection has already been accomplished in Jesus and it works even now in us (we are already raised with Christ – Ep.2: 6). It was/is the plan inaugurated, of which nothing can turn it back or annul them. How could there be an addition to the fact that the Kingdom of God is here and death is vanquished? What could be added to the perfect meeting of God and man, to the union established? Evil has been decisively set aside because God has died and, after that, evil can no longer do anything else.

Also, we see the ones who are condemned in the final destruction are not men, but the rebellious powers which are described to us in the previous section, upon whom men depend and whom men represent figuratively. It is the action of these satanic powers that in every circumstance provokes death in the Apocalypse – not at all the action of God upon men. It is the satanic power that God destroys, which also entails human disasters, since man is deeply attached and possessed by them.

The seventh seal breaking is a unique conclusion to the previous six being broken. The Seventh Seal is inclusive of all that happens during the trumpets and vials. It extends to the Millennium. There is no tangible catastrophic event seen here, but a silence in heaven. This suspense was awesome to the inhabitants of heaven, for they were totally silent. The silence of the beginning of the eighth chapter designates biblically a crisis. It is a sign of the end or the fulfillment of time. In biblical literature, silence is the presence of the all-powerful God (Ha.2: 20; Zec.2: 13, etc.). So the silence is of a triple, overlapped meaning: crisis/end of the time/ presence of the All-Powerful. They were waiting as silent preparation was made for the awful judgments to come upon the earth in the trumpets and vials. Heaven has not been silent, in what we know of eternity past, until now. Praise and worship takes place there, from eternity past, "around the clock" if a clock means anything there. But now there is silence. Angels will quit praising, the souls in front of the throne will be silent, not a sound. Six seals have shaken this planet, but the seventh does not bode well for the future with the trumpets and then the vials to follow.

There are seven trumpet angels and a priestly angel. This passage is explanatory and preparatory for the sounding of the seven trumpets. The seven angels seem to be special, with literal trumpets, but having nothing to do with the rapture of the Church. A single trumpet will be sounded then (1Th.4: 16-17). When these trumpets are blown, one at a time, it is an announcement of an event. Trumpets in Scripture picture and precede an unusual act of God or herald a Divine announcement (Ex.19: 13). It is immediately after the seventh seal that the first trumpet is sounded. Most scholars agree that this is half-way through the first three and a half years of the full Tribulation Period. The last trumpet will be blown at the end of the first

half of the Tribulation. The seven seals and seven trumpets represent fourteen events foreseen in this period.

The “another angel” came to the golden altar to minister. Likely it is Christ in His present earthly ministry as our High Priest (He.4: 14-16; 6: 20; 7: 24-28; 13: 15). The “censer” is always mentioned in connection with the high priest of the Old Testament (Le.16: 12; He.9: 4). A golden censer was in the hand of the angel who came before the Golden Incense Altar. The “gold” represents royalty and kingship, or that he was acting in the behalf of the King. He was given “much incense” to be offered with the “prayers of all saints.” This is significant, for it again indicates that God can do nothing without the prayers of the saints concerning planet earth. The incense is indicative of the Holy Spirit and His energizing power. The altar of Incense was a very sacred place (Ex.30: 6; He.9: 3-4), a place of purification and mediation. It implies the consecration of the high priest because only the one who offers absolute sacrifice can approach and stand before the place where God encounters man. Before God, it is the prayers of the saints and martyrs that accomplish the purification and mediation.

The ones who had come out of Tribulation prayed for deliverance from their enemies. The fire from off the altar is a remarkable act and the effects of it are seen in the thundering and voices which broke the silence and the lightning and earthquake that take place on earth. The judgments coming upon earth are the answer to prayers of these saints. The lesson of the fire from the altar is clear. If a man will not accept the sacrifice of our Lord and the resulting comfort, he will be subject to the fire from the altar that signifies condemnation. The burning coal is that of purification, similar to Isaiah’s experience (Is.6: 5-6). Contrived and complicated methods of approaching God (religion) will never cause a man to be right with God.

Finishing the ministry at the altar, the seven angels prepare to blow their trumpets. This is not events concurrent with the time of the seals being broken. These are literal events as the other judgments recorded in the history of Israel, just as the plagues of Egypt were literal (Ex.34: 10; De.28: 10; Is.11: 15-16; Mi.7: 13-15; Je.23: 7-8).

Man falls into the evil deeds as a result of the liberty God has given to him. Every work of liberation is in fact destructive of the evil environment man lives in. That which assures man’s liberty is felt by man as a frightful personal offence. Many times the question comes, “How can God who is good permit it . . .?” Man does not envisage that the evil deed is most often the result of the liberty God has allowed man to have as well as the autonomy man has seized against God. Man is responsible for what is done, but he protests against God for what is done. Man would demand then that God take from him the very liberty that he enjoys. Man would have God mechanize him. Evil takes place by the interplay of spiritual powers who act in the world and society. Thus, the act of God may appear evil to man when it is actually God liberating him. The surgeon cutting out a cancer, of necessity removes some tissue that is not cancerous. But, the person whose life is saved may perfectly well interpret it as a frightful torture or illegitimate extraction, since they are only aware of the pain that remains after the operation. It is in this perspective that we view the “plagues” which fall upon men in the Apocalypse.

Amazingly, the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is the overturning of the order of the world. It is the unthinkable that has happened; God is blended with His creation. He even submits Himself to its laws. This is unimaginable. The five trumpets are the royal announcement by the heralds of the Perfect Majesty, that it approaches, is present, and more intimately present than can be conceived, since it is no longer possible to distinguish Him from creation, from a body of men. So God renounces His power and adopts

the way of humility. The pillars of the world are more shaken by this than be Him coming in His fury and glory. When God renounces His power, it is far more terrifying, and the whole of creation totters. These are a recollection of the plagues of Egypt, descriptive of God's deliverance of Israel from bondage, and so it will be as God delivers man from the bondage of a sin-sick world. Yet it appears to be a "de-creation" with the destruction of plant life, waters, lights, and fish. It is a true counter-creation which is at work up until the time of the process of the new creation begins in Jesus.

A. First Trumpet – Hail, Fire, Blood

Trumpets are used to call to war, to worship, and the convocation of the people, as well as to proclaim festivals and judgments (Ex.19: 16; Am.3: 6; Jos.6: 13-16). At the sounding of this trumpet we see literal events, with the seventh of the five of the nine plagues of Egypt being repeated. The events here are similar to the seventh plague that came upon Egypt because of Pharaoh's disobedience in letting Israel go. Here there is the addition of blood, and the exception of animate life. This plague will affect only vegetation, though in Egypt it affected man, beast, and vegetation. The trees are literal (Re.7: 16; 18: 8). Agricultural progress will be impossible, leading to more famine and difficulty. The "fire" that is mentioned running along the ground is lightning.

B. Second Trumpet – Burning Mountain

The "great mountain burning with fire" is likely a meteor that blazes as it enters earth's atmosphere. The area this hits could well be the Mediterranean, for the events of the seals, plagues, trumpets, and vials will be especially poured out on the Old Roman Empire, which borders upon that Sea. One-third of it will become blood, and a commensurate amount of life in it will die. How fitting that man will reject the blood of Christ as part of an "emotional fanaticism in a slaughter-house religion," and then blood will be the end result of several of the judgments ships and businesses will be destroyed, with people beginning to realize that God is judging here. The ships may be destroyed by a giant wave of water, or it may be that the meteor strikes the shipping yards or a fleet of naval vessels. This kind of destruction happened before as a storm struck the Spanish Armada in the past. The first plague in Egypt is replicated here.

Another thought about what this "mountain" is comes from the Bible which teaches a cataclysmic disturbance in the sky similar to a nuclear blast (Lk.21: 25-27). When it says that the "powers of heaven shall be shaken," it is a phrase truly power packed. It uses the Greek word "*ouranos*" which is where we get our word "uranium." Uranium is where men produce nuclear energy. So the phrase could be read as, "the powers of uranium being shaken." "Dunamis," potential stored up explosive power combined would cause the phrase to read "the explosive power of uranium shall be shaken." "To be shaken" here is to be "set off balance." In modern English, we can see it being a nuclear explosion. This "mountain of fire" could be the same, though we do not know. John was describing in the best word-pictures he could what he saw.

C. Third Trumpet – Star Called Wormwood

The third trumpet is sounded and judgment falls in the form of a star from heaven which is on fire as a lamp. This is probably again a meteor that flames as it passes through this atmosphere, whose gaseous vapors are absorbed by the one-third waters of the rivers and fountains, likely in the Mediterranean area. The waters, now bitter as "wormwood," kill many. Wormwood is a bitter herb used in the manufacture of absinthe (vermouth). This bitter green alcohol had a cult following during the Bohemian period (19th Century Paris), and affected people with hallucinations. This bitterness can also be seen as calamity from the original Greek. Jeremiah prophesied this event, as Israel would be given "water of gall to drink" (Je.9: 13-15). The Jews knew of this plant, which grew in only the most desolate of areas. The stubbornness of man in rejecting Christ's sweetness shall result in man receiving the bitterness of his own actions and disbelief.

D. Fourth Trumpet – Sun, Moon, and Stars Affected

These events are similar to the sixth seal, and comparable to the fifth vial events. The time of darkness is not known, but smoke from the abyss causes it. When these events start, they will happen one after the other. These events are prophesied by Christ in Luke's writing (Lk.21: 25-28). "Distress of nations" is what Jesus said would accompany these events. Some have proposed to render the word "earth" by "land," confining it to Judea. It often has this meaning, and there seems some propriety in so using it here. The word translated "distress" denotes anxiety of mind-such an anxiety as people have when they do not know what to do to free themselves from calamities; and it means here that the calamities would be so great and overwhelming that they would not know what to do to escape. There will be a lack of counsel or answer from humans, and deep anxiety at the impending evils.

The words "with perplexity should say, "on account" of their perplexity, or the desperate state of their affairs. The Syriac has it, "perplexity or wringing of hands," which is a sign of deep distress and horror. The "woes" of the future will be the opposite of the blessing of the Lord which comes only through submission to Him as Savior and Lord. The angel is a bearer of bad tidings to those below, for they are without hope.

When Jesus said the "sea and the waves roaring," this is not literal, but as an image of great distress. Probably it is designed to denote that these calamities would come upon them like a deluge. As when in a storm the ocean roars, and wave rolls on wave and dashes against the shore, and each succeeding surge is more violent than the one that preceded it, so would the calamities come upon Judea. They would roll over the whole land, and each wave of trouble would be more violent than the one that preceded it, until the whole country would be desolate (Is.8: 7-8; Re.18: 15).

Men's hearts will fail them. It is an example of the highest terror. The word rendered "failing" commonly denotes to "die," and here it means that the terror would be so great that people would faint and be ready to die in view of the approaching calamities. So much the more when the wicked will be arraigned before the Son of God, and face the prospect of the awful sufferings of hell that shall continue forever.

There is an announcement at the end of the fourth trumpet, and before the fifth is sounded. These three woes come after warning from the angel, and come as the trumpets are sounded. The Revised Version

says that an “eagle” flies through heaven announcing the “woes.” We can see that the reason for the RV substitution of “eagle” is that the Greek word “*aetos*,” from which it is translated, indicates the “wind-like flight.” The meaning is not affected, for God used Balaam’s ass to talk to him, and certainly can use an “eagle” in the same manner (Nu.22: 30).

E. Fifth Trumpet – Demonic Oppression (First Woe)

Here a “star” falls from heaven. Not literally a star, it is an intelligent being, an angel. The Word of God uses “star” to speak of a “great one.” Today it is used to speak of a “star” in entertainment. Satan’s angels are referred to as stars also (Re.12: 4-9). Only an intelligent being can be given a command or use a key. This is likely the same angel that binds Satan at the start of the Millennium (Re.20: 1-3). God certainly would not entrust the key to this place to an evil angel, so it must be a good angel.

The “bottomless pit” mentioned is not hell, nor the Lake of Fire, but a place of confinement of demons, who are not of Satan’s angels, but a class of disembodied spirits, likely of the Pre-Adamic period, who will try to take control of bodies again through humans. They are the most-wicked spirits of the wicked, with the power to derange the mind and body (Mt.12: 22, 15: 22; Lk.4: 35, 8: 26-36, 9: 42). These are what were identified as “familiar spirits” of the Old Testament and “seducing spirits” that Paul spoke of (1Ti.4: 1). Demonical power will increase over the people because of these which invade earth (Mt.12: 43-45). The word “generation” used in Matthew should be understood as “race,” which Jesus was addressing, the Jews. The Greek word “*genea*” is alternately translated as age, generation, or nation. This “possessing” seven-fold worse comes because of the “covenant” that the nation of Israel makes with the Antichrist, called a “covenant with death and hell” (Is.28: 18).

There is an angel referred to *Abaddon* or *Apollyon* (Greek) which means “destruction” or “destroyer.” This evil angel is bound in the abyss at present. Study the following Scriptures for a clearer picture (Is.16: 4; Je.4: 7, 6: 26; Da.8: 24-25, 9: 26; 11: 44). This destroyer has no reference to Satan, but to an angel (star) which will be loosed and will torment men with his “locusts.” While John the Baptist ate locusts, they were a “clean” food and were eaten for centuries (Le.11: 22). These locusts will not hurt the vegetation or the believers who have been sealed with God’s seal. All others will be tortured and seek death, but it will not come. The affliction is so great, like the sting of a scorpion, (which is excruciatingly painful), causing people to want to die rather than suffer. Soldiers of the Roman army of old said that they did not fear arrow or sword, but the sting of a scorpion. The poison injected is like a firebrand inside, causing death more often than not. They will have power to torment men for five months. Smoke, like a great hot furnace will cause the sun to be darkened as the abyss is opened, and the demon locusts will come out of the smoke to bring great torment.

Joel’s prophecy speaks of “horsemen” in similar context. It is not likely literal horsemen, but these same “locusts” which are actually spirit beings, which cause such pain as to make a man’s face turn black. That John and Joel are speaking of the same event is clear, for it is the “Day of the Lord” (Joel.2: 1, 11). Since we have no historical record of such “horsemen,” we can only say that the event is future. In their description we see several things of significance:

1. “Horses prepared unto battle” speaks of irresistibility. No human weaponry will stop them.
2. “Crowns of gold” speaks of their authority from God to carry out their torturous mission.
3. “Faces as of men” says that they are of superior intelligence, yet even the brightest of men will appear moronic in trying to escape these demons.
4. “Hair as of women” confirms beauty. Man is drawn as if hypnotized by them.
5. “Teeth as of lions” speaks of destructive force, crushing in their abilities to go through any obstruction in their path.
6. “Breastplates of iron” says they are totally invincible.
7. “Sound of chariots of many horses running to battle” describes the terrible sound of their movement in battle.
8. “Stings in their tails” signifies the terrible pain they will inflict as a man is attacked.

These “locusts” have a king and the description of them proves they are not as the locusts that were eaten during John’s day. Ordinary locusts do not have a king (Pr.30: 27). Some have taught that Satan is this “*Abaddon*,” or “*Apollyon*” (Greek). However, Satan is not so called in Scripture, and He certainly is not confined to the Bottomless Pit at this time. Thus it must be another creature of wickedness. Smoke of a fire would destroy ordinary locusts, and they certainly do not have hair as a woman or teeth like lions. They do not exist on earth, but under the earth, are not subject to “death,” and are feared by men because they are not mortal.

The locusts are precisely the horror of counter-creation unchained (which was spoken of previously) as well as how many Chaldean, Egyptian, and Greek divinities and semi-divinities are characterized by mixture – winged bulls, centaurs, sphinx, etc. Here men will wish to die, but they do not, for spiritual death is strictly beyond death. The locusts act five months; a limitation which St. Augustine said was because of God’s “seven months of grace.” This is the unchaining of chaos, revealing how profound the reality of evil is.

Indications are that they are literal, receiving commands to not hurt certain persons. Some say they will be clearly visible, others say invisible. Either way, men shall do anything to be free of contact with them. But if invisible, as spirit beings, there will be “screen” that would keep them out of a confined area. No wall would stop them. The extraordinary difference of these locusts will be their size and voraciousness. Five months is the time of these locusts, the same amount of time that natural locusts appear, May to September. This is the first “woe,” but it is trifling compared to the next two.

F. Sixth Trumpet – Invasion from the East (Second Woe)

At the sixth trumpet there will be a command to loose the “four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.” These fallen angels will command a two hundred million man army, going in four directions, slaying the “third part of man.” It is a massive slaughter. This army is of Satan’s forces, since the “four angels” were bound in the Euphrates, the geographic area of “Satan’s seat” in ancient times, specifically the city of Babylon. We see previous supernatural armies in Scripture with Elijah and Elisha (2Kg.2: 11; 6: 13-17). The Lord Jesus will take the Kingdom back with an Army of Heaven attending Him (Re.12: 7).

While the river Euphrates is indicated here, we do not know the land area of this destruction of men. If it covers the whole world, more than a billion humans could die. If the only area affected is around the Euphrates, it is likely three hundred million or more will die. These literal and indestructible demonic creatures will be leading an army just for the purpose of killing men. This killer army is not going to kill for 391 days as some teach, but have been prepared for “the hour, month, and year” when God says it is time. They come to punish idolatry and demon worship, but the remainder of humans do not repent, being left to face further judgment (V.20-21).

The army is literal, though not human. Unlike the previous trumpet sounding, here the beasts will kill, not just maim. Speculation has named the Chinese as having this many men for an army, and they do, but there is nothing in Scripture here to indicate where the army comes from. There is no human horseman who ever looked like these creatures. Since these are literal events that are taking place, we should take the descriptions literally also. There is again no protection against these demonic creatures. It seems incomprehensible that a person could be aware of the great suffering and still not repent. Certainly the television will be full of it, with 24 hour coverage, but still men will not repent.

This second woe (9: 13-11: 14) corresponds to the manifestation of the Incarnation in the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The forty-two months continually reappear, which corresponds with the 3-1/2 years as in Daniel (Da.8: 25; 12: 7). This explains the duration of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanies. But there is also acknowledgment that this number designates the eschatological ordeal or the time of the Church upon the earth (possibly) by more likely the time of the ministry of Jesus on the earth. This enemy drives men into a corner to decide for repentance and conversion. The locusts of the first woe brought a desire for annihilation; here they are faced with an appeal to conversion. The locusts end the first “woe” of de-creation, while the cavalry begin the second “woe” of Incarnation. This cavalry corresponds to the fire that Jesus came to cast upon the earth, and the sword that separates man at his own interior.

G. Voice of Seven Thunders

Here we have another parenthetical statement. From chapter ten, verse one, through chapter eleven, verse thirteen, there is explanation of things which are not part of the trumpets or vials, but fulfilled in conjunction with them. This is inserted between the sixth and seventh trumpet, even as the first parenthetical statement was placed like it between the sixth and seventh seals. Evidently this means that the events take place concurrently with the sounding of the trumpet.

A “mighty” angel has a “little” book in his hand. It came from the hand of God (chp.5) and now it is time to reveal the contents thereof. This is apparently not one of the trumpet angels, for the word “another” is used of this angel. Since God is associated with clouds over 150 times in Scripture, and the rainbow is never used apart from God, this “angel” must be the Son of God. Certainly none of the angelic hosts have been described as Christ in the vision of John. Other details also correspond with the vision of Christ that is in Revelation chapter one (Re.1: 12-16). The “light of His face” speaks of symbolic truth, as Jesus is the ultimate truth. The brilliance of His presence shows up in the darkest hours of our lives. Even the most hidden of conditions becomes evident in the light of His glory (De.29: 29).

The “seven thunders” voice was not to be recorded for posterity, and the little book is sealed as the book of chapter five. It is a book of judgment which seems likely by the language of chapters five and ten. The opening of this book takes place on earth. He comes with no delay, that is, to take possession of earth and sea, displacing the one who falsely claims to be ruler. The numerous events to follow mean that this is not the end of chronological time.

H. Bittersweet Scroll

John is instructed to eat the little book. The Hebrew expression of this nature is to give the understanding of reception of knowledge. It was sweet to taste, but bitter to digest. The effect upon John is proof that catastrophic events were about to come to pass on earth. John was to continue to prophesy to the peoples of earth as he had been before, though the book was bitter with the future events that would come under the reign of the “beast” (Antichrist). Thus it was bitter to his soul. The idea of “eating it up” includes studying it thoroughly or consuming it completely. There are actually two things that will determine success or failure in a man’s ministry as a preacher or pastor. One is to trust and believe totally in the inerrancy of the Word of God. The second is to maintain a clear testimony. Failure in either of these will likely abort the successful fulfillment of the ministry.

Probably the book contained information that pertained to John’s work as a prophet, and which he was about to reveal. Some believe that this is the instant of time when Jesus comes to earth for Kingdom set-up, but not likely. He was simply showing John that there were other events coming that were to become even worse and that no further delay could be allowed for the judgments to follow. God’s reprieves finally come to an end and the awful final judgments will quickly play out.

The “bitter-sweet” scroll contained “*musterion*” or the idea of “to shut the mouth.” It is as a secret or mystery, through the idea of silence imposed by initiation into religious rites. There are several “mysteries” in the Scriptures, namely:

1. The mystery of the Church

The Church mystifies the world. Love for the Lord is the member’s only common denominator. Rich or poor, sick or well, they all come to the same level of belonging.

2. The mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus spoke extensively of this in the 13th chapter of Matthew. He used seven parables to clarify it. We must always differentiate between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God. Heaven is where God’s rules of behavior are followed, such as angels as well as man. The Kingdom of God is reserved exclusively for the Redeemed.

3. The mystery of Israel’s blindness

It is so difficult to witness to a Jew (Ro.11: 25). As Israel rejected Christ (Jn.1: 11), the prophetic clock was stopped and God turned His attention to the Gentiles. This left the Jews in a partial state of blindness, which will be cured after the Church (mostly Gentile) is removed from earth.

4. The mystery of the rapture

Scripture teaches that the coming of Christ is in two stages and Paul speaks of it in Corinthians. The first appearance is in the air, to receive the Church out of this realm, while the second is to conclude the Tribulation Period and set up His Millennial Reign.

5. The mystery of the Bride

Paul talks of Her in Ephesians (Ep.5: 28-32). She is the Church, and is both an organization (visible) and an organism (invisible). The TrueChurch is the invisible part of what the world calls the church.

6. The mystery of the indwelling Christ

Paul proclaims this mystery as being hid from ages and generations, but now revealed. The power source of a believer's life is found in the fact that Christ lives in us and we are actually allowing Him to live through us.

7. The mystery of the Incarnate Christ

God infused Himself into humanity by the "hypostatic union" at the pregnancy and birth of Jesus (Co.2: 2, 9).

8. The mystery of man's restored godliness

Paul told Timothy that it was a great mystery (1Ti.3: 16). Adam lost man's godliness through the fall, which Jesus regained by the cross. Because of God's love and Christ denying His selfish desires and allowing the sacrifice of Himself, we are made righteous in Him.

9. The mystery of iniquity

Theologians ask the question, "How and why does God allow sin to continue?" It causes wonderment in man as to why God does not destroy cancer and stop all unrighteousness (1Th.2: 7-8).

10. The mystery of the seven stars

Jesus is pictured holding the seven stars, and as we have already discussed, they are the pastors of the seven churches of Asia Minor whom John wrote the letters to.

11. The mystery of Babylon

Babylon is a literal nation in the Old Testament, but in the New a symbol of carnal spiritual conditions. Also, the Book of Revelation uses the word to describe an immoral religious system (RE.17: 5).

It is likely that the statement of Revelation 10: 7 is of the same subject matter as the eleven mysteries mentioned. Here the mystery of God is why God permitted Satan to cause the fall of man and bring sin, misery, and death into the world.

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Part 03: Chapter 07-08

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

VII. Seventh Trumpet – Third Woe

There is a parenthetical explanation given here (10: 1-11: 13) that is qualifying information. It is the measuring of the Temple and the introduction or revelation of the Two Witnesses. When this Seventh Trumpet is sounded, God will make clear the “mystery of God”, including the “mystery of iniquity” (2Th.2: 6-10). This is the person whom Satan will incarnate himself after he is cast out of heaven. Because of the renovation of the earth by fire, the redeemed race will take up abode on a redeemed and restored earth, with sin and rebellion forever destroyed. Then the “mystery of God” or why sin was permitted to wreck this world will be finished.

A. Temple Measured

The reed used to measure the Temple is also mentioned in Revelation chapter 21 (21: 15-16). It is a rod or scepter which is of a determined length, about 12-1/2 feet long. Destruction is the reason for the measuring, not for construction. The rod has also been used as a method of chastisement (2Sa.7: 14; Ps.2: 9, 89: 32; Is.11: 4; La.2: 8; Ezk.20: 37; 1Co.4: 21).

John is told to measure only the Temple proper, not its court that surrounded it. This temple is not Herod's, for it was destroyed in 70 A.D. It is not the Millennial Temple of Ezekiel chapters forty through forty-eight (Zec.6: 12-13). During the Tribulation Period, the Jews will rebuild the Temple, which will be destroyed in one of two ways: 1) by the earthquake of the Seventh Vial (16: 18-19); 2) by the armies of the Antichrist (Zec.14: 1-5). Sacrifices will be offered there during the Tribulation Period, during the first half, but not the last, for it will be desolate then (Da.9: 27, 12: 7-12; Mt.24: 115; 2Th.2: 2-4).

There are six Temples indicated in the Scriptures. Solomon's was the most beautiful, exquisite building probably ever erected. It was a permanent representation of Moses Tent of Meeting. Both had the following stations:

1. Altar of Burnt Sacrifice, which is the first requirement, just as salvation by the sacrificial blood of Jesus.
2. Brass Laver, which was a symbol of judgment, filled with water for cleansing, and symbolic of the Word of God.
3. Table of Shewbread, where the 12 loaves of unleavened bread was available for the priests to eat.
4. Candlestick, which was the only light in the Tabernacle. Actually it was a lamp stand, with olive oil supplying the fuel.
5. Table of Incense, the last station before entering the Holy of Holies, where prayer was made.
6. Holy of Holies, which the area where the Shekinah Glory of God resided over the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant.

The Temples and Tabernacle provided the people of God access to meet with Him. Gross transgressions forced the captivity in Babylon, which destroyed Solomon's Temple in 583 B.C.

There was also Zerubbabel's Temple, found in the Book of Ezra. It was a grueling experience in captivity, so upon the release and return to Jerusalem, they rebuilt the Temple. None of the great beauty of Solomon's Temple went into it, but they could again worship God in the proper fashion.

Herod's Temple was the Temple of Jesus day. Josephus described this temple as having a shimmering white surface with a golden cap or dome. Titus the Conqueror's Roman legions destroyed it in A.D. 70.

The Temple of the Believer's Body is the Temple in use today, with God inhabiting it (1Co.6: 19). Then there is the Temple of the Church (Ep.2: 21-22). Lastly there will be the Millennial Temple. Its erection will take place during the Tribulation Period, be desecrated by the Antichrist, and find a greater fulfillment during the Millennial Period (Ezk.chps.40-44).

We should understand that all will pass under God's rod of judgment, including the Temple and the Old Testament type of worship. Breaking the spirit of Israel is the purpose. The court of the Gentiles is not measured as it was already in their possession. Jerusalem will be "trodden down" by the Gentiles for 42 months (three and a half years). The times of the Gentiles will end when Jesus comes back, which is indicated by the different phrases: 1) "forty and two months"; 2) "a thousand two hundred and threescore days"; 3) "a time, times, and a half-time." These all refer to Daniel's Seventieth Week's last half. This is the period when the Antichrist reigns (Re.11: 2-3, 12: 6, 14; 13: 5; Da.7: 25; 12: 7). These severe troubles will come upon the Jews due solely to the fact of their rejection of Christ.

B. Two Witnesses

There has been much discussion about who these "witnesses" are and what they are doing. Of course, any true answer will be in harmony with Scripture: 1) They are two men; 2) They will have great power from Christ as His witnesses. The twelve hundred sixty (1,260) days they prophesy is during the same period the Antichrist is reigning in the Holy City. Israel will have to flee to the wilderness during this time to avoid annihilation (Re.12: 6, 14). This coincides with the Great Tribulation. Some have taught they are systems or churches, or a body of witnesses. Not so, for none of those we could say have the power to shut up heaven in the days of their prophecy. The purpose of their prophecy is to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers (Ma.4: 5-6).

The angel comes from heaven to declare that the Two Witnesses have power given to them. These are the "two olive trees" and "candlesticks which stand before the God of all the earth (V.4). Zechariah testifies of these two also (Zec.4: 3, 11-14). They have the right to exercise their authority, causing rain to fall or not, water turn to blood, and plagues brought on the earth. Plagues have been used by God against sin and idolatry and these two will wield the same power (Ex.7: 20-36; Le.chp.26; De.11: 14-17; 28: 1-30; 10; 1Sa.6: 4; 2Sa.24: 15).

When their testimony is completed, they will be killed. It is the beast that comes from the abyss to overcome them (Re.11: 7). They are natural men, so when slain, and because of the pain and anguish their testimony and plagues have caused, the beast will not allow their

bodies to be buried, but will display them and people from all over the earth will see it via television. In the streets of Jerusalem, commonly called “Sodom” and “Egypt” at this time, with the inhabitants acting like Sodomites in the days of Lot and the conduct of Israel in Egypt (Ezk.23: 3-4, 8, 19), there will be parties and gift giving at their death. But, at the end of 3-1/2 days, the Spirit of life will enter again into them and their enemies will be struck with fear. They will ascend into the heavens and a great earthquake will strike Jerusalem, killing seven thousand men and destroying a tenth of the city (11: 8-13). Men are foolish, thinking that the men being dead has salved their conscience and destroyed His Law. The balance of the people, still alive, will give glory to God. Yet the “repentance” will be like Pharaoh’s, short-lived.

Elijah is believed to be one of the witnesses, coming back to fulfill Malachi’s prophecy (Ma.4: 5). John the Baptist is also mentioned as one of them, for John is mentioned in Malachi 3: 1). John is not Elijah as some say of Matthews account (Mt.11: 140, and John also said such (Jn.1: 19-23). Jesus affirmed that John was Elijah, if “ye will receive it” (Mt.11: 1-14). The “it” is the Kingdom. John came in the spirit and power of Elijah, but he was not Elijah. Since the Jews would not receive Elijah at that time, God did not send him at that time, just a substitute with the spirit and power of the same. Elijah’s coming will be to restore all things, which John the Baptist did not.

Some believe that the second witness is Moses. Moses certainly has been involved in such plagues and powerful judgments during the time in Egypt. Yet it is clear that Moses has already died, and God buried him (De.34: 5-8). Since Moses is dead, he would have been resurrected. A resurrected body is not subject to death again. It is appointed for man to die once, not twice (He.9: 27). The most reasonable conclusion is that the second witness is Enoch, who was translated without death. They must go the way of all men (Ge.5: 21-24; He.11: 5; 2Kg.chp.2). They were both prophets of judgment (Jude.14-15), so it is logical, if not fully accurate, that these are the two witnesses. Elijah and Enoch’s translations were both for the same reason, they pleased God. However, man’s reasonable conclusions do not always take place. Which ever it is, Enoch or Moses, they will wield great power and testify of the Grace and Judgment of God.

It appears that the Test of Fire is how the contest will go, with Elijah and the Antichrist both bringing down fire from heaven. It will be an inconclusive test, but the true Israel of God will acknowledge the claim of Jehovah, while the unbeliever will continue to follow the Antichrist as God. Elijah will not be as fortunate in this contest. While he escaped from Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, the Antichrist will seek vengeance and will kill Elijah.

We see a parallel in Zerubbabel and Joshua in Zechariah and Haggai (Zec.3: 1; 4: 6; Ha.1: 1, 14). They were appointed to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple after the Babylonian Captivity, against which there was much opposition (Zec.3: 1-7). These two are types of the Two Witnesses whose work it was to proclaim the time to rebuild Jerusalem and reestablish Temple worship, as the “kingdom of heaven” is at hand.

C. Seventh Trumpet – Third Woe

The last of the “woes spoken by the angel (Re.9: 12) take place with the seventh trumpet period, as well as the vision of the woman, man-child, dragon, remnant, war in heaven, beasts, and other events from Revelation 11: 13-13: 18). The main event is the casting of Satan out of heaven. This is simply a part of the process of retaking possession of planet earth. Not all things that might be accounted to this event happen now. The judging of the dead and rewarding of the saints takes place later. The wicked dead are judged in the final judgment after the Millennium (20: 11-15). The saints will be rewarded during the time they reigning in the Millennium.

The Seventh Trumpet blows in the middle of Daniel’s Seventieth Week. After the statement declaring God’s sovereignty over all kingdoms of the earth, there are six sayings that are anticipated fulfillment. The first three statements are fulfilled at this time.

John here sees the Ark of His Testament which is not the one Moses made, but the Heavenly one, the Original. Catching away of the man-child, Satan being cast out of heaven, the flight of the woman into the wilderness, persecution of the remnant, and the rise of the beast out of the sea and the beast from the earth occurs under the Seventh Trumpet.

VIII. INTERLUDE

The events we see pictured are what are known as a “recurrence” theologically. That is, the events of Revelation 4: 1 through 11: 18 are parallel to the events of Revelation 11: 19 through 19: 6. This method of placing events back to back is called recurrence, that is, simultaneous, not one after the other. We can see the same thing in Genesis, where creation is described in its order of happening in chapter one, while chapter two give us creation in its order of importance. Thus, we see man at the end of chapter one, and at the first of chapter two. It is not two events, but the retelling in another fashion so as to give understanding and detail. And, let us say this. Chapter twelve of Revelation is a “thumb-nail” sketch of history of events surrounding man and God’s efforts to bring him back unto Himself.

The “great wonder” that appeared would be better translated as “was seen.” The “woman” that was clothed with the sun was a sign (*“semeion”* Gr. = “sign”). Several things show us that what was symbolized here by the woman are in the earth. The man-child that was delivered was caught up into heaven and the woman fled into the wilderness (12: 6) which is upon earth. While the dragon (Satan) will be cast to the earth, the flood that will come from his mouth to devour the woman will fail. The earth will help her by swallowing up the flood, which could not be true if she were in heaven (12: 15-16). The Dragon spews forth this torrent of water, which is the satanic reproduction of the flood. God has decided that men would not be subjected to it again, but the dragon does not seek to kill men, but the obedient Man, the Son of Man. However, God simply has the earth to intervene.

The woman is clearly a symbol, but not the Virgin Mary, the Church, nor Christendom. She appears to symbolize National Israel, as they will be in Palestine during the Seventieth Week and form the nation (Joel.chp.3; Zec.9: 10-16, 12: 4-14, 13: 8-9; 14: 1-21; Mt.24: 15-22; Da.9: 27). Israel is often mentioned as married to the Lord in the Old Testament (Is.54: 1-6; Je.3: 1-14). Hosea pictures Israel as a backslidden and immoral wife that is married to God. With a humiliation taking place in her, she is broken in the wilderness and returns to her husband (Ho.2: 14-23; Ro.chp.11' Ac.15: 13-18). We see also that Israel has been called a "widow" during the time of setting aside as God deals with the Gentiles during the Church period (Is.47: 7-9). In contrast to this, we always see the Church called a virgin and an espoused virgin at that (2Co.11: 2; Ep.5: 25-27). The Church has never been "with child" nor "travailing to bring forth." So we see this woman representing Israel in the land during the middle of the Week on to the coming again of Christ.

Also, we can see that there are three classes of people in the Bible, namely, 1) the Church, 2) The Jews, 3) The Gentiles (1Co.10: 32). During this woman's travail, in the middle of the Week, the Church has no appearance here, leaving only Jews and Gentiles. She would not be the Gentile world or Jews living in that world, so she must be the Jewish peoples who have come back to Palestine from other nations to await the Messiah. While there is no reference to the Church after Revelation chapter four, verse one, there is ample reference to the Jewish peoples.

A. Woman in Travail

This woman is pictured as being in travail. The Greek word is "*odino*" which means "travailing" (Ga.4: 19, 27; Mt.24: 8; Mk.13: 8). It is to experience pain, whether literally or figuratively. Since the woman is symbolic, the pain would be in the figurative sense. "Pained" means "tormented" as used in other places (Re.9: 5, 11: 10, 14: 10, 20: 10). Israel is going to suffer untold pain and torment during the Tribulation Period, also known as the "Time of Jacob's Trouble." Under Gentile rule she has suffered this before, but none like this time period.

Israel has been in bondage several times, starting when they were in Egypt. This travail, however, will be the worst she has ever known (Da.12: 1; Mt.24: 15-26). The result of this will be: 1) a deliverance of the man-child in the middle of the Week (12: 2-5; Je.30: 6-9; Da.12: 1; Is.66: 7-8). The covenant Israel makes with the Antichrist for protection from the "great whore" and the Ten Kingdoms of the Revised Roman Empire will be broken in the middle of the Week, by Antichrist, and he intends to completely destroy Israel.

Antichrist will be defeated in his purposes because of other problems (Da.11: 44-45) that come from "tidings out of the north and east." Certain Asiatic countries will move in unity with some Northern and Eastern European nations against the Antichrist to stop his conquests. These activities will occupy him and divert his attention away from Israel for a

while. But after conquering these nations, and with other nations who cooperate with him, Antichrist will come again against Israel to bring about his plan to destroy her. It is at this time that Christ will come to Israel's rescue (Zec.chp.14).

Israel's travail will result in the catching up of the man-child, while God will supernaturally protect the woman in the wilderness, with the diverting of Antichrist's attention away from Israel for a season. The woman herself will be delivered at the end of the Week when Antichrist and the federated nations with him are destroyed (Mi.5: 3; Zec.12: 10-14:21; Jo.3: 1-21). This deliverance will result in the conversion of Israel, for Christ will return with His saints and angels. Then will Christ set up His earthly Kingdom (Ro.11: 26-27; Re.19: 11-20: 6; 2Th.1: 7-10).

B. The Dragon

Satan is represented by the "great red dragon." This is appropriate, as he has ruthlessly murdered multitudes of people over the ages (Jn.8: 44). Job called him "leviathan, the piercing serpent" & "that crooked serpent" (Job.chp.41). The "dragon" is symbolic of Satan, the seven heads and ten horns symbolize the same seven world kingdoms as those of the "beast" that came out of the sea (Re.13: 1-4, 17: 1-18). With each head crowned, we see the universality of his earthly dominion, which typifies the seven-fold perfection of his power as the "prince of the power of the air" as well as the "prince of this world" (Ep.6: 12; Jn.12: 31, 14: 30, 16: 11). These nations will be used by the Lord in His purposes of judging Israel, from the beginning of her history to Christ's coming. Some teach that these nations are Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Medo-Persia, Rome, and the Ten Kingdoms of Revised Rome or the Old Roman Empire (Re.chp.17). A crown on the head show that Satan has ruled, and will rule over the seven kingdoms. He has tried to destroy Israel throughout the periods of these six kingdoms that have already occurred, and he will also try in the seventh, but to no avail again, for God will defend Israel.

The beast has his ten horns crowned. He is to be new in existence, since he has not lived through the previous six empires. He will come in the future and defeat the ten horns (7th kingdom), and reign over it to become the last kingdom before Christ sets up His Millennial Kingdom.

The "stars of heaven" which are dragged down by the "tail" of the serpent confirms that the expulsion of Satan from heaven takes one-third of the angels with him. Angels are spoken of as "stars" (Jb.38: 7). They are not visible, but will be in action sowing seeds of rebellion and will face the same fate as Satan when he is cast into the lake of fire.

The dragon stands before the woman to devour the man-child when he is delivered, at the middle of the Week. While he does not achieve his goal, he will turn on the woman to destroy her after failing with the man-child. Before this activity, the dragon is cast down to

the earth, makes an alliance with the Antichrist to give him his power, throne, and authority (13: 1-4). Both of them turn on the woman which brings forth the man-child.

There has been a long-time effort by Satan to destroy man and defeat God through killing the Seed of the woman. The promised Seed he knew would bruise his head, so if he could kill off the Seed, there would be no bruising. He did not know who exactly the Seed was, so he had Cain kill Abel. The sons of God intermingled with women to bring about a generation of evil people and influence man in wickedness to such a degree that God would have to destroy man, but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Not long after the deliverance of Noah and the destruction of wicked man, Noah got drunk, bringing the curse on Ham, which extended to Canaan. As people multiplied, Satan filled their hearts with pride and rebellion, bringing about the Tower of Babel, which God had to judge through the confusing of tongues so the unity of the race would be broken.

With the call of Abraham, the fight narrowed down to Abraham's seed. While Satan laughed at Sari's barrenness, God worked a miracle through a man that would believe. The testing of Abraham's faith was in the call to sacrifice Isaac, but Abraham passed it through obedience and his confession, "God will supply Himself a sacrifice." Satan thought he had Him, as Isaac dead could not propagate the Seed, and Abraham refusing would thwart God's plan also. As the plan for Isaac's destruction failed, he was married to a barren woman, but God heard his prayer and Jacob came along. The "heel-catcher" appeared to head the wrong way, but when confronted and wrestling with God, he had his life changed, which kept the angry Esau from killing him. The heart of Pharaoh was hardened, demanding the death of all males born of the Hebrews, but God still had a plan for a Deliver, which Moses was a type of. His rescue and the subsequent deliverance of Israel from Egypt was another victory toward the Seed that would come. Jehoram slew all his brethren except one, the chosen line through which the Seed would come. The Arabians slew all his children save one, Ahaziah. Ahaziah had children which Athaliah, his mother slew, certainly at the behest of Satan, except one. Satan tried to get Haman to exterminate the Jews, but to no avail. Can anyone see that God is in this thing?

At last the Seed is born, and immediately Herod tries to kill him. At the testing, Satan tried to get Jesus to kill Himself by throwing Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple. On that dark night in Gethsemane he tried to physically kill Jesus. Satan worked and worked through the religious Pharisees and Sadducees until he finally got one of Jesus own disciples to betray Him and a Priest to condemn Him. Then he moved the angry crowd, who just a few days previous hailed Him as "Son of the Highest," to demand His death. Thinking he had conquered Him, he got the tomb sealed, but it was not enough to hold Him. What are we saying? The Church has been one long story of conflict between Satan and God and His people. The whole of history has been an effort by Satan to stop Christ from coming to earth, and failing at that, to kill him so as to stop His effectiveness in redeeming man.

C. The Man-child

The man-child is another symbol and should be treated as such. Some believe that the man-child is Christ, because He came from Israel “concerning the flesh” (Ro.9: 4-5). Also, there is the expression that he will “rule with a rod of iron” (Re.chp.19; Ps.chp.2). This expression means to “have authority” over all the nations. Christ’s Millennial Rule will be autocratic, not democratic. He will rule with love. No politics will function in His government and no power will be used to run over the people. The resurrected saints will have authority in Christ over the nations and the Old Testament believers will reign with Christ (Ps.149: 6-9; Da.7: 18; Mt.8: 11-12; Je.30: 9; Ezk.32: 24, 37:24-25). The Church saints will rule with Christ (Mt.19: 28, 20: 20-28; Ro.8: 17; 1Co.4: 8, 6: 2; 2Ti.2: 12; Re.1: 5-6, 2: 26-27). The Jews making up the 144, 000 will reign with Christ (Re.7: 1-8, 12: 5, 14: 1-5). The Tribulation saints will also reign with Christ (Re.20: 4-6). So this phrase does not necessarily prove that it is talking of Christ. The amount of reigning and the authority given to each will be determined by faithful earthly service at the judgment seat of Christ (Lk.19: 11-27; Ro.14: 10; 1Co.3: 11-15). Some say the man-child is Christ in that he is “caught up to God’s throne” (Ep.1: 20). This again is not proof, for John saw the historical ascension of Christ sixty years previous to the vision he is receiving now, so what the angel is showing him now is a prophecy in the middle of the Week. These arguments are too generic to prove that the man-child is Christ.

Others have said that the TrueChurch is the man-child and that professing Christians are represented by the woman. The Church (man-child) would be caught out of the mass of professing Christians (woman) which would then go into the wilderness, for the remaining group would be those who are not the TrueChurch and then could not go to heaven at that time. There are no statements in Scripture to back this up. Along with this is the thought that the clothing of the woman represents the righteousness of Christ, with the moon symbolizing Jewish ordinances which were superceded by the teachings of Christ. Yet if these professing Christians were truly clothed with the righteousness of Christ, they would have gone in the Rapture. All of this comes from a belief that the Church will not be raptured at the beginning of the Tribulation. The man-child is taken out at the middle of the Tribulation, which is part of the basis for belief in a mid-Tribulation rapture.

Some teach that the man-child is the “bride part” of the Church. This is a teaching that a select group of believers, known as over comers, will come out of the Church at this time. On this basis, the Body of Christ and the Church would not be the same entity, yet Scriptures say they are (Ep.1: 22-23; Co.1: 18, 24). Paul makes it clear there is one Body, and that believers are the members of that Body (1Co.12: 12-28). He also writes that the Church as a whole is the Body of Christ (Ep.1: 22-23; 5: 26-27).

Another group teaches that the man-child is those who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Other Christians are then the woman and the remnant which are left to go through the Tribulation. They will point to the parable of the Ten Virgins as proof of this. However, the Spirit of God brings individuals into the Body of Christ (Jn.3: 3-8; Ro.8: 1-4; 1Co.6: 11, 12: 12-13; Ep.2: 18, 4: 4), while it is Christ who baptizes members in the Holy Spirit (Mt.3: 11; Mk.1: 7-8; Lk.3: 16; Jn.1: 33, 7: 37-38; Ac.1: 5-8, 2: 1-4). The baptism in the Holy Spirit does not place us in the Body of Christ nor cleanse us from sin.

The man-child symbolizes the 144,000 Jews saved after the rapture of the Church. These are the “first-fruits” to God from Israel. The woman represents Israel (12: 1). So, Israel cannot bring forth Gentiles, but her own nationality, Jews. The remnant is a company, so the man-child must represent the company of Jews to fulfill statements which are plain in chapter twelve. These are living people, as resurrected or dead people would not be subject to the dragon any way. These 144,000 sealed Jews, living saints, will be caught up under the seventh trumpet, which occurs at the middle of the Week (Re.14: 1-5). References to the 144,000 in chapters seven and fourteen refer to the same group. They are redeemed from the earth and from among men (Re.7: 4, 14: 1).

There are some indications of a special relationship this “man-child” has (Re.7: 3, 14: 1-5). They are not defiled with women for they are virgins (14: 4). This is not sexual, but reference to the religious system that dominates the Old Roman Empire during the first half of the Tribulation. They abstain from the fornication of Mystery Babylon, as we see in Paul’s writings (2Co.11: 2). Also, they are “first fruits” which is always mentioned in relationship with Israel in the Old Testament. They will be the first of the Israelites who are saved after the rapture. This is not the Old Testament saints or the Church. A large contingency of believers from Israel will be caught up at the end of the Tribulation, which is symbolized by the man-child. Both the man-child and the 144,000 have several things said about them that confirm they are one and the same: 1) they are a small company out of Israel; 2) they are caught up to the throne; 3) they are delivered from the dragon; 4) the dragon attempts vengeance on them; 5) they are not mentioned on earth after the seventh trumpet; 6) they will help rule the nations.

D. War in Heaven

Lucifer tried to exalt his kingdom above the angels of God and to dethrone God. He was the “anointed cherub that covereth” or we might say, the protector of the Throne of God. He was perfect in all his ways from the day he was created until iniquity was found in him. Fullness of wisdom was in him, and the “perfection of beauty,” which was what caused pride to rise up on him (1Ti.3: 6), bringing his downfall (Is.14: 12-20). He dwelt in the Eden of God, a paradise on high, for the Scripture teaches he dwelt on the “Holy Mount of God” (Ezk.28: 11-19). Here he was called the “King of Tyrus.” Isaiah chapter fourteen describes a King of Babylon, which has never happened as described here, so this is a future king. This is likely a fore-view of the Prophet of Antichrist as controlled and likely indwelt by Satan.

Satan is not, nor are his angels bound at this time, as some teach. The angels of Second Peter and Jude are described as having left their first estate and now are reserved in darkness in everlasting chains. These are not Satan’s angels, but a class of angels spoken of as “Sons of God” whose sin was in trying to corrupt all of humanity by cohabiting with the daughters of men, thus corrupting the human race (2Pe.2: 4; Jude 6; Ge.6: 1-8). They are the imprisoned spirits that Peter speaks of (1Pe.3: 18-20). Satan was still in the heavenlies at the time of this writing (A.D. 96), and still has access to the Throne room to accuse the Brethren.

Satan wants to take over all the kingdoms of the earth. He has a kingdom, but wants to take over all the kingdoms of this world (Mt.12: 24-30). The war we see in chapter twelve is a last-ditch struggle between the spirit beings in the heavenlies. The opposing generals in this war are Michael, the Archangel, and the

Dragon, Satan. Michael is one of the chief princes (Da.10: 13), the prince of Israel and the prince who stood and stands for the people of Israel (Da.10: 21, 12: 1). Michael, the Archangel, is associated with the resurrection of the dead (Da.12: 1-2), and contested the devil in the matter of Moses body (Jude 9). It is the “voice” of the Archangel which will be heard when the “dead in Christ” shall rise (1Th.4: 16).

Lucifer was cast out of the Third Heaven (God’s Throne and realm), and dethroned when he first rebelled against God (Is.14: 12-14). Though he lost his kingdom placement, he still had power. This power was his by nature and gift, in the heavenlies, as well as over the earth since Adam gave it to him through usurpation. Satan still accuses the saints day and night (Job.chp.1-2; Re.12: 1-12; Zec.3: 1-2). This war will be timed in the middle of the Week (V.7) and take place in heaven. Michael, the warring Archangel will be in command of the angel-armies of God which will stand against Satan and the angels that fell with Lucifer. In this conflict (Re.12: 7) the devil and his angels are defeated and cast down to the earth. While the inhabitants of heaven rejoice (V.12), it is evident that earth will not as it is a “woe.” Satan’s wrath will be vented upon the man-child and the woman for he realizes that his time is short.

E. The Woman Persecuted and Protected

Severe persecution will take place on planet earth as Satan is kicked out of heaven to earth. His first purpose will be to destroy the man-child. But, with that failure, he will then turn on the woman, using the Antichrist to break his covenant with Israel so as to use him to try to destroy Israel. Power and authority will be given the Antichrist, a picture of the incarnation of Satan in him. The Antichrist’s persecution of Israel is well documented (Is.10: 20-27, 14: 1-27; Je.30: 3-9; Da.7: 12-27, 8: 23-25, 9: 27, 11: 40-45; Mi.5: 13-15). Flight will be the order of the day (Mt.24: 15-24; Da.11: 40-45). Isaiah also speaks of this time (Is.26: 20; 27: 1).

Christ refers to this time in Matthew (Mt.24: 15-22). We must be careful here, for there is another reference to flight by Luke that is not the same event. Luke talks about the flight when the destruction of Jerusalem took place by Titus in A.D. 70, at which time the city was surrounded by the Roman army (Lk.21: 20-24). There was such suffering at that time that mother cooked their babies to avoid starvation. This is past, but what Jesus said in Matthew is future, for it is at the time when the Abomination of Desolation is set up. This is an idol, just as the idols Milcom or Molech was the abomination of the Ammonites and Chemosh the abomination of Moab (1Kg.11: 5-7). The idol spoken of in Revelation will be an “image of the beast,” set up in the Holy Place (Re.13: 14-15).

The “avenger of blood” will go after Israel because they are guilty of man slaughter, the murder of Jesus. They brought it upon themselves, crying out for His crucifixion, and then saying, “Let His blood be upon us and on our children” (Mt.27: 25). They wanted His death, but it was not just premeditated murder, as we see in Christ’ words from the cross forgiving them. It was a murder of blind religious frenzy (1Co.2: 8). The Jews have thus been running for a “City of Refuge” for almost 2,000 years, yet not reaching it. The prophecy of Moses is true, there is no rest for their feet (De.28: 64-67). The Avenger of Blood, the Antichrist who is indwelt by the Dragon, is after her.

Water will come out of the dragon’s mouth to stop the fleeing woman, but the earth will swallow it up (Nu.16: 29-35). Isaiah prophesies about this escape to the wilderness, indicating she will flee to the city of Sela (Petra as it was called by the Romans), near Mt.Seir and Mt.Hor in the land of Edom and Moab. Moab is actually commanded to welcome the Israelites and cover them from the face of the spoiler. They are not to betray the Israelites. This is the land that is so often referred to as a wilderness in Scriptures, and is where Israel wandered forty years before actually going into the Promised Land. The flood describes Satan and the Antichrist’s armies attempting to destroy Israel.

Petra is a stronghold and was a commercial center in Solomon's day (2Kg.14: 7; 2Ch.25: 11-12). Lost to Rome as she lost power, it fell into Arab hands and was unknown until rediscovered by Burckhardt in 1812. With one entrance, the canyon which alternately is from twelve to forty feet wide, a narrow and winding defile, the sky is almost shut out, almost causing a person to be they are traveling subterranean. With walls from two hundred to one thousand feet high, it is an almost impregnable site. This will be Israel's "city of refuge." It will not be the "death of the high priest" that liberates Israel from Petra, but the coming of the Great High Priest, Jesus, with the Armies of Heaven.

Christ is pictured coming to earth to destroy the nations of Armageddon (Is.63: 1-5) and He will pass over Petra (Mt.24: 27). Jewish fugitives hiding there will see Him coming in great power and glory. Hosea speaks of Petra or a place where Israel will flee for protection from the Antichrist (Ho.2: 14-23). Jesus said in Matthew that the time of abomination of desolation would come when the Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel. He does away with the sacrificial worship and sets himself up in the temple as God. It is at this time that the Jews remaining flee and there has never been a time of trouble like this one (Mt.24: 15-22; Da.9: 27; 2Th.2: 1-3; Re.13: 1-18), nor ever shall be. The "remnant of the woman" are those who are saved after the catching away of the man-child and flight into the wilderness. The word "remnant" in Scripture always is used in reference to Israel, not the Church or Gentiles (Is.1: 9, 10: 20, 11: 16; Jo.2: 32; Mi.2: 12, 5: 3-9; Zec.8: 6-12; Ro.chp.11).

F. The Beast Out of the Sea

The beast rising out of the sea is a symbol. The sea is symbolic of peoples (Da.7: 2-3; Re.17: 1, 15). The beast seen here is symbolic of a kingdom, and particularly the Antichrist, the head of this kingdom. The beast also symbolizes here a supernatural spirit coming out of the abyss. Kings and kingdoms have been pictured as beasts in Scripture (Da.2: 38, 39; 7: 2-7, 17, 23), as well as the controlling of supernatural powers of the kingdoms.

There has been speculation as to the identity of the Antichrist. Infamous political leaders of the past have been classified as the "Antichrist." This is simply speculation, harmful also, for it has caused some to become skeptical of prophecy. Positive identity of Antichrist is not available to us at this time, but he will be revealed at the proper time, when he makes a covenant with Israel for seven years (Da.9: 27). There are, however, indications of the area he will come from:

1. Two visions cover the Gentile world powers from Daniel's day to the second coming of Christ. The image in Daniel chapter two has a head of gold and the lion of Daniel chapter seven symbolize Babylon, which was Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom (Da.2: 37-38; Je.15: 4; 24: 9; 25: 11-12; 29: 18)

Sir Henry Layard discovered a colossal stone lion with the wings of an eagle and the head of a man, which is in the British Museum, London. This is the image Daniel saw in chapter seven. It typifies the "eagle-like" swiftness of Nebuchadnezzar's armies. Beastly insanity is likely the "plucking of the wings" that overtook Nebuchadnezzar (Da.4: 20-27). The "lifting up" was his restoration to sanity.

2. The breast and arms of silver depict Medo-Persia on that image in Daniel chapter two and the bear in Daniel chapter seven.

This second beast, the bear of chapter seven, speaks volumes to us when we study history. Bears are slower than lions, strongest after the lion, distinguished for voracity (Da.7: 5). This empire was known to have an army of two and a half million fighting men, besides those in camp. It simply overwhelmed its enemies by its vast numbers. Besides their killing of very large numbers of enemies, there was also the effect of their scavenging the countryside for food to feed itself, bringing starvation to the areas they went into. The “three ribs” in the bear’s mouth is not Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, as some teach having been overrun by Russia. It is Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt who will formed an alliance to try to stop the power of this army, but who were all destroyed by it.

3. Alexander the Great, the old Grecian Empire, followed the Medo-Persian and is symbolized by the belly and thighs of brass and the leopard (Da.2: 39; 7: 6, 12, 17; 8: 20-21; 11: 1-4).

Leopards are small of frame, strong, swift, and fierce. This describes Alexander the Greats’ army to a “T.” Small, but well-equipped, they were very brave and moved with such swiftness that the slow, unwieldy army of the Medo-Persians could not stop them. The four heads of the Leopard represent the splitting of Alexander’s kingdom when he died.

4. The Grecian Empire was followed by the old Roman Empire, with its four divisions, depicted by the legs of iron on the image, as well as the non-descript beast. This empire continues the persecution of Israel (Da.2: 33-35, 40; 7: 7, 18, 19-27; Da.2: 40; 7: 23-25; 9: 26; Lk.2: 1; Jn.11: 48; Mt.24: 1-2; Lk.21: 21: 20-24; Ac.16: 21; 22: 25-29). These empires did not follow one another contiguously, but had intervals in between.

“Great iron teeth” aptly describes this old Roman Empire. It devoured and broke in pieces and stamped (obliterated) the residue. The kingdoms before it disappeared under Roman domination.

5. Ten kings will lead ten separate governments from ten capitals inside the Roman Empire in the days of Christ return, symbolized by feet and toes of clay and iron mixed on the image, as well as by the non-descript beast (Da.2: 31-44; 7: 23-25; Re.12: 3; 13: 1-4; 17: 8-17). It is in the times of these kings that the “StoneKingdom” will strike a calamitous blow, destroying that kingdom, depicted by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Christ is that Stone that was cut out of the mountain and will set up His Stone Kingdom at the Millennial Age ((Mt.21: 44).

6. These ten kingdoms will be the “revised” Roman Empire that is formed inside the old Roman territory. These will be ten separate kingdoms, and will not be a “revived” Roman Empire as some teach (Da.2: 44; 7: 23-24; Re.chp.8-17). (We can see the seeds of this in the 2005 rejection of the proposed constitution of the European Union by Germany and France, which were a part of the old Roman Empire. If this constitution was accepted, there then would essentially be a “revived” empire. It is not a failure of prophecy that there are far more than ten nations in that confederation (EU) at this time. It will work out as God said.)

7. Daniel saw a little horn growing out of the ten horns (Dan.chp.7). This horn plucked up three horns (Da.7: 7-8). The kingdoms of Daniel’s day on are Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and the old Roman Empire. Daniel says that the “fourth” beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms. He goes on to say that the “ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall rise.”

Four of the kings then are committed to the Antichrist, with the other six also agreeing to give their power to this “little horn,” as in a treaty or covenant. This “little horn” arises after the ten kingdoms are in existence (Da.7: 8; Re.17: 9-11).

This “little horn” was a mystery to Daniel, so he approached one of the “heavenly messengers” who told him that the “ten horns” on the fourth beast represented ten kingdoms that would arise, with the “little horn” being a king that should arise and subdue three of them. The mouth speaking great things indicates great oratorical power. This “little horn” will be audacious, arrogant, imperious, and persecuting. He will change “times and laws” and Daniel’s people will be given “into his hands” for three and a half years.

8. The vision of Daniel chapter eight shows a symbolic ram and “he-goat.” Medo-Persia is the nation symbolized by the ram, with Darius and his nephew, Cyrus as its kings. The “he-goat” that has a “great horn” and destroys the ram is symbolic of the Grecian Empire. The “he-goat” has his horn broken off, with four horns growing in its place. That indicates the events of Alexander the Great’s death and the subsequent division of the area he controlled by four men. Cassander took Greece and Macedon, Lysimachus took Asia Minor (present Turkey and Thrace), Seleucus took Syria and Babylonia, while Ptolemy took Egypt. These four divisions today encompass Greece, Turkey, Syria, and Egypt.

The Antichrist (“little horn”) will come out of one of these four “horns.” Daniel chapters seven and eight, delineates the geographical boundaries of the coming of the Antichrist. According to Daniel chapter eight, he will come from Turkey, Greece, Syria, or Egypt, not the Vatican, Germany, Russia, or Italy as some teach.

Daniel chapter eleven speaks of a war between two of the four areas mentioned above. Syria and Egypt were involved, with the wars covering about one hundred fifty years. Antiochus Epiphanies, who ruled about 165 B.C. came into power at the end of that war. Reference is then made to the end time, picturing a war between Syria [king of the north] and Egypt [king of the south] (Da.11: 36-45). This is minutely detailed prophecy, which corresponds exactly with the history of Egypt and Syria for over 350 years. These wars ended with the close of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanies in B.C. 164. Verses thirty-two through thirty-five of Daniel chapter eleven cover a period from 164 B.C. to the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week. This “willful king” corresponds to the “little horn” of the “he-goat” and they appear at the same time, the “time of the end.” Daniel saw that the “little horn” was to rise on the “Syrian horn” or the “he-goat,” so the Antichrist or “little horn” is identified as the “king of the north” or Syria. God will “punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria” and “tread him under foot,” removing his yoke and burden from them (Is.10: 12, 14: 25). This is a future king, connected with the restoration of Israel to their own land, so it could not be in Daniel’s time. We see that a future Assyrian king will be brought to Palestine and destroyed there, which has not happened yet. That this “little horn” is a Syrian Jew is also likely, for the Jews are looking for a Messiah that comes from their own people, as prophesied by Scripture. This would not stop him from being a Roman citizen, even as Paul was.

It will be after the formation of the Ten Kingdoms that the Antichrist becomes a player in world affairs. In the first half of the Tribulation, he will arise and become the leader or confidant of the Ten Kingdoms. By the middle of the Week, he will be recognized as the Beast and quickly come out of seclusion and rise to the power we see evidenced in Scripture (Da.7: 7-8, 19-24).

The Antichrist will be incarnated by Satan. He compares to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, who betrayed Jesus. Jesus spoke of the “Son of Perdition” as being the father of “the lie.” The definite article is there in the Greek, and “the lie” is the Devil speaking of his own child. In verse eleven it tells us that God should

send them strong delusion so that they will believe “the lie” (definite article is there again). The reason Judas was called the “son of perdition” is that the word “*diabolus*” with a definite article is used, which should read, “and one of you is the devil” (Jn.6: 70-71). This would make Judas the devil incarnate, or the “mystery of iniquity” and this also explains why He called him the “son of perdition” (Jn.17: 12). This is the only place in Scripture that the word is used of a human, and it implies incarnation. Comparing this with Genesis 3: 15, which says, that there would be “enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed,” we see that the Serpent’s seed must be the Antichrist.

He will reign in Babylon (Re.chp.18), but during the last 3-1/2 years, Jerusalem is where he will be, in the “glorious holy mountain.” The Temple having been rebuilt, he will commit the “abomination of desolation” by proclaiming himself god, and sitting on a throne in the Temple (Da.9: 27; 12: 7-13; Mt.24: 15-22; Re.11: 1-2; 13: 12-18).

From Daniel 12: 11 we see the words, “. . . *the abomination that maketh desolate set up.*” The same remark may be made here which was made respecting the previous expression—that the language is applicable to two quite distinct events, and events which were separated by a long interval of time: to the act of Antiochus in setting up an image of Jupiter in the temple, and to a similar act on the part of the Romans when the temple was finally destroyed. The view which is taken of the time referred to here will depend on the question as to which of these is to be regarded as the stand-point or the terminus a quo, or whether the language is designedly so used that an important epoch was to occur in both cases within a specified period after these events. On these points there has been great diversity of opinion. However, we must also remember that there are often multiple fulfillments of prophecy, and certainly this type of event will occur again in the near future.

A central throne will be established that these Ten Kingdoms give their power and authority to. While these ten kings still rule, the Antichrist will be the ruler over them all (Re.17: 9-17). This Antichrist will be the executive of Satan’s power. He will be inspired in his evil designs by Satan (Da.8: 24; 2Th.2: 8-13; Re.13: 12). The ten kings will give their support and power. While it is abnormal for a king to give up any power if he does not have to, during the last half of the Tribulation they will do so, adding their assent to anything he wants to do.

Satan will offer to the Antichrist what he offered Jesus, the kingdoms of the world (Mt.chp.4). Jesus turned him down, but in the psyche of man, a dream of ruler-ship is latent, waiting for the right motive and incentive. Antichrist will accept that offer, and then fight to possess it. He will pursue world conquest (remember Hitler?) by conquering the old Revised Roman Empire by the middle of the Tribulation period. Many northern and eastern countries of Asia and Europe will be conquered during the last half of the Tribulation period. Some nations will cooperate with him, forming a confederation and a kingdom.

G. Antichrist’s Reign

Cruel taskmasters have emblazoned the headlines of newspapers and been the subject of special news casts for years. But none of them will compare to the one coming. The world has yet to see such a godless leader who will use unequalled treachery to destroy nations and peoples. It will be with satanic brilliance and unbelievable cruelty this man will function.

The Antichrist will make “war on the saints.” He will be powerful, using his power from Satan to rule over all kindred’s, tongues, and nations. If this “all” is in the inclusive sense, every individual in the world

will be affected. If the “all” is a part of what God has in mind as to the decree, it would basically include only the Ten Kingdoms of the Roman Empire. The word “all” here also has a figure of speech attached, called “*synechdoche*.” This expression is where a whole is put in for a part, or a part for a whole.

Many examples of this we can find in Scripture. Genesis tells of where “... *all flesh and everything with the breath of life*...” was going to die. Yet we know that Noah and his family went into the Ark and survived. Joshua was told to “utterly destroy all that is in the city” and yet Rahab and her family were saved (Jo.6: 21-25). This and many other examples give us understanding that sometimes the word “all” is used only to include those individuals for which purpose it was intended; in other words, a part was considered the whole. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Antichrist gets to the place of ruling over ALL of the people of the earth, or kills every living person who does not have the mark of the beast. We conclude that the Antichrist’s reign will involve the Ten Kingdoms of the old Roman Empire (Da.7: 23-24), but they will along, with the Antichrist, make war on the land at Christ’s Second Coming.

It is also likely that though this reign will be geographically limited, it will affect the whole world, as did Hitler in the late 1930’s and ‘40’s. The Antichrist will have wide reaching influence and a far-reaching effect. Revelation chapter thirteen sets apparent limits to the kingdom of the Antichrist, and it apparently does not include America. Basically his rule will be of the Old Roman Empire, basically in the area of the Mediterranean Sea, which is revived in a modern form. As John saw the beast “rise out of the sea,” it indicates masses of people, not the oceans.

When Antichrist comes to power and breaks the seven year covenant with the Jews (Da.9: 27), he enters Israel at the middle of the Tribulation and is given power over the Ten Kingdoms (Da.11: 40-45). He will make a decree that all must worship him and many countries will be overthrown (Da.9: 41). But, with tidings from the East and North will trouble him, he will go out in fury to destroy all that opposes him. Edom and Moab, as well as the chief of the tribe of Ammon will escape the rule of the Antichrist, and they will border the area of his dominion. Since these escape his rule, there are likely others that will also, or at least to some degree. Evidently, he will not reign exclusively over every individual of the entire world. The main part of the nation of Israel and Judah will flee from the Antichrist as he breaks his covenant with them in the middle of the Tribulation period (Da.9: 27). The Bible says they will “flee to Edom and Moab” (Da.11: 41). A place of protection is prepared in that area for them to escape to, as well as protect them during the Antichrist’s rule.

Zechariah teaches that many will not take the mark of the beast, and yet not be killed. He speaks of a battle between the Jews of Jerusalem and those who follow Antichrist (Zec.14: 1-5). There is a comment in verse sixteen of this chapter that lets us know not all will be killed, for it says “that is left” of the nations will come to worship the Lord in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. If the whole world were under Antichrist, then there are Scriptures that we cannot understand, such as Revelation 13: 4 and 16: 13-16. Ten Kingdoms will give power and allegiance to him, and he will use his demonic powers to get the other nations to cooperate with him at Armageddon.

Egypt will be taken over by the Antichrist (Da.11: 40-45), but there will be many who will not take the mark of the beast, be damned, and go to hell. Some in Egypt will be alive, having escaped death, and will go into the Millennium. This will be true of other nations also. It is likely that though the Antichrist decrees that all in the kingdom he rules must take the mark of the beast and worship him or be killed, the war with the countries from the north and east will occupy his time and efforts to such a degree that he does not get this enforced completely.

Missionaries will go out of Jerusalem during the Millennium proclaiming Christ's reign in Jerusalem to the multitudes who were not aware of the Antichrist, with many going to see if it is true (Is.2: 2-4; 40: 9; 52: 7; 61: 6; 66: 18-21; Zec.8: 23; 14: 16-21). Even as some did not hear of Christ in twenty centuries, so some will not have heard of Antichrist in 3-1/2 years. There are "sheep nations" which go into the Millennium under Christ, that is, people of nations that do not cooperate with the Antichrist in trying to destroy Israel (Mt.chps.24-25).

H. Beast Out of the Earth

The beast that comes out of the earth is only spoken of from Revelation. In the Greek, the word used is "*pseudoprophetes*," which means "false prophet" (Re.16: 13; 19: 20; 20: 10). He is seen with the beast and dragon, and is a false prophet of the Antichrist (Re.16: 13). This will be the unholy trinity that imitates the Trinity of the Godhead. While some have claimed he is the Antichrist, being "lamb-like," but that is not possible as he is named the "False Prophet." Jesus spoke of him in Matthew (Mt.24: 24), and his influence. "False christs" and "false prophets" are differentiated by Christ and so must we. This is the one who instigates the Battle of Armageddon by sending demon spirits to influence the kings of the earth. He works with the first beast in coming against Christ (Re.19: 20). Several things we should observe about the beast out of the earth (false prophet):

1. He is called "another beast."

He comes on the scene after the beast out of the sea. The Greek word "*allos*" means "another of the same kind." So he is not the same as the first beast, and is of "religion."

The antichrist, though an individual, is not alone. He not only has the ten sovereignties working into his hand with all "their power and strength," but he has a more intimate and more potent companion, hardly less remarkable than himself, duplicating his power, and without whom he could not be what he is.

The religious element is one of the most powerful in humanity. Its great potency appears in all the history of mankind. It cannot be ignored, suppressed, or put aside. It may be misled and perverted, but its presence and power are inevitable wherever man is man. Nothing can securely stand against it. No other power can be sustained without its aid. True or false, human nature must have a religion. If the state does not provide one it must allow of it, and throw some sanction over it, or it kills itself. There can be no society, no kingdom, and no commanding administration without it.

2. This beast comes "out of the earth."

This word in Greek has also been translated as "world" and means "peoples of the earth" as in Daniel's writings (Da.7: 3). The two beasts personify two men, with the normal natural power of men who were born in the earth and rise to power by smooth talk and deceit. Coming out of the earth indicates a resurrected person. If the Antichrist is Judas resurrected, as some teach and has credence, why would not this second beast be resurrected also. There are two persons, likely Moses and Elijah, who come from the heavens as two witnesses, so, why would not Satan imitate that (as he always does) in resurrecting two and using them to counteract the witnesses? The fact that they are "cast alive" into the Lake of Fire is further proof that they are more than ordinary mortals (Re.19: 20).

3. The appearance of this beast is that of a “lamb.”

He will appear a religious man and wonderful prophet. Miracles will attend his “ministry” and that will deceive millions. This second Beast has "two horns like a lamb." Being symbols of power; these horns have no diadems, and are as those horns of a domestic animal. War, political sovereignty, conquest, and the might of military rule are out of the question for the false prophet. This Beast is a Prophet and a spiritual teacher. He does not function as a king or warrior. There is a softness and domesticity to his power, which is distinguished from the great horns of the first Beast, although in reality they are of the same Wild Beast order, and belonging to the same Dragon brood.

4. This beast will exercise the power of the first beast.

Worship of the first beast will be caused by the second. There is a deadly wound to the first beast, who then comes to life again. The False Prophet will be the executive of Antichrist and use Satan’s power that is given to the first beast (Re.13: 2-4; 2Th.2: 8-12). While the length of his power is not stated, it will be after the middle of the Great Tribulation because he shows up after the first Beast’s influence has grown to great proportions. This beast will work in close union with the Antichrist, as they are not mentioned apart.

5. This beast will do miracles and wonders for man to see.

Deceiving men is the purpose of these miracles and wonders (signs – Greek “*semeion*”). Prophecy implies inspiration and miraculous power. Where there are true prophets the inspiration is from God above, and the power from on high. This Beast is a false prophet and the consummation of all false prophets. His inspiration and power comes from beneath.

That Satan can bring down fire is confirmed in Scripture. In the Book of Job, after Satan had secured authority to affect Job’s life, he brought down fire from heaven in order to destroy Job’s sheep and servants (Job.1: 16).

6. He will instruct people on earth to make an image of the first beast.

The image will be set up to be worshipped, in the Temple where the True and Living God is to be worshipped. There will be special powers given to the image. All who do not worship it will be killed (Mt.24: 15; Re.13: 14-15; Da.3? 4-6). It is a strange weakness that man has, that he seems to continually want a “god” that he can see in order to worship. We see this demonstrated by the people asking Aaron to make a god for them, just a few days out of Egypt (Ex.32: 1-6).

The whole history of all religions, both true and false and looking at their hold on people's minds, it is sure to be found that two things hold sway; that is, naturalism and supernaturalism. It is the presence of revelations or what is accepted as revelations from the superior powers. These revelations are held to be divine and binding; or else the conclusions of natural conscience and reason. They are deemed as being sacred obligations because they are believed to be good and true. There is no other foundation upon which religion rests. As the second beast wields his power, appearing to be a "man of God," his instruction to set up the image and worship it will be accepted by most men.

This "revelation" is the seat of his strength and power, and how he pushes his way to dominion over the hearts and lives of people. As a religionist, this Beast-Prophet will have two horns, and is at once both a naturalist and a super-naturalist. Yet he will assert power above ordinary nature and in command of nature. He will claim to be the bearer of all Universal Wisdom, in which reason and revelation are fused into one great system, claimed to be the ultimatum of all truth, the sublime and absolute "*Universeology*." Because he presents himself as the one eternal and perfect Wisdom, he must necessarily present himself as the one absolute apostle and teacher of all that ought to command the thought, faith, and obedience of man.

7. He will cause men to receive the mark of the beast.

Men will comply by allowing the mark to be placed in their foreheads or the palm of their hands, in order to buy and sell. Many will be martyred for not complying with this order. The "brand of hell" is coming. In the not-too-distant future, various combinations of capital and those controlled by the accumulation of money will form a federation which will swallow humanity with the control of a despot, stopping commerce except with the mark of the beast. Begging, starving, or being killed awaits the person who refuses the mark.

Six is the number of man, and seven is the number of God's perfection. Six is as close to seven as can be, so man is as close to God as there is in the creation. Three is the number of the trinity (tri-unity), of God's nature. The number of the beast, 666, shows his futile efforts to be a "super-man."

All kinds of analogies exist in Scripture for this "666" mark:

- a. Goliath was six cubits tall, had six pieces of armor, and his spearhead weighted six hundred shekels (1Sa.17: 4-7).
- b. Nebuchadnezzar's image was sixty cubits in height, six cubits wide, and six instruments of music summoned the people to worship it.
- c. Using the Hebrew gematrical method, innumerable and fantastic results come about, including that the "666" indicates "Nero-Caesar" and "Hitler."

However, it is likely, and well known, that an opposition exists between six and seven, with the latter being the number of perfection, and the former being the number of imperfection. With this in mind, some may rightly ask, why an accumulation of sixes? The answer probably lies in the fact that the number of the human, imperfect accumulates imperfections, by which it finally attempts to reach perfection, seven. This

is done by multiplying sixes. Or we might describe it as the attempt to reach perfection in such a way that the six has itself taken for God, seven.

The one who imitates God discloses his own imperfection. It is not then an opposition of “human-divine,” but a movement between God and that which enters into competition with Him (Ge.3: 5). The enemy tries to imitate Jesus Christ and what He has done, what He has established upon earth. This then envisions not only the political power, but all that which acts by propaganda in order to inspire adoration.

8. The Antichrist is king over a kingdom, while the False Prophet is not a king.

The Antichrist will exalt himself and proclaim himself as God (2Th.2: 4), while the False Prophet will take the same relationship as the Holy Spirit has to Christ and will exalt the First Beast (Antichrist). His aim will be as the Holy Spirit's, that is, to direct worship to the false Christ.

Great devotion and worship will be given to the first beast and his image. It will be both political and religious worship (13: 4). The worship of such a statue would be the worship of the Man himself, for this was the understanding and meaning of all image-worship. It is on this idea that Rome sanctions the veneration of images of Christ, the Virgin, and other saints. It is of such that it is completely apostatized, with doom decreed upon all that partake of it (14: 9-11). To worship the beast, all faith in Christ must be renounced. It is the same if we follow the Lord, and truly make Him Lord. Creeds have contained statements such as “holding to no other” as a part of confession of faith.

We see three things that identify or are features of the False Prophet. These include: 1) a mark (the mark of the beast), 2) a name (no explanation is given in Scripture about it); 3) the number of his name (666). The “mark” will be a literal mark in the flesh (13: 16-18; 14: 9; 15: 2-4; 20: 4). It is a stamp or brand (“*charagma*” (NT: 5480). As masters of old branded their slaves in America and other places, and as owners of live stock brand and mark their cattle, so are the people branded under the Antichrist. The “mark” itself is both a number and a name. The Apostle tells us it is made up of two Greek characters which stand for the name of Christ, with a third, the figure of a crooked serpent, put between them, “*chxs*,” the name of God's Messiah transformed into a Devil sacrament. The “name” refers to the name of the first beast (13: 17), but is without explanation to us. The “number” has been attached to many people in history. We are to reckon the number of the Beast, as to his moral identification. The figures “666” may spell Nero Caesar in Hebrew, and “the Latin,” in Greek; but whether this is what the Spirit meant, no one is able to tell at this moment; nor would it help if we knew.

The wisdom here is to discern the anti-Christian evil; the ungodly principles which lay people open to the Antichrist's power, the subtle atheism and lack of faith by which people are betrayed into his hands. Six is the bad number, and when multiplied by tens and hundreds, it denotes evil in great intensity and most disastrous manifestation. This number of the Beast's name gives an estimate of him from heaven. It fixes attention on that rather than on the numerical spelling of the name he bears on earth.

The Beast and the False Prophet are supernatural. The image, though manufactured by a man, takes on of the supernatural. Men of that age will agree and maintain that it is so, for they cannot hold out against the absolute demonstration of the image speaking.

Thus it is that the False Prophet wins credence to his claims, swaying public sentiment to the acknowledgment of a new “divinity,” demanding a new religion, whose common abominations are thought but right and reasonable. This image will speak, with the closest observation of all science, wisdom, and skepticism being satisfied that it is a fact. This will not be done by collusion, make-believe or “slight of mouth.” The whole world is convinced that the image speaks. It is likely that people will institute and apply tests to disprove its ability to speak. They will scrutinize with all the science that earth affords, but the result of it all will be a universal admission, that the image does speak.

Part 03: Chapter 09-11

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

IX. PARENTHETICAL STATEMENTS

There is an interval here between the “seven personages” and the “seven vials.” This parenthetical statement begins the last division of the Tribulation Week (14: 1-19: 21). This is the sixth such statement, and there are seven in Revelation. These statements come between the seventh trumpet and the first vial. The “Mount Zion” the Lamb is standing on is not the earthly, but the heavenly which a New Testament writer speaks of (He.12: 22-23). Here an innumerable company of angels, the General assembly and Church of the First Born, and God the Judge of all are present. A Voice as the “voice of many waters” or as the voice of a “great thunder” speaks, and no doubt is the One who stood in the midst of the Lamp-stands, Jesus Himself.

The message of the Voice is not told us, but it is followed by harps being played and singing. These harpers are those who stand before the throne on the Crystal Sea. The new song is a composite song, that of Moses and the Lamb.

A. The 144,000 Jews with the Lamb in Heaven

The Lamb is in heaven with the 144,000. it is clear that the man-child is before the throne, with the 144,000 also, for they are now singing a song that is unique to them. Against the new order of things set up by the Antichrist, these sing "a new song,"-a victory and glory

never shared by any but them. As angels cannot sing the song of the redeemed because they do not know the joys of redemption, so no other saint can sing this special song of the 144,000. Theirs is a distinction and glory, a joy and blessedness, after all, in which none but themselves can ever share.

This account of the 144,000 is the other side of what is related of the Beasts, a counterpart of the same history. Against the wild and savage monster is a gentle and loving Lamb. Against the confessors and worshippers of the Beast, having his mark, is the company of the Lamb's followers, having their mark, even the name of the Father and the Son written in their foreheads.

Against the Beast's harlotry, both spiritual and literal, here is an opposing style of life and conformity—a virgin purity which refuses to be debauched by the prevailing fornication. These “virgins” may be of either sex, but “virgins” in the sense that they have kept themselves from the crowning sin of the day, fornication (Re.9: 21; 14: 8). Celibacy is not the virtue described here, but purity and freedom from contamination by the corruptions of their day. The reign of the Antichrist is a reign of literal and spiritual harlotry. Chaste marriage is no more regarded at this time than the worship of the true God. From all such defilements these have kept themselves. They are “virgins,” in that they have lived chaste lives, both as to their faithfulness to God in their religion, and as to their pureness from all physical lewdness.

This could include the looseness of a marriage tie, of which “free love” and the multiplied divorces of today are but the opening of a far greater quantity of sexual sin. The teaching of seducing spirits, spoken of by Paul to Timothy, belongs to these Anti-Christian times (1Ti.4: 1-3). “Forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats” is of more significance than the Church of Rome’s requirement of celibacy of the priesthood and clergy, and fasting of laity. This is of the pit of hell, seeking to weaken the body by fasting and making it more susceptible to the influence of demons, bringing about an intense desire to be satisfied by other than lawful means.

The confession of this company is in opposition to the unbelieving Jew, who rejects and repudiates the Son. It is in opposition to the Antichrist, who denies both the Father and the Son. As children of Abraham, they have embraced Christianity; and as Christians, they take issue with the Beast, persisting in their testifying against his blasphemous usurpations of the place of God and the only Savior. “In their mouth was not found what is false.” There is a depth in John's conception of truth and its opposite, falsehood; one who fails to confess Christ in his lifestyle and fails to live that profession or show by works what he speaks with his lips, is a liar. We are to be careful about our conversation, always shaping our words to the reality of things. To speak falsehood or exercise a deceitful and untrustworthy tongue is a devilish thing. To do so is to follow Satan, a liar and the father of all lies.

B. The Everlasting Gospel

Many angels have been seen by John as they did their work, and now comes the first messenger angel of this parenthetical time, preaching the “everlasting Gospel” to all those of planet earth. His message is:

1. Fear God
2. Give glory to Him for the judgment coming
3. Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and fountains of water.

The truth of God and His claims must be spoken, lest other things become vocal to testify for Yahweh. When the Antichrist succeeds in hushing up or burying away in caves, mountains, and wildernesses all testimony for the Eternal One whom he seeks to kill, the angels whom he cannot touch or slay become the preachers.

This is a most important message for the time, as it is declared immediately after the rise of the beasts. It cancels out the false message of the two beasts if it will be heard. God has in motion several counteractions to the two beasts. They include:

- a. The ministry of the two witnesses
- b. The multitude of saints that will be saved after the rapture, experiencing great power
- c. The Jewish people
- d. The Holy Spirit who will continue to work in people’s lives

- e. The judgments of God
- f. The appearance of these angel-messengers

In the face of deception by the beasts, this message will go forth. It is the same message of our Creator God, that He alone is to be feared and worshipped. He is the final judge over all and is to be given due praise, loyalty, and obedience. An angel flying through the air with a significant message will be a phenomenal event and is sure to receive much attention. Millions will, no doubt, see and hear of this event. This is the first time an angel has proclaimed the Gospel. The angel could not tell Cornelius how to be saved, but he could direct him to a man that could (Ac.10: 3-6). Only saved men preach the Gospel today, but then an angel will preach the Everlasting Gospel.

We have here another dispensation and order of things from what is presently. So it is intimated in the features of the Word preached. No longer is there a meek and entreating voice calling men to be reconciled to God, but a thunderous voice from the sky, demanding the nations to Fear God, rather than the false god whom they were giving adoration. Give glory to Him instead of the infamous Beast is the message, for "the hour of judgment is come."

This "Everlasting Gospel is not the Gospel of the Kingdom or the Gospel of Grace. It is not about salvation, but of judgment. The message is that the "hour of His judgment is come." It is "good news" to Israel, but not to the ones it is being preached. It declares that Israel's troubles will soon end and that the followers of Antichrist will just begin. Men here are called upon to worship God as Creator, not as Savior (see the Revised Version). There is "another Gospel" which Paul corrected as not being "another." Many seductive forms of the "gospel" have been preached, which usually emphasize that it takes something beside faith to receive salvation. Usually this something else is works (Co.2: 18-23; He.6: 1; 9: 14).

Men have said that they do not like this Book, as its spirit does not agree with theirs in relation to the Gospel. This is true, for the very life and spirit of reconciliation in Christ Jesus is what is now preached to people. Here is something different, what disturbs our Christian heart as the imprecatory Psalms do. As we see that here is not the Church-period, but the day and hour of judgment, the whole matter clears up. Men reject human messengers, and they will not believe this angelic one either.

C. The Fall of Babylon

The second messenger-angel flies through the heavens with a second message, namely, that Babylon will fall. The great city is destroyed during the seventh vial being poured out at the end of the Week. God always warns before judgment (Jon.1: 2. 3” 2). All peoples are given time to repent so that judgment can be averted. This announcement is not to a religious system, but to a literal city.

In Genesis chapter eleven, the inhabitants of Babel (Babylon) tried to build a tower to heaven. It was not that they thought they could get to heaven as much as they were set on a place to worship the sun, moon, and stars. The forerunner of the ancient nation of Babylon was stopped in its attempts to bring about idolatrous man-made styles of worship. It was not bad government or wrong personal attitudes, but bad religion that God dealt with there.

With the Church raptured, there will be left buildings and organizations to be filled with those who did not believe at the first, and so they are churches with ministers, choirs, and worship services that are false and unprofitable spiritually. Unifying the world under one system, politically, economically, and religiously is the goal of Antichrist. The rapture of the Church leaves a great void for Antichrist’s opportunity to control men who all desire to worship something.

With any hour of judgment there comes the work of judgment. The system of harlotry and corruption holds dominion over the nations. Every person won to that system is then intoxicated by it, and casts off all bonds of sacredness for the delusions of the Antichrist and his False Prophet. God has allowed it for the punishment of those who would not have Christ as their Lord, but now He will not allow it any longer. The Second Angel comes to proclaim: "Fallen, fallen, the great Babylon, which hath made all the nations drink from the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The announcement anticipates the accomplishment, and it will surely be fulfilled.

This announcement is proof that the city of Babylon will be rebuilt. Chapter eighteen also says the same. As this is anticipative - it is a declaration that Babylon had fallen to great depths of wickedness, with all foul spirits, demons, and every unclean and hateful bird residing and going out from that city (18: 2). The angel’s announcement also contains a warning to the people of God (Re.18: 4).

D. The Doom of Beast Worshipers

This third messenger-angel brings an announcement that anyone who worships the beast and his image, or receives the mark, will be eternally destroyed in eternal torment. This is called the “wine of the wrath of God.” Those who commit this great sin have no recourse; their doom is sealed by their actions. It is an extremely solemn message. God will send an angel to warn people against this sin. Apparently there will be no sense of right or wrong in the people who commit this sin. They will not fear God, are void of conscience, and are apparently completely controlled by demon forces.

The sentence is worthy of the sin, continuous torment with fire and brimstone forever and ever. It is eternal punishment, taught other places but here it is so prominent in the words “. . . the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day or night. . .” (Re.14: 11). A desire to enrich themselves in the market of their day and the resulting action will seal this doom.

This is an awful condemnation; but times of awful guilt, infatuation, and wickedness which deserve the same. When people are in such danger, marching directly into a terrible perdition, it is a great mercy of God to make the proclamation of the danger with all the force of an Angel's eloquence. It is for the ones who deserve the condemnation, as well as the wronged and suffering ones who are under the power of these terrible oppressors. Their awful grief and pain will be avenged. Therefore, with mighty energy the Angel proclaims the eternal doom of the abettors of the Antichrist.

The three aforementioned angels will give their messages concurrently, about the middle of the Week. Those who do not accept the mark will be severely persecuted, to death for most of them. There is an exhortation to them (V.12; Re.12: 17; 13: 10).

E. The Blessed Dead

The account John is told to write now is of the “blessed dead” (Re.14: 13). These are martyrs of the last 3-1/2 years of the Tribulation. They are martyred because of their refusal to neither accept the mark of the beast nor worship the image that has been set up. There is also a reference to them elsewhere in Revelation (7: 9-17; 13: 5-7, 15; 15: 2-4; 20: 4).

There has never been, nor ever be any suffering for any class of God's people in any age, like the sufferings of those who remain faithful to God during the reign of the Antichrist. It is the patience and endurance of those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. By coming out of Babylon, standing apart from its horrible harlotries, is a most costly thing. It is equivalent to volunteering for head-removal at the “state-chopping block.”

There can be no compromise with evil to preserve life (Lk.17: 33). The Martyr's Crown is a part of their blessing (Re.2: 10). They shall rest from "their labors" due to the tide of iniquity of those days. They are loyal to God during the most trying of times, the Great Tribulation; they know they have no opportunity before them but martyrdom. This is likely the reason for the message of special blessing to them who are faithful unto death.

Death to a good man at any time is a greater benefit than a disaster. When a life of truth and honor becomes so great a sorrow as at this time, it is a blessedness to have it ended. From this point on until death itself is vanquished, there is no more peace or comfort for a good man on earth. Therefore, no better thing can happen to him than to die. When there is no more peace for us but in death, why should we wish to live?

F. Armageddon

Here the Son of Man is seen sitting on a cloud, representing His coming to earth which has been prophesied (Re.1: 7; 10: 1-2; Mt.24: 27-31; Ac.1: 1-11). This particular passage relates back to several parables Jesus gave to the people while on earth, namely the wheat, tares, and dragnet (Mt.13: 24-30, 36-43, 47-50).

While there is a statement here about the "harvest of the earth," it is not about the martyrs of the previous messenger-angels proclamation, but of those who die in the great battle for the sake of Antichrist's cause at Armageddon. This account is anticipative of the armies of the world gathering together because of "three unclean spirits" who gather together all that are to be judged in the Great Day of God Almighty at Armageddon.

Evil has its harvest as well as good. There will be a harvest of misery, a harvest for the gathering, binding, and burning of the tares, as well as for the gathering of the wheat into the garner of heaven. This harvest of punishment has quite as prominent a place in the Scriptures as the harvest of the gathering of the saints to heaven (Je.51: 33). Rev 14:14-16

Mention of the sharpness of the sickle shows that we have a scene of judgment here. Likewise, the mention of the cloud points out a work of judgment, for wherever Christ appears on a cloud, the work immediately in hand is always a judgment. The name of the Son of man also points in the same direction, for it is as the Son of Man that all judgment has been committed to Christ (Jn.5: 27).

This angel-cry from the temple to the crowned, seated, and armed King of Judgment, to thrust in “His” sickle and reap, is connected with the fact of administration by angel-helpers against oppression and oppressors. The time of judgment has come to the full and everything will be in the condition of a great outcry for speedy vengeance. Iniquity will have come to the full, giving strong argument for the loud outcry of every holy being for judgment to strike.

We say this is about Armageddon, rather than Tribulation saints, for the following reasons:

1. The Son of Man does the reaping of this harvest.

This is because He will execute judgment on those who join in the false worship of the beast.

2. The “sharp sickle” here is the same as mentioned in Joel.

This pictures the destruction of the hosts of Armageddon (Joel.3: 9-14). Therefore, the scene must be about Armageddon, rather than the righteous martyrs (Re.19: 21; Is.11: 4; Mt.13: 30, 39; Je.51: 33; Ho.6: 11; 2Th.2: 8).

3. This reaping has been delayed.

From the expression “time is come for thee to reap” we see that it has been withheld till this time. Though delayed, now vengeance must be taken as foretold by the prophets concerning the events of Armageddon (Is.34: 8; 59: 17; 61: 2; 63: 4; Je.46: 9-10; 2Th.1: 8). As the cry of the angel is made, so Christ thrusts in the sickle (Re.chp.19).

4. Another angel comes out of heaven, carrying the same theme.

This angel speaks of the “vine of the earth” which corresponds with the “harvest of the earth.” Both angels anticipate the Battle of Armageddon, for angels are indicated as being part of this reaping and having part of the Battle (2Th.1: 7-9). This “vine of the earth” is cast

into the “great winepress of the wrath of God.” It will take place outside of Jerusalem in the Valley of Megiddo, where blood will flow to the horses bridle in the destruction of nations (Re.19: 11-21; Is.34: 1-8; 63: 1-5; Joel 3: 1-21; Ezk.chps.38-39; Zec.14: 1-21; Jude 14-15).

In the two images, Harvest and Vintage, we see they are too closely interconnected to assign one to Christ and the other to a created angel. The sharp sickle is the same in both instances. The work is great and belongs to the mission and prerogatives of Christ. It is to Him the Father has committed all judgment.

God looked for Israel to bring forth good grapes, but she brought forth wild grapes (Ho.10: 1). The Lord of the Vineyard sent His Son to partake of the harvest, but the “servants” cast Him out of the Vineyard and slew Him (Mt.21: 33-43). Jesus, the True Vine, opposes the “Vine of the Earth” (Antichrist) and all that belongs to this system.

The various names of the locality of this judgment are in close proximity to Jerusalem. "Armageddon" is the place named in the Apocalypse, the mount or city of Megiddo, or the great Esdraelon plain, also known as the “Valley of Megiddo." It has been one of God's great battle-grounds for the judging of the armies of the wicked.

There is a fierceness and wrath about God that we have not seen heretofore. It is expressed by His “Winepress.” Isaiah saw this and described Christ’s share in it (Is.63: 1-6). The whole of Palestine will be in it, extending south as far as Edom and Bozrah. The slaughter will be so great that blood will flow horse-bridle deep in the valleys over the whole of Palestine for about 200 miles (1,600 furlongs). The land will be “drunk with blood” according to Isaiah (Is.34: 7-8).

X. VIALS OF THE WRATH OF GOD

The accomplishment of the Harvest and the Vintage brings this present world, as we know it, to an end. Next is the setting up of the Eternal Kingdom and the coming down from heaven of the New Heavens and Earth. Yet it appears to us that the Harvest and Vintage are not seen as setting forth all that we need to know about these closing scenes. We need the complete picture, and further particulars are now included as to this momentous period. The fate of the infernal trinity-the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet - and all that pertains to them - will be fully described before we come to the Millennium, with its descent of the New Jerusalem as well as the planting of God's Tabernacle with human beings. So, starting with chapter fifteen, the same ground covered by the visions of the Harvest and Vintage are gone over again with reference to particular details.

In the vials (bowls, so some read), there is the presence of a symbol sacred and holy. The bowl is of the banquet, which is passed from hand to hand in communion. This passing symbolizes the union of the guests, thus the bowl of communion. Also, and not contradictory, the cup of libation which is associated with sacrifice, for a portion of the wine was usually poured on the ground as an offering to the gods. Therefore, to the Christian point of view, it is an unacceptable act. Here two conflicting wishes of the sacred come into play. The sacred-bowl factor of a communion or of a sacrifice is positive, but every sacred is at the same time bearer of blessing and curse. There are two faces of the sacred, both terrible and adorable. It is necessary to enter into the sphere of the sacred to encounter the gods, but at this moment one becomes a curse to other men. So the bowl of communion is at the same time that of rejection, as Judas found when he fled at the time of communion to do his dastardly deed. So it is the sign of blessing and the sign of curse, the cup of reconciliation and the cup of wrath.

A. Final Judgments of God

The final awesome judgments of God upon the earth are shown in the Vials (bowls) of God's wrath. The literal translation is "messenger" for the word translated as "angel" in chapter fifteen, verse one. We can see this plainly where John fell down to worship one called "angel" in Revelation (Re.19: 9-10; 22: 8-9). This "angel" testifies that he is a "fellow-servant" and one of "thy brethren the prophets" who kept the sayings of the Book. That redeemed men carry out some administration of God's vengeance on His enemies is entirely reasonable.

B. Sea of Glass Mingled With Fire

Here is another parenthetical expression, describing the same "sea of glass" John saw in the fourth chapter (4: 1-6). This actual pavement is like crystal mingled with fire. At this point, the area is occupied by Tribulation Saints (Martyrs), though it was not occupied in chapter four. It is indescribably beautiful and the saints there have harps and are singing the combined songs of Moses and the Lamb. This insertion here is likely to contrast the martyred saints with the unbelieving beast-followers. The "fiery" aspect of the sea depicts the "fiery trials" that the inhabitants underwent in getting the victory. While John only heard them before as harpers, he now sees them (Jn.14: 2).

C. Vision of the Heavenly Temple Resumed

Revelation relates to us the Temple in Heaven twelve times. This Temple is literal and God sits on its throne. Both the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon were patterned after it (Ex.25: 9, 40; Nu.8: 4; 1Ch.28: 11-19; He.8: 5; 9: 23). God was the Architect for the Temple in Heaven as well as for Moses Tent of Meeting and Solomon's Temple.

The Temple is filled with smoke, that is, the Glory of God so that no man was able to enter. When the presence of God is in His Temple, a manifestation is a common happening (2Ch.5: 13-14). The cloud of Solomon's Temple stood for grace, while the smoke now stands for judgment. Nothing happens outside the presence of God of any value, so this is where all needs could be met. It is not for the priests to accomplish, as they could not even stand up to minister. This shows us plainly it is all God and none of our abilities that get whatever need met that is met.

"King of Saints" is an unusual phrase to us. We are used to saying He is King of kings, but not of saints. This is a designation of love. King of kings is a title denoting authority and power over all other authorities. King of saints has no such objective. We are the "saints of God" by our voluntary acceptance and obedience to Him. We accepted His sacrifice willingly. He did not force us to it. We did not become such on our own merit, but on His. Every saint has a loving heavenly Father who extends His provision and protection to all His children as King.

All nations shall come and worship before Him (15: 4). While schools may bar utterance of His name in prayer and the "Supreme Court" find it less complicated to simply remain neutral on cases of a religious nature, they are each assuming a stance against God. It is impossible to be neutral in this arena. No group can stop the passage of time with God's plan and will. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.

Revelation chapters fifteen and sixteen belong together, as they form one whole, touching one important subject, to wit: the third or last woe.

XI. POURING OF THE SEVEN VIALS

The pouring of the seven vials now takes place, and the three unclean spirits are unveiled. Primarily, the seven vials or bowls of God's wrath will be poured out on the Beast's kingdom in chapter sixteen. Though the liberal preacher refuses to discuss the anger of God, it is prominently demonstrated here. God is a God of love, mercy, and tolerance in awaiting men's decision to come to Him for mercy (2Pe.3: 9). But, He will no longer tolerate the refusal of His Son as Lord of all (Php.2: 9-11). It is heresy to try to shield one's self from what is viewed as an unpleasant doctrine by pointing to one that a person likes. Divine retribution comes because of worship of the beast and the persecution to the death of His righteous followers. This knowledge by God causes Him to bring a just punishment upon the perpetrators. It is His right (Ro.12: 17-20).

While there were seals and trumpets which brought judgment, the vials are not to be confused with any other events of Revelation. These events are the last in the things that would “. . . *shortly come to pass*” before the Second Coming of Christ.

It is strange, but true, that some teach these events are already past. For instance, the first vial is interpreted to have taken place during the French Revolution in A.D. 1792, the sores being its infidelity, and the second vial as the naval battles that took place. The third vial is supposedly the battles Napoleon fought in Italy, with the rest of the vials being events in history of the 19th Century. If this was true, then we have been into one hundred twenty five years of the Tribulation, for the end of it has not come about. No, these are literal events, just as they were in Egypt in the Book of Exodus, and they are future at the time of this writing. Four of these events have happened before, in Egypt during the time of the Exodus. These vial outpourings will bring to end the judgments upon those who have persecuted Israel throughout the ages since the crucifixion.

Angels here are commanded to “Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth” (Re.16: 1). Angels are prominent in the delivery and execution of God's plan in the end time. Angels are: 1) wise (2Sa.14: 20; 2) strong (Ps.103: 20); 3) imply God's presence (Jg.2: 1); 4) sometimes appear as men (Re.1: 20); 5) are guardians (Mt.18: 10); 6) are numerous (Mt.26: 53); 7) possess tremendous power (2Kg.19: 35). There are several other qualities of angels, but suffice it to say that in Revelation we see them carrying out God's plan to the “T.”

A. Boils

In Exodus we see the plague of boils upon the Egyptians and this first vial is parallel to that plague (Ex.9: 8-12). This plague will affect only those with the mark, even as the plague in Egypt affected only the Egyptians. This is stated so clearly here that we can know all the other vial outpourings will be affecting the same people. There will be a supernatural cause to

these plagues, even as in Egypt. God is sending Divine judgment upon them. Boils will break out upon those with the mark who worship the beast that is a “grievous sore” upon them. It will be a torturous malady, afflicting all levels of those who worship him. Severe pain will accompany the boil, causing them to have problems bowing to the image. Boils are usually a result of bad blood, which reveals corruption in a person’s system. The sore of this angel’s outpouring is denoted by the same word which described the ailment of Lazarus. It is the Egyptian plague of ulcers intensified. This “boil” may appear in the form of cancer, but whatever form it appears to man; it will bring severe, intense suffering. The boils will come upon men only, not man and beast as in Egypt. This will be a revealing of the corruption in the hearts of the victims, manifested in their bodies.

The word “sore” here is used in Luke 16: 21 of the beggar’s affliction. It points to an ulcer that is drawn together. The words “noisome” and “grievous” mean “depraved, bad in nature” and “full of labors and pains in working mischief.” These words point to the extreme pain and corruption of the ulcers. God is here showing extreme displeasure at their worship of the beast with a direct punishment for not serving the True God. Just so the boils came upon the Egyptians for worshipping Neit, the “Goddess Queen of heaven.” In that plague in Egypt, the magicians were affected, becoming unclean so that they could not worship Neit. Similarly we see the affects of the plague upon those who worship the beast. While such a grievous event will turn some to God, this event will simply harden the hearts of the people affected. Suffering alone does not lead to repentance.

B. Sea Becomes Blood

The Mediterranean is affected here, with its waters becoming as blood. The devastation will be so complete that it will be as the “blood of a dead man.” Sea creatures will add to the pollution as they die, further corrupting the waters. This is not their blood, but that they simply die as a result of the corruption of the water. An unbearable odor will come forth from this rotting flesh, making human life there almost unbearable. The “Red Tide” seen on some beaches today may be a precursor to this event. The “blood of a dead man” is not life giving, and it can be that this is the result of pollutions accidentally or providentially placed in the waters for God’s purposes. Ships may well be stranded on the sea at that time, and the corruption of the rotting flesh will add to starvation and disease in the nations that surround that body of water.

When the second trumpet blown affected the sea, 1/3rd of the ships were destroyed. However, now there will be much greater devastation, but it is not the blood of sailors in a naval battle. A similar plague came upon Egypt, with the Nile gods being mocked by the Living God for seven days.

C. Rivers to Blood

The third vial is a replication of the first plague brought upon the Egyptians (Ex.7: 19-24). Not only the sea is affected, as in verse three, but now the rivers become polluted, as well as the fountains of water, when this vial is poured out. Drinking places for man and beast will have blood coming out to them, so that only polluted water is available. John hears an angel confirm that the reason for the waters becoming blood is due to the shedding of the blood of “saints and prophets.” As this angel finished his statement, out of the altar another voice, perhaps an angelic being, perhaps a redeemed human, confirms that God is always just and righteous in His judgments of man. This “. . . angel of the waters,” he who has the administration of this plague, is amazed at the greatness of the infliction, but breaks forth in celebration of the righteousness of God. The punishment is full of horror; but it is deserved. They shed the blood of saints and prophets, now their only drink is blood. When God once comes with His terrible awards upon the wicked, their unrighteousness will be so conspicuous, and the justice and truth of His administrations will be so clear and manifest, that it will not be in the power of any holy being to find a flaw, to raise a question, or to withhold the profoundest Amen.

Greece, Italy, Syria, and Turkey, as well as other parts of Antichrist’s domain will be affected by this plague. Men suffering here have shed the blood of innocent worshippers of God, and now they will receive their just retribution in blood. So it is, that we reap what we sow (Ga.6: 7). They have shed blood, and now blood will be everywhere. The plague will be so phenomenal in effect that it will get the attention of the whole world. Such is a situation when men do not have water to drink, but only blood, to quench their thirst.

D. Heat Wave

The fourth vial’s outpouring will bring such heat that men will be scorched by it, bringing excruciating pain. As the fourth trumpet brought diminished sunlight, this vial seems to amplify the intensity of the sun. Yet in spite of the misery and pain, with such humiliation, there will be no repentance in those who worship the beast. We see that the plagues at times had the opposite effect on Pharaoh, with his heart hardened instead of being softened, so it will be in this day. They will die, rather than serve the True and Living God.

Malachi speaks of this day, when the heat will be such as to “. . . *burn as an oven.*” This event, foreseen by Malachi, seems to “burn them up,” leaving no “root or branch.” The people who do wickedly will be as stubble before the judgment. Malachi gives us this picture as being just before the “Sun of Righteousness” arises with “. . . healing in His wings” (Ma.4:

1-2). This was foretold concerning the Messiah (Ps.21: 9). “Thy hand shall find out all thy enemies, and shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of thy anger.” It will be a day of terror and destruction like the burning of a city, and likely the vegetation, though it is not mentioned here.

Here we see the fulfillment of Isaiah's words, *"The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken down the everlasting covenant, therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left"* (Is.24: 4-13).

To repent is to “change one’s mind.” These men will not forsake their sin, turn from evil to good, nor become morally better (Mt.3: 2; 4: 17; Ac.2: 8; 3: 19). Their attitude will not change, and so, they will receive great judgment. Yet, they will continue to blaspheme God for their troubles. Person’s today will turn to God in adverse circumstances, but not these people. They have denied Him in the goodness He showed them, and now will curse Him in His judgments (Ro.2: 4).

E. Darkness

The fifth angel pours out his vial, and darkness covers the “. . . seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness” (Re.16: 10). This is parallel to the ninth plague upon Egypt, but is much more intense. In the Egyptian plague, it was a judgment upon Ra or AtunRe, the Sun god who was the Egyptian’s supreme deity. Joel prophesied of this day as a day of “darkness” and “gloominess.” It will be a day when there is “thick darkness” (Joel 2: 1-2). Christ also prophesied its occurrence (Mk.13: 24). Isaiah prophesied of this event when he said, "Behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people" (Is.60:2). Nahum writes that the fierceness of God's anger would be poured out like fire, and “. . . darkness shall pursue His enemies" (Na.1:6, 8).

The people of the beast’s kingdom have just gone through a time of intense heat and light, and now are plunged into darkness. It is of extreme proportions, with the people gnawing their tongues for pain. God will bring such judgment as is ample reward upon the beast and his followers for the torment they have executed unmercifully on his saints. Some have taught that this blindness is a physical blindness of the persons living in the Antichrist’s domain, but this is not likely, as it is not how the Lord did it in Egypt. It is not a hard thing for God to do even as described in Revelation (Lk.1: 37; Mk.10: 27).

We do not know the time frame of each of these vial outpourings, but it seems to be that the boils of the first plague is still in effect at this time,. The historical school of interpretation says the vials are poured out over years, but we tend to see that it is over a few months.

Even though they suffer from the pains of the previous vials, they show their true colors by consistently refusing to repent. It is pure rebellion that they demonstrate. Their evil deeds and refusal to repent will continue to bring God's punishment to the end of His just retribution. Some speak falsely of repentance taking place in hell and so all being reconciled, but these events show the hardened heart of those who partake of the mark; their adamant refusal to repent would not be changed though they are in hell.

F. Euphrates Dries Up

The EuphratesRiver will be dried up as the sixth angel pours out his vial. This does not seem to be much of a plague, but it releases a natural barrier to the flow of the armies of the east at the end of the Tribulation to come to that great battle, Armageddon. A disaster is developing with this vial's affect. The largest army this world has seen will come form the east to fight against Jesus Christ at Armageddon. Millions of its soldiers will be slaughtered which is the reason it is called a judgment.

Isaiah prophesied of God effecting bodies of water for His purposes. He said that the Lord would “ . . . utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian Sea (Red Sea) and . . . shake His hand over the River (Euphrates) and smite its seven streams, so men can go over ‘dry shod” (Is.11: 15-16). This is a reference to the drying of the Euphrates. This drying will perform a two-fold purpose, allowing the Jews in Assyria to return, as well as allow the nations of the east to gather for the Great Battle and subsequent judgment (Mt.25: 31-46). Zechariah refers to this event when he says: “*He shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps in the river shall dry up, and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down*” (Zec.10: 11; Je.51: 36).

In ancient times the Euphrates, with its tributaries, has been a great and formidable boundary between the peoples east and west of it. It flows 1,800 miles, being scarcely fordable anywhere or at any time. From three to twelve hundred yards wide, and ten to thirty feet deep in some places, wider and deeper in most; it has been a formidable boundary. It was the boundary of the dominion of Solomon, and is repeatedly spoken of as the northeast limit of the lands promised to Israel (Ge.15: 18; De.11: 24; Jo.1: 4).

This drying of the river is an actual event, though perhaps today, with our technology, a more symbolic act, for armies today can traverse rivers easier than in days without our technology. What we see here is that God is pointing out that no geographic boundaries will protect a nation when God decides to come to it and do a work in it. The kings of the east are likely emboldened to come against Israel even more with this event. Modern China will not be afraid to come, for Israel will be deceived into dropping or at least slackening her military readiness, while also having successfully completed a successful war against Russia. China will see the wealth of Israel ripe for the taking, and come against her. God's opening through the Red Sea proved a trap of destruction to the persecuting Egyptians, so will it be in this case to the kings of the east.

Some teach that this is the drying up of the Turkish Empire or the breaking up of it. Not so, it is a literal army coming to a literal battle with literal deaths taking place. While the River Euphrates is mentioned twenty-one times in the Bible, it is always referring to a river in Asia. There is nothing symbolic here. This river runs through Baghdad, Iraq even today. Since the other vials, judgments, and seals were literal, this judgment is also.

God has preordained that the river would be dry so there would not be that impediment to the kings of the east who come to this great battle. It is a resolute and preordained wrath of God that will be justified as vengeance against those who persecuted His people.

G. Three Unclean Spirits

Now we see the seventh parenthetical expression of Revelation (Re.16: 13-16). This is between the sixth and seventh vial, and is a part of the plan of God to bring the nations to the Great Battle. Three unclean spirits, shaped like frogs according to John, came out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. It seems that this is the continuous speaking of the unholy trinity to bring about what they think is the consummation and victory in their battle against God. These demon spirits will go forth inspiring and working miracles to mobilize armies to march from all directions to try to block the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the earth. These lying spirits, working with false prophets, will bring nations to cooperate with the Antichrist at Armageddon.

These demon spirits will go forth preaching “doctrines of devils” which Paul warned Timothy about (1Ti.4: 1). Paul tells us that “. . . *the Spirit speaks expressly*” *about the latter times when these seducing spirits manifest themselves. It is interesting that John describes them as “frogs.”* However, there are word pictures here that are prominent. Frogs are amphibious, comfortable on land and in the water. This is a picture of the spirit of compromise which is the mother of much sin (Mt.6: 24). Many confess to be believers, but

their life-style belies that. They do what appears to be “Christian” when a brother or sister is watching, and what they want from the lust of the flesh when no one is looking.

These “frogs” come out of “quagmires of darkness” to do their devilish work in the evening shadows of “man’s day,” creeping, croaking, and defiling the ears of nations with noisy demonstrations until they convince the kings of the earth to move against the Holy Land. They do so with counterfeit miracles; that is miracles done without the power of God. Satan counterfeits that which God does, and his works resembling God’s will be a great deceiver through the “frog” spirits. The parable of the wheat and tares gives us some understanding here. In Matthew, the Word says they grow up together, with the tares being sown by the enemy. They look so much alike that without discernment, they cannot be told apart. Human reasoning cannot determine which the true is and which is the false. Jesus told them to not uproot them, for if they did, they would “. . . root up also the wheat with them.” The instruction then came to simply let them grow, for a time of harvest was coming, and the tares would then be gathered, bound in bundles to be burned, and the wheat gathered into His barn (Mt.13: 28-30). So it is that God does not destroy even today those He knows will not accept them, but allows the “harvest” to be the time of separation. The point here also is that Satan had counterfeited the “wheat.” This brings us also to another point that all healing is not of God. When it benefits the enemy to stop the affliction of a person, he will, so as to gain any glory he can from it. It is not healing as God does, but simply the removal of what the enemy had already done. All works that do not conform to the Biblical pattern we can say are false.

A very plain incident in the Book of First Kings shows us how this work comes about with King Ahab’s destruction (1Kg.22: 20-38). A spirit of hell was allowed to go forth to inflame and deceive Ahab. So we see here, only on a much greater scale, with demonstrations that persuade and deceive all the kings and governments of the earth to join in what proves the most terribly disastrous of all the expeditions ever undertaken by man.

The Crusades of past eras were of the same nature. Those who did not hear and obey the voice of God, then were led captive by the Devil and his emissaries. How great was the stir, and how intense the enthusiasm, awakened throughout Europe by the crusader craze set ablaze by Peter the Hermit! The nations aroused themselves to take back the “holy places” from Islam. Myriads rushed to arms, taking the mark of the “red cross” on their shoulders, going forth without thinking about supply for life, nor how they should reach the expected victory!. What happened throughout Europe was a campaign professed to be of God’s direction, and will readily happen throughout the whole habitable world, when the question of the sovereignty of the earth hangs upon the success or failure of one last battle. There was a delusive and enthusiastic sentiment to recover the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, which led to the destruction of great numbers of men nine different times. If this religious fanaticism could engender such destruction and hardship upon hundreds of thousands of religious devotees, it is easy to see what these three frog-like demons will bring about.

It is sacred irony, with the universal enthusiasm that will be stirred by these spirits, that the prophet Joel says, *“Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up:*

Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD” (Joel 3: 9-11). The Divine taunt reflects the character of the proceedings which He scorns. The Psalmist of long ago caught the tenor of this event in God’s eyes: *“Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision”* (Ps.2: 1-4).

Demonic spirits are real, and here we will see perhaps their greatest deception as they convince natural men that they can defeat God in a battle. In his vision, John saw the spirits coming out of the three leaders who are against Christ. These nations who will come from all over the world are deceived by the demons that come from the mouths of the two beasts and the dragon. These nations influenced are outside of the realm that the Antichrist controls.

This battle will be fought in Palestine, not Europe, according to Joel chapter three and Zechariah chapter fourteen. The Valley of Megiddo (Armageddon) is about fifteen miles southeast of modern Haifa. This will be the center of the strife, though obviously, with such large contingencies of armies, it will cover an even larger area. Christ is coming to this battle “as a thief” and will bring sudden destruction upon the world of the ungodly (1Th.5: 1-11; 2Th.1: 7-10). Yet with all the destruction, it will certainly be a blessing to those who are faithful to Christ (16: 15).

The unclean spirits are stirring up the kings of the world, gathering them for the battle of the Great Day, even as John hears a voice (Re.16:15). This may seem a strange announcement, yet plainly we see it is the voice of Jesus. It is the words so often given similarly to the Church with reference to His coming again. It applies here, though not to the great body of the saved are already in heaven, but to those who will come out of this time frame, a gathering of saints under these plagues, even as there is a gathering of the armies of the apostate world.

There will be those who live at the time of the Antichrist, and yet do not worship him or his image. Some will hold to the death against acknowledgment of the Antichrist as God. They will not be marked with his number or his name. Most of them die as martyrs in their faith, conquering all the bloody persecutions of the Beast. It is a note of indication that at any

moment Christ will call for His people as yet on earth. It is instruction and direction to keep themselves in strictest readiness by watchful expectation and careful severance from the defiling abominations around them.

H. Great Earthquake and Hail

“And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Re.16: 16). Armageddon (*Har-Megiddo* - NT:717) means the Mount of Megiddo. This name has also been given to the plain of Jezreel, which belts across the middle of the Holy Land, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. Coming from a Hebrew root, it means "to cut off, to slay." A place of slaughter Megiddo has ever been. It was the great battlefield of the Old Testament between the theocracy and its various enemies. During Deborah and Barak's time in the Book of Judges, *"the kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo"* (Jg.5: 19). Good king Josiah fell before the archers of Pharaoh Necho as he *"... came to fight in the valley of Megiddo"* (2Ch.35: 22-24). Where God's king, in mortal flesh, fell a victim to the power of the pagan, there God's King, in resurrection glory, shall revenge himself on His enemies.

We should note here that the events of the seventh seal, the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial are the same. Voices and thunderings are heard, lightning is seen, and a great earthquake takes place. There have been many atmospheric commotions as these judgments progressed, but now they reach a climax, fulfilling what so many of the prophets have spoken touching the changing and folding up of the heavens (Ps.102: 25-26; Is.51: 6), the shaking of their powers (Mt.24: 29; He.12: 25), the passing away of the heavens with both a great noise and a dissolving fire (2Pe.3: 10, 12). Isaiah called it a time when "the multitude of all the nations fight against Ariel" (Is.29: 7-8). He also said, "The Lord of hosts shall visit with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire" (Is.29: 6). These aerial convulsions simply confirm the ending of the Seventieth Week of Daniel. The outpouring of the Seventh Vial simply executes the trumpet and seal.

At the Seventh Seal there was silence. At the Seventh Trumpet, as well as the Seventh Vial, there will be Great Voices. It is from the throne of God, crying out, "It is done." As Christ laid down His life at the cross, He cried, "It is finished." Likely it is His voice declaring and confirming what He said from the cross.

This seventh vial involves an earthquake of such proportions that it emphasized twice as to its magnitude. Hail accompanies it, and the major event we see with the quake is that Jerusalem is divided into three sections by its force.

Under this seventh vial God's Wrath is poured out and finalized, as Christ comes to earth to set up His Millennial Reign. This is the concluding event to Daniel's Seventh Week, which terminus also begins the "Day of the Lord." John hears a "great voice" at the end of this outpouring which announces the ending of God's Wrath being outpoured, as well as the consummation of the Week, by the words, "It is done." This is God speaking, with reference to the seventh vial and His Wrath (15: 1; 16: 1).

Great Babylon as well as other cities will no longer exist, for they will be destroyed. Islands and mountains will disappear as a result of this quake. We hear of 7.0 on man's Richter scale, but there is probably no scale that can measure the magnitude of this quake. The contour of the land of Palestine and surrounding countries will be changed to such a degree that our current maps will not indicate the truth about it. The Dead Sea will be raised to such an extent that it will start to flow into the Red Sea (Ezk.47: 1-2), and the ". . . waters shall be healed."

Jerusalem will no longer be a contiguous city, for it shall be divided into three parts. Such an earthquake with its tremendous power unleashed must necessarily affect the foundation and topography of the city itself. The earthquake divides it into three parts. As great chasms divide it, great damage will occur to it. Zechariah speaks of a trichotomy of the land at that time, in which two parts shall be cut off and die, and one part shall be left (Zec.13: 8-9).

The earthquake that divides the city and destroys cities of the nations is brought about by the feet of Christ touching the Mount of Olives at His Second Coming (Zec.14: 4). The cities of the Ten Federated Nations that are controlled by the Antichrist and come against Israel will be destroyed (Re.chp.18) by the Great Earthquake. Likely capital cities to be destroyed include, but are not limited to, Rome, London, Naples, Paris, and Constantinople.

Great hail will also fall, with the stones weighing upwards to one hundred pounds. This last plague or vial will be extremely catastrophic for the people of planet earth that worship the beast. Hail has been one of God's instruments of judgment before, but none like this time. This hail will likely fall in the crisis of the Battle of Armageddon, and will be used by God to finish the destruction of the Allied armies of Antichrist. Men will blaspheme God for it, but the judgment will come. The seventh plague of Egypt is similar, but on a much smaller scale (Ex.9: 13-35; Jos.10: 11). This plague was on Iris, the water deity, and Osiris, the fire deity of Egypt. God's Wrath, which first began to be poured out under the sixth seal during the first part of the Week, is now completed with the seventh vial.

There shall also be a "sharp sword" come from Christ' mouth at this time, destroying that "wicked." While that "wicked" is Antichrist, it is likely that the sharp sword will destroy his

followers, as in annihilation, and not him, since he personally is not destroyed, but later is relegated to his final destination, the Lake of Fire (Re.19: 20).

Concerning the reality of these events, rather than giving them some dreamed up fulfillment, we propose and confirm that it is better to risk mistake by clinging fast to the plain sense of what God has caused to be written for our learning, than to go floundering through a world of fancies, ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. If, in the great day of fulfillment, when God shall turn these prophecies into living realities, it does not turn out according to the terms used by the Holy Spirit, we will certainly be excused for having clung tenaciously to the Word of God as it stands. In any event, whether right or wrong in our interpretation, our simple faith will be our best apology.

There is likely nothing which a sinner so little expects as the punishment of his sins. While he can talk about ungodliness in general, its sinfulness, danger, and the certain judgment of God upon it, he proclaims that no doubt God is a holy God and will not spare those who fail to make their peace with Him. But, looking at his own sins, negligence and disobedience, his accountability seems to go out the window. Be sure your sins will find you out. Some ignore the danger they are in while condemning others. He may even admire vivid and faithful preaching of the sure and terrible wrath of God upon transgressors; yet go on in his sins and disobedience. Thus he is impenitent, unconverted from his old ways, until the end comes, and he dies as he lived, unreconciled to God. So it will be with these who become deceived and involved with the Antichrist, falling under his sway and worshipping him.

Click [Modules](#) to return to the module list or click [Quiz 7](#) to take the quiz for this unit

Part 03: Chapter 12-14

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

XII. MYSTICAL BABYLON JUDGED

Revelation 16:19 has the thought of God interspersed with the destructions of the seventh vial: “. . . and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” This description and fate of great Babylon forms the subject of the next chapters. While Jerusalem is only partially destroyed, something of the sacred being there, the Gentile cities which are lower in moral character is entirely destroyed,

for they all belong to the Beast. Then, Great Babylon, standing at the base in the scale of guilt, is made to drink the bitterest draught of all, because she is the source and center of the prevailing abominations.

Before we discuss Ecclesiastical Babylon, perhaps we should point out what history teaches us concerning churches and doctrine. National decay turns on the axis of liberal theology. When the church loses its conservative view and convictions about the Bible, the nation and the church in that nation begin a downward move, in patriotism and common decency. Political ideas are the outgrowth of personal religious convictions of the people populating that nation. Thus, we see that godliness is passed from one generation to the next through convictions that are expressed to that new generation. We can see that history is replete with those whose convictions were attacked by moral cancer, bringing about that nation's death or relegation to the trash-heap of history.

Any grouping of liberal and conservative doctrinal following churches must of a necessity bring about some compromise, someplace. To join up light with darkness is to bring about the weakness and eventual death of one or the other. Individual cooperating churches and denominations that were once strong on their stand of purity before Christ, join the World Council of Churches and have to modify their stand on the very doctrines that have made them great, bringing about, in the name of tolerance, their own death.

Some religious groups affiliated with this "World Council of Churches" have no faith in the shed blood of Christ, or His bodily resurrection. So to join them is to fall from the true faith, entering into a program of spiritual adultery, which is what is pictured in Revelation chapter seventeen.

A. The Great Harlot

Revelation chapter seventeen describes the identification and character of Mystical, or perhaps more accurately, Ecclesiastical Babylon. Some teach that this destruction of Babylon is an eighth parenthetical statement, for the following reasons:

1. It is not in the proper order of fulfillment.

It has been placed as a matter of explanation between the fact of destruction of literal Babylon (seventh vial – 16: 17-21), and the full and complete description of that destruction in chapter eighteen (18: 1-24). This shows a contrast between Mystical Babylon and literal Babylon (others teach that there is no rebuilding of literal Babylon [Je.51: 29, 37]). Only the

Antichrist and his image are allowed to be worshipped in the last half of the Tribulation, while Mystery (Mystical, Great Harlot) Babylon will be destroyed in the middle of the Week.

2. The Babylon of Revelation chapter seventeen must be destroyed in the middle of the Week by Antichrist and his Ten Kings.

The destruction of the Babylon in chapter eighteen is strictly supernatural (16: 17-21; 18: 1-24), as an earthquake is the method of her destruction and not within the power of Antichrist nor any other human.

3. There will be certain domination of the Antichrist and the Ten Kings by Mystery Babylon during the first half of the Week.

During the first half of the Tribulation, Antichrist gains power so as to destroy Mystery Babylon at the middle of the Week. He will be the power dominating all areas of life in the last half of the week. No two controlling forces can operate in the same space, so they are different and that in chapter seventeen is parenthetical, relating to the judgment of the whore which takes place at the middle of the week when Antichrist comes to full power.

4. By comparison of chapters seventeen and eighteen, we see two distinctly different identities.

The reference to the Babylon of chapter seventeen which is destroyed, breaks into the message of the seventh vial (16: 21). The literal Babylon destroyed under the seventh vial (16: 17-21). Chapter seventeen fits closely with the events in Revelation chapters ten through thirteen, and Revelation chapter eighteen is a continuation of the seventh vial, showing how and why literal Babylon is destroyed.

5. Revelation seventeen is parenthetical.

The revelation concerning the beast could not be given before the rise of the beast and the woman could not ride on the beast until it appeared.

Other points of contrast include the fact that: 1) one of the seven angels gives John the complete mystery of the woman, while in the next chapter another angel gives the other message (17: 1; 18: 1); 2) the woman and the beast of chapter seventeen are symbolic, with explanations being given, while there is no indication of chapter eighteen being symbolic; 3) an angel speaks to John directly in chapter seventeen, but he hears only voices in chapter

eighteen; 4) the one Babylon of chapter seventeen is called the “woman” and “great whore” while no such reference is made in chapter eighteen; 5) John wonders with “great admiration” over the one in chapter seventeen, while he has no such reaction at the literal city of Babylon which he is familiar with in chapter eighteen; 6) there are no predictions of the fall of Mystery Babylon in chapter seventeen, but many about literal Babylon (Is.13: 19-22; 14: 4; 21: 9; Je.50: 39-41; 51: 6-11, 24-29, 36-57; Re.14: 8; 16: 17-21; 18: 1-24)’ 7) there is no warning in chapter seventeen, but one is given in eighteen (18: 4); 8) there is no mourning over the destruction of Mystery Babylon, while the Antichrist and the Ten Kings will mourn over the destruction of literal Babylon (18: 9-19).

John was considerably astonished at the Great Harlot. He was even asked why he marveled. The question of the identity of the Great Harlot has been a matter of great controversy, but most branches of Christianity allude to Roman Catholicism as indicative of the Harlot. Romanism will dominate the beast of a while, during which time the beast will have risen over the Ten Kings in the middle of the Week, to destroy this “Great Harlot.” There have been many relationships existing between Rome and Babylon, with the fact that Romanism being called “Babylon” and “Mystery” is based on some of these relationships.

Nimrod built Babylon (Ge.10: 8-10). Here the first apostasy was evidenced, affecting the “Babylonian Cult” developed by Nimrod and Semiramis, his queen. Their religious activity revolved around divination of secrets, mysteries, and priestly functions. It became a stronghold on the human race, counteracting the truth of God. It spread and developed, becoming known as the “Seat of Satan.” This power emigrated to the Roman emperor and Rome succeeded Babylon as the center of the cult, having far-reaching effects. This initial influence still is apparent in some Roman practices and even in some Christian realms too. While some historic observations could be noted here, they do not prove that the Great Whore is a symbol of Roman Catholicism. Too many questions would be left unanswered, such as why Rome would be called Babylon, with no special connections, especially since they are two thousand miles apart.

Rome is not mentioned in prophecy. Babylon is mentioned many times, six of which are in Revelation. Rome is mentioned apart from prophecy, but then only nine times as compared to Babylon, which is named two hundred ninety four time in Scripture. The Roman Catholic Church, as such, is not mentioned in the Scriptures.

Rome is built on seven hills, which some take to mean the seven heads of the beast, but this is not the evidence of the passage at all. Five of the mountains existed prior to John’s time, one existed when he saw the Revelation, and the seventh was yet to come, and that eventually there would be an eighth. This obviously repudiates the possibility of Rome and her seven hills explaining the passage.

Some of the practices of the Roman Church, although considered improper and unscriptural by many, would not be called mysteries. The terms “great whore” and the “woman” are used in Scripture, connecting Israel, Babylon, and other pagan nations with which Israel had to do.

She committed fornication with them long before Christianity (Is.13: 8; 54: 6; Je.3: 9; 4: 31; 6: 2, 24; 31: 27; Ia.1: 17; Ezk.16: 17-36; 20: 30; 23: 3-44; 34: 7-9; Ho.4: 10-12). Similar terms are never used of professing Christians in any respect.

This Babylonian Religion of the days of Antichrist relates to witchcraft, demon worship, and the manifestation of demons (Re.9: 20-21; 13: 2; Da.11: 37-38; Mt.24: 24; 2Th.2: 8-12). Roman Catholicism may have some intermingled rituals which relate to Babylon, but most of their doctrine is established by the Bible. They believe in the virgin birth, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as His ascension. They teach His blood as the atonement for sin, and that all forgiveness is through Him, as well as other basic Christian doctrine and Biblical facts. Not so with Mystery Babylon, for it will be completely anti-God.

The “kings of the earth” are spoken of as committing fornication with the Great Whore, but we know this is not literal sexual sin, but spiritual adultery against God (17: 2). Kings hold their position of leadership because of God, and to fail to follow God’s leading, or seek any other director or power for guidance in decision making, is to commit adultery against God.

“Abominations” go far back in Scripture, with reference to such practices in Babylon as idolatry and whoredoms. It is associated with witchcraft, demon worship, and sorceries that were practiced by heathen nations (De.18: 9-12; 29: 17-18; 32: 16-17; 2Kg.16: 3-4; 17: 1-18; 21: 2-11; Ezk.16: 22-58). The religious system then referred to here is of Babylon, involving ancient imagism, spiritism, witchcraft, sorcery, idolatry, and paganism.

We see today a turning again to witchcraft, astrology, the black arts, and black magic. Human sacrifice is taking place in our world. Demon spirits have invaded our societies and a Harlot religion will come out of it. This Mystery Babylon is in reality a Mystery, for it will hold sway over millions and millions of people. It is a diabolical religious system, involving that which relates to witchcraft and sorcery.

The parenthetical matter of Mystery Babylon is inserted here to explain the religious aspect of Babylon. The Great Whore is called Mystery Babylon as an indication of a connection with literal Babylon (17: 5). The first great rebellion against God was at Babylon, not long after the flood, so it will be the site of the last rebellion (14: 8; 16: 17-21; 18: 1-24). Demon religions and idolatry in Scripture are always associated with literal Babylon (Is.21: 9; 47: 9-10; Re.18: 2-3, 23). Babylon is the center of the last days for demons and their activity (18: 2). Sorceries, enchantments, and related activity will be centered there (18: 23; Is.47: 9-10; Is.chps.12-13). Rome, nor any center of false religion we know, fulfills these prophecies.

Babylon is the city which makes the nations drunk with the “wine of her fornication (18: 3). The Great Whore is the religious entity which is of the same city, a religious aspect of literal Babylon. This city is named as the focus of God’s wrath (16: 19; 18: 4, 5). She is also named

to be judged in the last days of martyrdoms (18: 24). The Antichrist will be king of Syria, with Babylon its capital (Is.14: 4).

The religion that is spoken of here could be a new effort, or simply the revival of sorcery, witchcraft, enchantments, and astrological studies and worship that were characteristic of the city years many ago. The Roman Empire of this day will have these religious activities going on to a large degree. False prophets who demonstrated with signs and wonders that deceived the people was prophesied by Jesus (Mt.24: 24) as a major deception. Paul spoke of “lying wonders” and powerful signs done by Satan’s power through the Antichrist (2Th.2: 8-13; Re.13: 1-8; 19: 20). Demons manifesting these wonders and sorceries will deceive the nations, concentrated in literal Babylon (14: 8; 18: 23; Is.47: 9-10, 12-13). Mystery Babylon will be involved with ancient imagism, which is demon instigated and empowered, and will dominate the Old Roman Empire. Many saints will be martyred in the first half of Daniel’s Seventieth Week before Antichrist comes to his full power over the Ten Kingdoms (17: 2, 5-6, 12-17).

This religious system could be a newly developed system, with its headquarters in Babylon to fulfill chapter seventeen during the years that Antichrist is coming to power. Antichrist would have to start a new religion with the object of worship being himself, killing millions who do not worship him or receive his mark (2Th.2: 3-4; Re.13: 1-18). At any rate, the Antichrist will move his headquarters to Jerusalem eventually.

B. The Beast Which Carries the Harlot

The Greek word “*therion*” is translated as “beast” which the Harlot will ride upon. Revelation chapter seventeen gives us a description of this beast (Re.17: 3, 7-17), as well as being referred to several times in chapters eleven through twenty. The picture of this beast is a wild, untamed, dangerous animal. It symbolizes the powers coming against Christ in the last days, which seek to destroy Him and the plan of God for the Ages. The vision of the Beast here is mostly for identifying the eighth Kingdom, which is the last one that is formed after the rapture and before the Second Advent. While the first seven kingdoms have been identified to us, this kingdom will reign over the previous seven. This beast symbolizes three things:

1. It signifies a human being, the Antichrist, and is the beast out of the sea (chp.13).

This beast comes out of the sea of humanity (13: 1; 17: 1, 3, 11, 15). He is the same beast referred to in other passages (13: 4, 8, 16-18; 14: 9-11; 15: 2-4; 20: 4). It is this beast that receives power from the Dragon, and he, the Antichrist will be worshipped. He will: a) speak blasphemies against God, His name, His Tabernacle, and those dwelling in heaven; b) he will have power for forty-two months (13: 5); c) he will make war on the saints (13: 7); d) he will kill the saints (14: 9-11; 15: 2-4; 20: 4-6); e) he will have power over the Ten Kingdoms and

the inhabitants thereof (13: 1, 7; 17: 12-17); e) he will have a co-worker described as the False Prophet, who will influence men to worship him (13: 11-18; 16: 13-16; 19: 20; 20: 10; f) he will have a mark and a number (13: 17-18; 14: 9; 15: 2; 16: 2; 20: 4); g) his mark will be forced upon men so as to buy or sell, with the penalty of failure being death (13: 16-18; 14: 9-11; 15: 2-4; 20: 4).

2. It symbolizes a supernatural being.

He is the beast out of the abyss (Re.11: 7; 17: 8). He symbolizes a satanic prince, making war on the Two Witnesses during the last half of the Tribulation. This beast, possessed with demon powers, will be involved in gathering the forces that come against God at Armageddon. Some other things can be observed: a) he was not on the earth before John's time (of receiving the vision); b) he will "ascend out of the bottomless pit" (17: 8); c) he will be destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ, and go into "perdition" (17: 8; 19: 19-21; 20: 10).

3. It symbolizes an empire.

This eighth kingdom immediately succeeds the seven heads or kingdoms. We see this because: a) there are seven heads with the timely, characteristic names of blasphemy written on them (13: 1; 17: 30; b) the beast has ten horns on which are ten crowns (13: 1; 12: 3; 17: 12-17); c) verse nine of chapter seventeen tells us that the ". . . *seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings . . .*" *This refers to the kingdoms, of which "five are fallen."* These are apparently the five kingdoms that had passed away (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece) before the vision John saw (17: 10).

4. In verse ten, it says that "one is."

This was the Old Roman Empire which was in existence in John's day. The balance of this statement about kingdom says that the next one ". . . is not come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." This refers to the Ten Kingdoms that exist inside of the Old Roman Empire and are revived. This is a future event. The "little horn" will take control of this kingdom (17: 10; Da.7: 7-8), at the middle of the Week. This "eighth kingdom" exists for forty-two months, the ". . . *beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth*" (17: 11; 13: 5).

In this area, some have recognized a kingdom, and not a man. Others have recognized a man, but not a kingdom. But, it is the satanic powers that rule over the man, in the kingdom. Three identities are recognizable out of the beast: a) the human being out of humanity that is the Antichrist; b) the supernatural being, out of the abyss; c) the empire or eighth kingdom. All three are recognized in this symbol of the beast.

C. Beast Out of the Abyss

Many theories have been given as to the identity of this beast out of the abyss (11: 7; 17: 7-8). Some say he is a human spirit who is confined to the abyss, but will come out again to be the Antichrist, while others say he is a revived kingdom that has existed in the past. Those who contend for a human spirit say he will be reincarnated as the Antichrist, grow to maturity and power, be slain in the middle of the Week, and then be raised from the dead. Some say Satan will incarnate him, making him immortal.

There are reasons to believe that the Antichrist and the beast out of the abyss are two separate individuals. The beast represents three things: 1) a human out of a sea of people; 2) a supernatural being coming out of the abyss and referred to as the beast out of the abyss; 3) the eighth kingdom composed of many peoples and making up that eighth empire (17: 1, 3, 7, 9-11, 15). However, Antichrist is an ordinary human being, who will die at the Second Coming of Christ, not at the middle of the Week. He will be slain and cast into the Lake of Fire (Da.7: 11; Re.19: 20).

The doctrine of reincarnation is another reason for saying the beast and the Antichrist are two different individuals. Reincarnation is not taught in the Bible. Hebrews nine, verse twenty-seven teaches us that there is one death, and then judgment. The beast out of the abyss then would not be reincarnated, if there is no such thing. The resurrection brings a person to life in an immortal body that cannot die (1Co.15: 20-23, 35-54; Jn.5: 28-29). Also, the abyss is not a place for departed spirits, but a prison for demon spirits (Lk.8: 31; Re.9: 1-21). Human spirits went to hell or Paradise before Christ was resurrected (Lk.16: 19-31; Ps.16: 10; Lk.23: 43; Re.20: 11-15). When a Christian dies, his spirit and soul goes into the presence of the Lord. This is confirmed because at Christ's resurrection, He took all in Paradise with Him into heaven (Ep.4: 7-11; He.2: 14; Php.1: 21; 2Co.5: 8; Re.6: 9-11).

Some teach that Antichrist will be killed in the middle of the Week, and then rise from the dead, immortal as an incarnation of Satan. However, the Scriptures teach that one of the heads is wounded and healed again. This is not talking about the beast itself, but one of the heads that involves the seven kingdoms, which come before the beast. The eighth kingdom is the one ruled by Antichrist and the satanic prince that comes out of the abyss (17: 9-11). Thus it cannot be Satan incarnate as Antichrist, though we know he is going to be influenced by demonic forces.

This very strong, supernatural satanic spirit will be a ruling prince under Satan's leading, dominating the Antichrist, and bringing him to authority over the eighth and last kingdom of the age. He apparently ruled one of the first five kingdoms that had fallen before John's day. He will be confined until the formation of the Ten Kingdoms. This demonic spirit will be instrumental in the rise of the Antichrist, and restore the kingdom of Greece, which he ruled before the sixth and seventh kingdom.

The war upon the Two Witnesses of which the Antichrist is a part will really be instigated by the best out of the abyss. This has been a common practice of demonic spirits and powers of darkness (Is.14: 4-21; 24: 21-23; 25: 7; Ezk.28: 11-17; Da.2: 19-23, 28, 31-45; 4: 25-37; Joel.chp.3; Lk.4: 5-6; Jn.12: 31; 2Co.4: 4; Ep.2: 2; 6: 11-17; 2Th.chp.2; Re.13: 1-18). The influence of supernatural princes under Satan is plainly shown in Daniel (Da.10: 1-11: 1). Supernatural princes are referred to in many places in Daniel (Da.10: 12-14). The “prince of Persia” detained Gabriel, but he says that the prince of Grecia will come. It is likely that this “prince of Grecia” is the spirit that comes out of the abyss.

Daniel’s last vision concerns the Grecian Empire. Since the head of the eighth kingdom will come out of Syria, which is a division of Greece, it is logical that the spirit out of the abyss is the prince of Grecia. No “princes” of other nations are mentioned in this relationship, and it could not be the prince of Rome as it was in existence during John’s time.

The body of this “beast” is “like a leopard.” It symbolizes the Grecian Kingdom in the Book of Daniel, proving that this eighth kingdom of the Antichrist is of the Syrian division (Da.8: 9-14, 20-25; 9: 27; 11: 21-12: 7; Re.chp.13). Two prophecies of the Grecian empire about the last days involve the deliverance of Israel from other nations at the return of Christ (Jo.3: 6; Zec.9: 13). These passages show the existence of Greece as being under the Antichrist; so we conclude the prince of Grecia is the demonic spirit that shall come back from the abyss.

D. The Seven Heads

The seven heads are seven mountains or seven kings (Re.17: 9-10). The heads symbolize seven mountains, which are kingdoms or kings (words used interchangeably (compare Da.2: 37-38 with 2: 39; also 7: 3, 23-24 with 7: 17). Seven kings are an interpretation of the seven heads, not the seven mountains of Rome. When the Scripture says five are fallen, that has not happened with the mountains of Rome.

Some debate the word “fallen.” It is appropriate for kingdoms and fallen kings. The sixth kingdom (the one that “is”) existed in John’s day. The seventh, “the other that is not and is yet to come,” is the one that comes from the old Roman Empire and forms the Ten Kingdoms. The beast itself is the eighth and final empire. The beast is the eighth kingdom, spanning the times of the Gentiles, with the woman being a great religious system headquartered in Rome. Those future Ten Kingdoms of the Revised Roman Empire will be dominated by that religious system during the first half of the Tribulation, during which time the eighth kingdom is being formed by the Antichrist (17: 1-3, 7, 12-17).

While the ten horns of the dragon do not have crowns, those of the best do, revealing that Satan gives his power over the ten kings of the Revised Roman Empire to the Antichrist to

rule 3-1/2 years (13: 2,5; 17: 8-17; 2Th.2: 8-12; Da.8: 24). The seven heads on the beast represent kingdoms which have relationship to Israel.

1. The first mountain kingdom is Egypt.

She was the first to oppress Israel, and where Israel began to multiply and actually become a nation (Ge.15: 13-14; Ge.chp.37-Ex.chp.15). Egypt does not appear again until during the time of Solomon, six hundred years after the Exodus (1Kg.3: 1-3; 9: 16; 11: 1-40; 12: 1-33). Judah was chastened by Egypt during Rehoboam's reign (1Kg.chp.14), being invaded by her (2Ch.14: 9-12; 16: 7-9). Second Kings also speaks of interrelationships with Egypt (2Kg.chps.17-25). Egypt, a part of Greece's division that will be one of the Ten Kingdoms in the last days (Da.8: 21-25), will have a downfall in the latter days (Ezk.chps.29-32).

2. The second mountain kingdom is Assyria.

She has had many relationships with Israel, especially as recorded in Second Kings (2Kg.chps.15-18). Assyria joined with Judah against Israel, but had a down fall because of it (Is.10: 20-27; 14: 25; 31: 4-9; Mi.5: 5-6). She will be blessed in the Millennium with Israel, as well as Egypt (Is.11: 16; 19: 23-25).

3. The third mountain kingdom is Babylon.

Babylon was involved with Israel and Judah at various time periods (2Kg.17: 24-30; 2Ch.33: 11). For the activity of captivity of Judah, Babylon was punished (Je.25: 9-14). She shall be under the Antichrist's rule when Christ comes.

4. The fourth mountain kingdom is Medo-Persia.

They helped overthrow Assyria. They are depicted in symbols in Daniel chapters two, seven, and eight. She is mentioned again in Daniel chapter ten as being ruled by satanic princes (Da.10: 13-14, 20-21). Ezra also speaks of relationships that Israel had with Medo-Persia.

5. The fifth mountain kingdom is Greece.

Her oppression of Israel is recorded in Daniel as the third kingdom mentioned. Several references in the Apocryphal Books mention this relationship (1&2 Maccabees). Daniel depicts this kingdom as a leopard with four heads (Da.7: 6). The kingdom was an entire

entity, but had four divisions later on. Several Scriptures mention the Revived Grecian Empire and the Antichrist in their persecution of Israel (Da.7: 17-27); 9: 26-27; 11: 35-45; Ezk.chps.38-39; Zec.9: 7-13; 12: 4-14; 13: 1-9; 14: 1-9; Re.12: 6, 14-17; 13: 1-18). The fifth kingdom mentioned is the one that was “wounded to death” and revived or healed. It will be the eighth kingdom.

6. The sixth mountain kingdom is Rome.

Rome, the sixth kingdom to oppress Israel is mentioned fourth by Daniel. This is the kingdom that was symbolized on the beast by the head “that was” in the time of John. Rome was in control in John’s time and strong as iron (Da.2: 31-45). Rome was very strong, having ten horns (Da.7: 7-27). Rome is mentioned as the destroyer of Israel (Da.9: 26-27), which Jesus also spoke of (Mt.24: 1-3; Lk.21: 20-24). Titus besieged Israel in A.D. 70 and after four months, killed one million Jews, destroying the Temple and the city. One hundred thousand were taken captive, while thousand had been killed prior to this siege.

7. The seventh mountain kingdom is the Revised Roman Empire, still future.

Under the leadership of the Great Whore, ruling the Ten Kingdoms, she will be a terrible persecutor of Israel. The Great Whore, Mystery Babylon, will try to stop all religious activity that does not give worship to the Antichrist. Murder of the followers of Jesus will be prominent at this time. While Israel will be involved in this persecution of believers, with the Great Whore, the Antichrist will intensify it as he gains power over the Ten Kings (Mt.24: 4-13; Mk.13: 4-13; Re.6: 9-11; 17: 3-6). Elevating his persecution, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and try to kill her also (Da.7: 21; 8: 24-25; 9: 27; 12: 1; Mt.24: 15-31; Re.7: 9-17; 13: 1-18; 14: 11-13; 15: 2; 20: 4-6).

8. The ten horns and the beast, the seventh and eighth kingdom.

The old Roman Empire will exist in this day, in a revised form, a confederation of Ten Kingdoms, the Seventh Kingdom, or head of the beast. It will exist as two separate kingdoms (Da.2: 40-45). The legs of iron and toes of iron and clay represent two divisions, the eastern and western division of the Roman Empire. The ten toes are ten kingdoms, separated by the fact that they are attached to two different legs. These ten kingdoms will exist at the same time as the ten kings referred to (Da.7: 7-27). The “little horn” will arise after them (Da.7: 11), also known as the beast. This is the Antichrist’s rising. Christ will destroy them at His coming.

The beast itself is the eighth kingdom, ruled by a mortal human being who is personal and visible, the Antichrist, by the personal but invisible and immortal angel, the prince of Grecia. He will aid in the rise to power of the Antichrist over the Grecian Empire. It will include the

Ten Kingdoms, which will comprise the Revised Roman Empire, taking place during the first half of the Tribulation.

These Ten Kingdoms will have such fierce hatred for religion (especially of Rome), that though they (he) had embraced her previously, now he (they) destroy her. The moral laxity of liberal theology is appealing to the man who wants religion that has few restraints. A discipline-free religious experience is pleasing to him, but gives no answers when judgment comes. When there are storms in life, liberal theology is ripped asunder upon the gales of personal tragedy and/or divine judgment. Venting their anger against the “church” is a natural event, just as a “church member” (but not a believer) would against the liberal preacher who led them astray. The statement to “... *come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins* “... *is not just for the people of that day, but a principle that is throughout Scripture* (2Co.6: 14-17).

Countries east and west of the Ten will be engulfed as the Antichrist goes on toward world domination, but he will fall short that domination. Nations before have tried to gain control of the world, such as Nazi Germany and the USSR, but they did not nor can ever do so. Antichrist will come close, but Jesus is the eventual and Ultimate Ruler of the world to bring peace and prosperity. Some believe that Russia is the focal point of much prophecy in Revelation, but she does not fit nor fulfill many predictions some claim to see her as doing. She will be involved in end time activity, and will suffer defeat under the Antichrist’s rise to rule.

Countries to the north of the Kingdom of the Antichrist will have war with him, but they shall be defeated (Da.11: 44). By being defeated, and her allies, Russia will be ruled by Antichrist. They will ally against the Jews, with others that she has conquered, in an attempt to exterminate them completely (Ezk.chps.38-39; Zec.chp.14). As the Antichrist tries to destroy Israel, Christ and His armies will descend from heaven to defeat him in a short battle, but bloody battle. Then Christ will set up His Everlasting Kingdom (Zec.chp.14; Mt.24: 27-31; 25: 31-46; 2Th.1: 7-10; 2: 8-12; Jude 14; Re.19: 11-21; 20: 1-7).

It is through the conquest of these countries to the north and east that Antichrist will become the prince of Meshech and Tubal, and the Gog of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39. He will overtake Russia, thus involving her in the battle of Armageddon. The Antichrist will come from Syria before the war with Russia takes place, with Ten Kingdoms at his control. That war will not be fought in Palestine, but to the north and east of the Ten Kingdoms (Da.11: 44). It is with these other forces the Antichrist will come to Palestine at the battle of Armageddon.

XIII. The Doom of Literal Babylon

The doom of literal Babylon is in chapter eighteen. While there is some prophetic writing in Scripture that relate to the Medes destroying Babylon, it is a future destiny that is involved in this chapter. Babylon does not realize her impending doom. Revelation chapter eighteen says that her judgment will come in one hour (V.19). It will be with suddenness and completeness. It will be with great violence. Fire will be intensely involved in her destruction (Re.18: 8-9, 18; Je.50: 40; Is.13: 19). The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah took place in a few hours, and thus it will be that the future Babylon will also be extinguished. The rebuilt city will be set on fire.

Babylon is a region full of bitumen. The mortar of its buildings was not clay in olden days, but bituminous slime. The earth around it is full of inflammable material, as was the Vale of Siddim before the conflagration of the cities of the plain, which was "full of slime-pits." There, when God's fiery judgment descended, with the thunderbolts that ignited the oil-springs, naphtha, and bituminous wells, all the land of the plain burned as a furnace. So it will be with Babylon, sinking as the burning goes on, swallowing up the doomed cities in a literal "lake of fire."

She will have glorified herself and lived deliciously. While man was created to please God, in pride and arrogance foolish men project themselves into lives of frivolous living and contemptuous thinking for the things of God. Expenditures of time, energy, and money that they lavish on themselves in selfishness will be but a tarnished glory on the ones created. No matter how exalted a man may become in his thinking and the thinking of others in the human family, God will judge. None of the human race is exempted, no matter their station in life, nor the amount of money they have.

When we speak of the day of the Lord, we may have the idea that it is a single day, or at least a very brief space of time. Consequently, some may wonder how we can speak of the impending nearness of that day and yet look for the rebuilding of a great city that then will be destroyed. The difficulty is not in the nature of the thing, but in how we apprehend what the "Day of the Lord" means and the length of that period. The "Day of the Lord" or the coming again of our Savior is not in one moment of time, as with a single scene of a play. The Scriptures describe the "Day of the Lord" and the "Second Coming" of Christ in a way that that we should not limit in our thinking to a single moment of time, any more than we should the day of his first coming, which extended over more than thirty years, embracing various stages and successive presentations of His person. While men have told us that the coming of the Lord will be at "any moment," there is no Word in Scripture which indicates Christ could not take His Church out of this world and yet there be twenty five or even fifty years before the events of Revelation nineteen happening. We do not know how, but we do know it is true.

To see all of Christ's comings, such as in Old Testament prophecy, we have to see that He came over a period of years, fulfilling indeed the events prophesied. His first Advent was spoke of in such a way that we cannot take them to apply all to a single day, year, or scene. Micah said that Christ should "come" out of Bethlehem (Ephratah), but Hosea said that he would come "out of Egypt." Malachi said that He should "suddenly come to his temple," and Zechariah that he would come to Zion "riding upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass"

(Zec.9: 9); while, according to Isaiah, "the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali" (Is.9: 1) were to see the "great light." All these presentations were His coming. He did come when He was born at Bethlehem; He did come out of Egypt; He did come when He announced Himself at Nazareth; He did come as a great light among the people of Northern Galilee; He did come riding into Jerusalem on the ass; He did come suddenly to His Temple when he twice drove out the money-changers; and He came when He reappeared after His resurrection. Each one of these particular incidents are alike called "His coming," but they were many separate presentations at different dates, extending over a period of thirty-three years. None of these could be left out of being connected to His First Advent. As it was then, so it will be again.

A. Indictment of Babylon

The statement "After these things" indicates that literal Babylon will fall after the matters discussed in chapter seventeen about Mystery Babylon. Chapter seventeen is a parenthetical explanation of the spiritual side of what literal Babylon has been involved with. She becomes the "habitation of devils" and the "cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This is a portrayal of demonic powers that are centered in Babylon. Her evil indulgences are also joined by other nations. While luxury abounds and illicit relationships are prevalent, there is also demonic worship, with men bowing down to images. It is the spiritual fornication Jeremiah writes about (Je.51: 7). This does not prevent the truth that Mystery Babylon is the religious entity of chapter seventeen. Literal Babylon is a wicked and abominable place.

A mighty angel brings the word in tremendous power: "Fallen, Fallen" - Babylon the Great." This is not just information as to what has been or what is to be, but that word which effects what it describes-the word which brings Great Babylon down. The twice-repeated word describes two separate parts of a fall, indicating the two aspects in which we have observed Babylon; first to Mystery Babylon as a system of false worship, and second to Babylon as a city, in which this system or spirit is finally embodied.

There is a prophecy in Zechariah that has been mystifying for ages, but shall be displayed in this time. In the vision, Zechariah sees an "*ephah*" that goes forth. The angel who was talking with him said that "this" is their resemblance in all the earth (Zec.5: 5-11). The "woman that sitteth in the midst of the *ephah*" the angel described as "wickedness." He cast the weight of the lead (lid) upon the mouth of the *ephah*. Then two women with wings lifted the *ephah*, bearing it on wings as of a stork to build her a house in the "land of shiner." We should recognize some things from this vision:

The *ephah* is the largest of Hebrew dry measures. It was used as a symbol of commerce. Its resemblance or going forth through all the earth refers to universal commercialism. In this *ephah* that Zechariah saw sat a woman who was called "wickedness." She tried to raise the lid, but the angel he saw thrust her back down with the lid in place (a talent of lead). The two women came, lifted the "*ephah*" high, and carried it to Shinar where they would build her (wickedness) a house. Shinar is the land where the Tower of Babel was in the process of being built when God foiled their plans (Ge.11: 1-9). Babylon was built on this site. The

vision of Zechariah was centuries after the fall of ancient Babylon, so the vision speaks of a future city and events.

With the ephah standing for commerce, and the woman called wickedness, we can see that the commercialism displayed at the time of the fulfillment of the vision will be filled with all manner of dishonest schemes and methods. Since the woman is thrust back into the ephah and covered with a talent of lead, we see that the schemes were covered or kept out of sight. The “stork winged women” indicate something also. The stork was an unclean bird under the Law of Moses. Yet the name of the bird was “*chased*” which means “pious.” This is likely to indicate pursuit of wealth under the guise of religion, which will be a characteristic of those Babylonian days.

While we may not see how this could take place, when capitalists of today decide to do something, a large amount of buildings can be built in a few months. We can point to the complex built in Athens for the Olympics as an example. When the wealth of the world has come under the control of Antichrist, this will be no problem to move the center of commerce from New York City to Revived Babylon. At the Department of War of France, records of valuable surveys and maps made by the order of Napoleon I contains a plan for the New City of Babylon. It contains vast schemes of rebuilding that ancient city, with it to be Napoleon’s capital city. Napoleon had recognized its strategic position in the possible conquering of Europe and Asia.

The whole country of Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylonia only needs an irrigation system to again make it the most valuable land in the world. Steps have been taken to do just that. The British government explored and surveyed the river Euphrates at a cost of \$150,000 in 1850. The English engineer who built the Assouam dam in Egypt also surveyed the Euphrates Valley for the purpose of constructing a series of irrigation canals that would restore the country agriculturally. It was a tremendous grain producer at one time, and will be again when these or similar plans are put into place.

Others have been involved in building highways and railways that connect the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, by way of Aleppo, to the Tigris River, and from there to Baghdad, then on through Babylon to Kuwait on the Persian Gulf. Not all of this has been built, but the plans are there. European capitalists especially would be interested to revive the country of Babylonia and rebuild its cities for commercial purposes.

Babylon the Great will be an immense city, rivaling some and perhaps all we know today, such as Paris, London, Chicago, Los Angeles, Seoul, Mexico City and Tokyo. It will be the greatest commercial city of the world, with merchandise of gold, silver, precious stones, purple, silk, scarlet, and costly wools. Its inhabitants, enriched by its great commerce, will be the best clothed, with homes of the most costly and modern things that can be purchased on this planet. Costly perfume, sweet wines, rich pastries, and delicious meats will be at their beck and call. They will have their “slaves” and traffic in the “souls of men.” Women will sell their bodies and men their souls in that city at a rate unseen heretofore. The finest of

music will be heard there, with a mad whirl of pleasure and desire for riches that possesses the minds and hearts of its inhabitants. Occultism will flourish there, and Satan himself will rule Babylon, as he influences Antichrist.

As in the days of Lot, and Noah, so will it be that their disaster will come unforeseen by the multitude. It will be after the commerce is thriving and settled that “wickedness” will lift the lid and reveal itself, along with the mark that is required to trade.

B. The Verdict of Babylon

The voice in chapter eighteen, verse four is God because of the statement about “My people.” His people are to separate themselves from the sins of the city and the judgments or plagues that will follow. Morally corrupt, the plagues sent will bring the same destruction and cup she has imposed upon others. Torment and sorrow are the result (Je.51: 24; Is.47: 8-11). Living in luxury and pride, being grossly evil, her verdict will come suddenly and surely. It will be destruction so great that the city will vanish off the face of the earth and there will be no more Babylon (Is.13: 19-22; Je.50: 13, 39-40; 51: 29, 37, 43). Notice the difference of this judgment from that of Mystery Babylon of chapter seventeen.

Babylon burned Jerusalem and the temple of God, and her end is a fire and destruction which leaves nothing of her. As the Lord said by Jeremiah, so it will come to pass: *"I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea, all their evil that they have done in Zion"* (Je.51: 24).

C. Lament over Babylon's Destruction

The fall of Great Babylon is one of the most marvelous events of time. More is said about it in the Scriptures than any other secular occurrence. When it comes to pass the whole universe is either shocked or thrilled at the sight. The emotions are not the same, for while two worlds are concerned, it will be evident that these emotions are sharply in contrast as their respective groups respond to the news of the catastrophe. Some will rejoice greatly at her destruction, while many will lament it.

The kings or presidents of nations of the earth wail and mourn, for they have given agreement to her bewitching schemes and policy, being caught up with the enriching and glorifying power of her greatness. The merchants of the earth will exhibit tears and grief over the sudden collapse of their enriching trade through her. So also, those who were dependent upon her for occupation and livelihood, such as the shipping industry, will lament her fall as it will stop their harvest out of this great and enriching Babylonian traffic.

While this chorus of lamentation and disappointment takes place on earth, there will be a grand jubilation that fills the sky. All the peoples of heaven will shout their mightiest Hallelujahs. This voice will spring up as soon as the harlot city has gone down amid her judgment fires. God will have judged her and those who were not attached, or came out of her, shall not suffer judgment with her.

Seeing the smoke of her burning, those who trafficked with her will be aware of her destruction. Only a material city, whose inhabitants are destroyed and whose interested observers grieve, could do so for a literal Babylon. The kings were freely venting their wrath upon Mystery Babylon, but here men lament her destruction. People will flee and then stand afar off to view her death. Fear will grip those who realize that they were so close to being a part of her destruction. The judgment, being supernatural in nature, will be recognized as from God's hand.

Literal Babylon has become the habitation of things that are loathsome to God, but some lament her demise:

1. The kings who have committed fornication with her.

Kings and political leaders who have aligned themselves with her will find sheer hopelessness in her. This is the reward for all who blindly affiliate themselves with the religious and economic system of the Antichrist.

2. The merchants who have profited by her.

The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her (18: 11-16). Their lament is because of merchandise which they brought and sold to her merchants, which will no longer be. The luxuries that they trafficked in are listed (18: 3). Babylon was a great trading point due to her location, but no more. Amazingly, the loss of money brings tears faster than the loss of dignity or respectability before God. Deep sorrow will overwhelm the hearts of those who will have profited thereby.

3. The mariners who were blessed by her trafficking in goods.

The mariners are pictured as crying over her, for they traded by sea, and realize that judgment which she suffered is from God. They see her burning, and weep and wail over the riches in her that has come to naught (18: 10, 17, 19; Is.47: 11; Je.50: 26; 51: 8). While this speaks of shipmasters, it is indicative of all the shipping industry, which will be stricken a great blow by the destruction of Babylon. No products will be manufactured for transportation to or from her any more.

Not all lament over Babylon's destruction. Verse twenty says that there is to be rejoicing over it, even as a command to the heavenly world. Saints, apostles, prophets, and the people of heaven will rejoice because God has dealt with her in judgment. Justice has been rendered. While not all that rejoice have been a part of her in the past, but all have been persecuted by her and they are now avenged.

The destruction of Great Babylon is an illustration of the truth and righteousness of God's Divine administrations. It may seem as if God has forgotten His Word, or perhaps even abandoned this earth to its own course. This could be the thought as we see the great prosperity of the wicked, the triumph of injustice and the wrongs and afflictions which those who most honor Him suffer. Not so, for He is true and His ways are just. He will fully equalize it all at the last. This event is a most prominent and significant demonstration of that fact. While the godless wisdom and pride of people is left to work out their end result to the full, when the harvest is ripe, the sharp sickle of judgment will cut through all of it and surely it will suddenly fall, getting its just deserts.

D. Things No More

While the previous parts of chapter thirteen of this commentary spoke of the earthly view of Babylon's destruction, there is a completely different outlook from heaven. While the kings, merchants, and shipping industries are crying "alas, alas, alas," heaven replies with five things that are "no more":

1. There is no more mastery of the world by violence.

The false church, Mystery Babylon has lost her mastery of the world order. It has been like a millstone crushing her to obliteration. Christ spoke to Peter about living by the sword, and so it is with literal and mystery Babylon. Intense persecution was upon the world, especially those who refused the mark of the beast. Even though blood flowed at his command, his kingdom is no more.

2. There is no more music.

When God brings judgment, there will be no more time for music. We tend to forget how much music affects our world. It is played 24 hours a day on many radio stations, and many television channels, broken only occasionally by the advertiser, but no more. There will no longer be a worldly melody coming forth.

3. There is no more manufacturing.

As hard as this seems, every kind of money-making effort will cease. Manufacturing, sales, and all vocations of any kind, whether done by a laborer or a professional, they will cease. It seems there will be a complete paralysis of the world which is no longer able to make a living.

4. There is no more meditation.

While many spend the evening conversing, perhaps while dining at a candle-lit table, reflecting on the good things of the day or cooking up a business deal, God's judgment will come to end it. His deadly blow will destroy the false systems of the Antichrist and there will be no comfort for the musings of desperate men. There will be no more family or social gatherings.

5. There is no more marriage.

Matrimony, the most basic of all human institutions will be destroyed in this judgment also. The bride-to-be will in this once proud, false system of religion and economics will no longer pour over the catalogs of dainty things with which to beautify her wedding. No more planning and preparing, for it will be over in Babylon.

E. Cause of the Utter Doom of Babylon

Her destruction is extremely violent. As an angel would take up a mighty millstone and cast it into the sea, so is the violence with which Babylon destroyed. The words "no more at all" indicate the completeness of her destruction. It is an absolute and complete destruction. Utterly ruined, she shall be rebuilt no more. A concentration of martyrdoms and a reign of terror will prevail in Babylon, but no more.

The world scene is now set, with the nations in shambles and political and economic chaos which has replaced the tyranny of the Antichrist. It will be a world devoid of joy with the exception of the assurance of the Tribulation Saint who has refused the mark of the beast. To such a world condition is our Lord preparing to return for the climax of the ages, the Battle of Armageddon. This final destruction brings to an end the wrath of God upon Babylon, under the seventh vial.

XIV. RETURN OF CHRIST

The “Hallelujah Chorus and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb of chapter nineteen are parenthetical events. It is given after the vial judgments, but actually is fulfilled in heaven when the Tribulation saints and two witnesses have been raptured. The Supper will take place before Christ comes physically to set up His Millennial reign with the saints. Judgment of the Great Whore will have occurred and the smoke of literal Babylon will be ascending. The multitudes of heaven will be praising God because this has been done. It is clearly a physical burning of Babylon when the Scriptures say fourteen times that her “. . . smoke will ascend up forever and ever.” This relates to physical Babylon’s judgment (Is.13: 19-22; Je.50: 13, 23, 39, 40; 51: 26, 37, 62).

Reference is made once more to elders and living creatures in heaven, and they are worshipping God. A Great Multitude is saying, “Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” Here John is shown the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. In chapter twenty one he is shown the Bride, the “Lamb’s Wife.” The Bride, at this point, has made herself ready, as attention is directed to her fine white linen robe, representing the righteousness of the Bride, as well as her righteous works. We should note here that this righteousness of the Bride is not from herself, but from Her Lover, the Bridegroom. Interestingly, it is not the Bride that is the focal point of this event, but the Bridegroom. All attention will be given Him, the Risen Lord, for He is the object of the Saints adoration at the Wedding Supper. The Church and only the Church is the Bride here (2Co.11: 2). There are wedding guests also (Re.19: 9). Old Testament believers, not a part of the Church, will be the invited guests.

While there is no description of the wedding supper, the Greek word for “marriage” means “marriage feast.” So it is undoubtedly a literal supper just as we would enjoy at a marriage on earth (Mt.22: 2; 25: 10). While we cannot imagine how many thousands and millions will participate in this supper, God is able to do whatever is needed for all to enjoy it. John was so moved by what he saw and felt that he wanted to worship the angel, but was forbidden to do so. This is because he was a fellow-servant, with a testimony of Jesus and a spirit of prophecy.

While some have taught that the Marriage Supper will be in the air when Christ comes at the rapture (1Th.4: 16-17), that is not likely. It appears the Supper will take place in heaven (19: 1-11), as the saints who rise to meet Him will be presented to the Father in heaven (Jn.14: 1-3; 1Th.3: 13). The Supper will likely take place just before the Second Advent (19: 11; Zec.14: 5; Jude.14-15; Re.19: 11-21). After the Supper, the next event will be the return to earth with Christ so as to deliver Israel and set up that new Kingdom that the disciples were so interested in (Mt.24: 3).

A. Triumph of Christ – Second Coming

Beginning with verse eleven of chapter nineteen, we see the physical return of Christ to set up that Kingdom. This is the main theme of the Book of Revelation, when He will rule as King of Kings and Lord of lords over all men (19: 11, 14; Mt.24: 29-31; 2Th.1: 7; Da.7: 13-14).

He rides a white horse at His return, and is called “Faithful and True” and “King of kings and Lord of lords.” While He came as an infant the first time, He will come this time as a conquering King. He also has a name that no one knows. He will judge the nations, and rule with a rod of iron. Rebellion will not be tolerated here. As He comes, the saints will follow, clothed in white linen, the righteousness of the saints (V.14). With the saints and angels, there will be a defeat of the chief, the beast, and the false prophet, along with their armies.

It will be a short battle, with Israel being delivered, and a reign of righteousness set up on earth. The defeat will be affected by the “sharp two-edged” sword that proceeds from His mouth (V.15). The crowns upon Christ’s head are “kingly crowns” (Gr. “*diademata*”) rather than “victor’s crowns” on the heads of the elders (Gr. “*stephanous*”). The diadem on His head notes His Deity.

The Old Testament prophets have prophesied about His return in many instances (Ge.5: 21-24; Ge.49: 10; Nu.24: 7; Is.59: 20; Ezk.34: 23-29; 37: 17-29; Da.2: 44-45; 7: 13-14; Ho.2: 18-23; Joel.2: 28-3:21; Na.1: 5-6; Zep.1: 14-18; 3: 8-9; Ha.2: 6-7, 21-23; Ma.3: 1-4: 6). The New Testament like so is filled with references to His return (Mt.16: 27; 24: 1-25: 46; Lk.17: 22-37; 21: 1-33; 2Pe.1: 16; 3: 3-9; Ro.11: 26-27; 2Th.1: 7-10; 2: 1-8; He.9: 28; Re.1: 7; 19: 11-21; Ju.14-15). Our observance of the Lord’s Supper is to be done until He returns (Lk.22: 19; 1Co.11: 26).

Some confusion is had in when Christ really returns. Some teach that he spiritually descended on the Day of Pentecost, but this could not be because of His statements about “another Comforter” (Jn.14: 16-17, 26; 15: 26-27; 16: 7-16), which is of course the Holy Spirit. Some think that He comes each time a person is born again. Obviously there is no physical coming at that event, as it is a spiritual work in the heart of a believer, not a physical entering of the person who is repenting. Still another theory is that He comes at the death of a saint. Some think He came at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Some say that His coming is to be interpreted spiritually and not literally. However, His first coming was literal and there are Scriptures that cannot be fulfilled without a physical coming. While theories abound, the Scripture says

that “every eye will see Him” and that there will be wailing by those who did not know Him (Re.1: 7). So, we cannot but say He will return physically just as He said.

Other speculation concerns the timing of His coming. Many have placed timetables by which He “must come,” but no, He has not. Jesus warned about setting dates (Mt.24: 32-51; 25: 13), for it would tend to dissuade those who were moving thereby to change their life, their activities, and even quitting jobs to wait upon some mountain to be the first to see Him. Without a date and time of the day, we can know the season, and we are sensing that return even today, in the early stages of the 21st Century. We do have strong indication that His return will be seven years after the removal of the Church, just prior to the setting up of the thousand year reign. There have been those who held to a post-millennial return. Under this thinking, the Church will prosper and extend its influence and become the predominant force on planet earth, existing for a thousand years (Millennium), and that Christ will come after that. But, it does not appear to be that way, for two world wars and wars and rumors of wars tell us that things are not getting better, but worse. With terrorism abounding in the start of this century, we can only see it being a grave condition for the Church and she is not in control. Degeneration of conditions has mostly stopped this thought. A pre-millennial second coming with the rapture prior to the Tribulation is most closely held today by theologians, but not by all.

The Antichrist, being fully engaged in his diabolical plan for world control, is destroyed when Christ returns (19: 11-21; 2Th.2: 8). Christ will return just before the Millennium and immediately following the Tribulation (Mt.24: 15-31; Zec.chp.14). This Millennial Kingdom will be literal (5: 9-10; 11: 15; 20: 1-10; Da.2: 44-45; 7: 13-14; Zec.chp.14). The resurrection of the righteous, those saved after the rapture will take place during the Millennium and they live and reign with Christ during that one thousand years. The wicked dead are not yet raised, for they await the Great White Throne judgment (20: 5-15). Satan will be not allowed to roam the earth and conduct his wicked business during the Millennial Reign. He will be bound to await a later return, for his final effort to unseat God and ultimate defeat and trip to the eternal Lake of Fire. Jesus Second Coming is after the end of Daniel’s Seventieth Week, at the start of the Millennial Reign (19: 11-21; Zec.chp.14; Mt.24: 27-31), also known as the “Day of the Lord” (1Th.5: 1-11; 2Th.2: 1-12).

Many interesting as well as terrible events are prophesied as happening prior to Christ’ return:

1. Establishment of the Revived Roman Empire (Da.2: 38-44; 11: 35-45)

2. Antichrist's being revealed
3. Revival of the Grecian Empire, Antichrist's kingdom (Da.7: 7-8; 2Th.3-9)
4. Antichrist's covenant with Israel (Da.9: 27)
5. Re-gathering of Israel, along with an increase in travel and knowledge-consider the Internet and its information, as well as airline travel (Ezk.chps.37-39; Da.12: 3)
6. Talk of peace and safety
7. Great apostasy
8. Terrible moral conditions
9. Increased satanic powers in operation

10. Great delusions of many people

Four Greek words are used in particular with His Second Coming. These words are:

1. *Paraousia* – “personal coming, immediate presence, arrival, advent, or return”
2. *Phanerous* – “to shine, be apparent, appear publicly, be manifest, be seen”
3. *Erchaomai* – to come or go”
4. *Epiphaneia* – “advent, appearing, brightness, to give light, become visible”

These words each give us understanding about His coming. Matthew tells us that He is coming “as the lightning comes out of the east, and shineth even unto the west” (Mt.24; 27). He went away visibly, and He will return visibly (Ac.1: 11; Re.1: 7). His purpose is to bring punishment upon His enemies (14: 14-20; 19: 11-21; Ju.14; 2Th.1: 7-10); and destruction upon the ungodly (Mt.24: 38-51; 25: 31-46; 1Th.5: 2-3; 2Th.1: 7-10; 2: 8; Ju.14-15; Zec.chp.14). He will come as Judge and King (19: 11-21; Is.chp.11; Zec.chp.14; Mt.25: 31-46).

B. Battle of Armageddon

The last portion of chapter nineteen describes the battle known as Armageddon. This word is only once in Scripture, referring to two Hebrew words, “*har*” - “mountain or range of hills,” and “*megiddo*” – “rendezvous.” Two words combined give us the understanding of a meeting on the hill of Megiddo, the south side of the Valley of Megiddo, also known as Esdraelon (2Ch.35: 22; Zec.12: 11). It is located southeast of Mount Carmel, and is the part of Canaan which Joshua conquered and made its capital (Jo.12: 21; 17: 11; Jg.1: 27). It is a key position between the Euphrates and the Nile Rivers. It has been a battle field before, but this will be the greatest battle of all time, for all nations will gather here to fight against God (16: 13-16). It has also been called the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” according to Joel (Jo.3: 2).

Satan is aware his time is short (12: 12), so after the conquering of the Russian allies of the north and east of the Old Roman Empire by the Antichrist, he will cause his vassal to return to Armageddon, gathering with him the nations of the earth, to do battle with Christ. Antichrist will have lost control of Jerusalem while dealing with the problem from the north and east, so that the Jews will again be in control of their country. It will be then that Antichrist will come against them, and the two witnesses who have helped Israel gain back control.

Zechariah chapter fourteen says that Antichrist will come back from the north to gather against the Jews in Jerusalem. According to Ezekiel chapters thirty eight and nine, Russia and Germany are involved as countries of the north, so it is coming back from these two areas Antichrist comes, with the Ten Kingdoms, and other nations that cooperate with him. It will be a tremendously large army trying to destroy Jerusalem.

Ezekiel heard the Word of the Lord about this event, with God the Father setting the tone in directing Jesus against “Gog” who will be the “chief prince of Meshech and Tubal.” The Lord is against him, and will move him to go forth with “all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed with all sorts of armor, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords.” Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya will join God, as well as Gomer and the house of Togarmah of the north quarters with his bands and a great company of people with them.

The people of Israel will be dwelling safely in their land at that time, when this gigantic army is amassed and comes like a storm and a cloud over the land. God says it will be an “evil thought” that God has, coming against “the land of unwallled villages,” a picture of dwelling safely. The goal will be to take a

spoil. God is bringing them against His land so that the “. . . heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.” When Gog comes with his armies, God’s fury will come up in His face. It will be by jealousy and fire of His wrath that a shaking will take place in the land of Israel, and a sword will be brought against Gog, with the enemies actually destroying each other as in Jehoshaphat’s time (V21; 2Ch.20: 22-24).

While the amassed armies of the earth will have all the most modern weaponry, including nuclear warheads, they are no match for the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Ep.6: 17). This sword will proceed from the mouth of Christ, who is the Living Word of God, and annihilate the enemy. No Saint will actually enter the fray, for God Himself will defeat His enemies. Pestilence, blood; an overflowing rain, great hailstones, fire, and brimstone will destroy the armies of the Antichrist, and God will be magnified and become known in the eyes of many nations, that He is the LORD (Ezk.38: 2-39: 1).

Allied with God will be earthly Israel, the angels of God, and the resurrected saints of all ages (Zec.14: 1-15; Mt.25: 31-45; 2Th.1: 7-10; Re.19: 11-21). Allied with the devil will be Antichrist, the devils angels and demons, the ten kings and the kings of the north and east (Re.12: 7-12; 16: 13-16; 20: 1-3; 17: 14-17; Da.2: 44; 7: 19-27; Da.11: 44; Ezk.chp.38-39; Re.16: 12). Other nations will cooperate at some level by influence of the three “frog demons” (Re.16: 13-16; Zec.14: 1-5, 16; Ezk.chp.38-39). Only a sixth part of the armies opposing God will survive (Ezk.39: 2; Re.19: 19-20: 3; Zec.chp.14; Jo.chp.3). Earth will be free of rebellion after the victory of this battle (1Co.15: 24-25; Ep.1: 10). Christ’s Kingdom will now be established on earth (Da.7: 13-14; Lk.1: 32). The carcasses of those killed in the battle will feed the fowls of heaven for seven months. An angel calls for these fowls to the “supper of the great God.” They will eat the flesh of horses, kings, captains, and all men killed in the battle (19: 18; Is.34: 3; Ezk.39: 17-23; Mt.24: 28; Lk.17: 37). While the Antichrist and false prophet are killed in the battle, their bodies will be resurrected and cast into the Lake of Fire while alive (19: 20; Da.7: 11; 8: 25; 11: 45; 2Th.2: 8-9). The devil (and likely his angels), will be sent to the bottomless pit, without ability to affect men on earth for a thousand years. In this battle, Israel is vindicated and delivered, and God sets up His Eternal Kingdom (Mt.25:31-36; Da.2: 44; 7: 18, 23-27; Re.11: 15; Re.20: 1-10; 21: 2-22: 5).

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Part 03: Chapter 15-17

Before reading the chapter(s) for this week please click the next button at the bottom right of the page to find the homework sheet for the assigned reading. The homework will aid you in taking the quizzes, mid-term, and final. Complete the homework as you read the reading assignment below.

XV. MILLENNIAL AGE – WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

The glorious reign of Christ is the subject of chapter twenty. It is at the first of this chapter Satan is placed, bound, in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. We will see also at the end

of the Millennium Satan's last gasp at power as he is loosed for a season, deceives some nations again, and is finally put in his proper place, the Lake of Fire.

A. Satan Bound

At the close of the Battle of Armageddon, an angel comes from heaven to put Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. This angel has a key to the pit (abyss) mentioned in chapter seventeen. While other spirits are imprisoned there, Satan will be added, and is noted as being "bound" with a great chain. We do not know if Satan's angels are bound with him at this time, though it is likely, as they will not be influencing man during the Millennium. They will be loosed, or at least allowed to be active during the time of Satan's short release after the Millennium. Then, they like Satan will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, never to harm or influence man again.

Can a chain of iron or brass bind a spirit, and that spirit an archangel? Certainly not, but the Scripture does not say it is a chain made of any earthly material. It is a chain of divine make, as the sword that proceeds from the mouth of the Son of God. It is a spirit-chain, even as the celestial army has spirit-horses. This chain's character is that which can fetter angels. Jude tells us of such chains which not even the angels can break (Jude.6).

Satan here is called by four names as were given him before (Re.12: 9). The names describe the being who wears them. He is called "the Dragon," with particular reference to his connection with earthly sovereignties and his administrations through the political world-powers. These are contemplated in the Scriptures as Dragon powers. Upon the fall of the kings and their armies which follow him, the Dragon power ceases. As the same evil spirit comes up again after the thousand years, he comes with only two names, and not as "the Dragon;" as his time of sovereignty of the earth has previously ended and he never has it again. Whom ever Satan then deceives and brings into rebellion are not the governors, kings, and rulers of the earth. They are not its great central administrations. Today he is the Dragon, as he will be until the confederated kings of the earth meet their final fall at Armageddon. The reference of the "Dragon" is related to his hold over this world's political powers.

Satan is also called "the Old Serpent." The term "old" alludes to the fact that he has been in existence since the beginning of human history; and "the Serpent" is alluding to his subtlety, his deceiving ways, subtle poisons, and deadly malignity. It was as the "serpent" that he beguiled our first parents and seduced them into sin and death. Today it is the same "serpent" nature with which he deceives souls, insinuates false doctrine, unbelief, and presumption into the human heart, corrupting the purity of the Church, and deluding people with a false and perverted wisdom. He is still the same evil spirit in his individuality, but his particular serpentine manifestation seems to cease with the present order of things, the same as his draconic manifestation. Only as "the Devil and Satan" does he reappear at the end of the thousand years.

The word "Devil" means a slanderer, a calumniator, a malignant liar; and this has been one of this evil spirit's chief characteristics from the beginning. "Satan" means an adversary, an accuser. It is a Hebrew word simply transferred. It is mostly used as a proper name of some great spirit of evil. It is as these two names indicate that he will function in the short period after his imprisonment in the abyss.

Some have tried to say that the thousand years imprisonment of Satan is not literal, and point to Second Peter, saying that the time frame is not as it is portrayed in Revelation (2Pe.3: 8). However, the phrase in Second Peter is not about refutation of our Lord's coming Kingdom, but about the eternal quality of God's nature. We should also point out that every prophecy concerning time is presented in exact measurements. No prophesied period is symbolic, but fulfilled within the framework of the Scriptures precisely as prophesied. For example, John writes about Jesus death and resurrection. The three days prophesied were exactly fulfilled (Jn.2: 19-22).

Daniel has a prophecy of "seventy weeks" which has already been discussed (Da.9: 25). This is a definite time period in prophecy, with sixty nine weeks of years (483 years). This is listed as the number of years from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until the crucifixion of Christ. The command was given in 446 B.C. and Jesus died in 33 A.D., a total of 479 years. But, when we consider the error of the Julian calendar, we come to exactly 483 years, even as prophesied. So we can see that if this prophecy period is symbolic, it is the only one in Scripture to be so, thus being inconsistent with other principles of prophecy.

The reason for Satan's not being immediately put into the Lake of Fire is that God will give man another opportunity and so that he will be without excuse. The test that will come is after the Millennial Reign. Man will have the most favorable circumstances to serve the True and Living God during the Millennial Reign. Man has charged Satan as the reason for his downfall and being subject continually to sin. Man has claimed to be radically good if there is no dominating influence. Man sees himself as the victim of an unfavorable environment, but God will show man's true condition. Though Satan cannot tempt man during the Millennium, many humans will serve God from the lips out, for his heart will not be changed.

Deception is Satan's trade, with all the false ones and deceivers his apprentices and children. Truth is ever against him and falsehood is his particular recourse and instrument. Naked falsehood is repulsive to humanity. Anything we know to be a lie does not command our respect. In the very framework of a human soul there is an impossibility of feeling toward known falsehood the same as if it were truth. Our very being revolts against it. Untruth only gains acceptance by disguise that causes it to appear to be the truth. Falsehood has no power over us until we are led to believe and conclude that it is the truth.

Certainly this world will be a better place without the satanic influence we have faced for the last six thousand years. But it is true too that man will still have an evil heart of unbelief to contend with, whether Satan is bound or not. This evil heart will become evident when, at the end of the Millennium, Satan is loosed and man is again deceived by him (Re.20: 8).

B. Millennial Reign

The doctrine of the Millennium is substantiated in Scripture six times in the first seven verses of chapter twenty. Paul referred to it as the “dispensation of the fullness of time” (Ep.1: 10). Many other references to this period are given by various writers, calling it the “day of the Lord” (Is.2: 12; 13: 6; 34: 8; Ezk.39: 22; Ho.2: 18; Joel.3: 18; Zec.12: 8-11; Ma.3: 17). In other places it has been called “the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Ep.5: 5; Mt.20: 21; Lk.1: 32-35; 19: 12-15; 2Ti.4: 1; Jn.18: 28-37; 1Co.15: 24-28). This will be a time of restoration of all things (Ac.3: 20-21). Luke called it the “consolation of Israel” and “the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk.2: 25; 2: 38).

After Satan is bound, John sees thrones and the occupants of the thrones, the Tribulation martyrs, reigning with the other redeemed heavenly people, as kings and priests with Christ. Tribulation martyrs have a part in the first resurrection, which comes before the one thousand year Millennium. It will include the different companies of the redeemed, those saved from the time of Adam to the binding of Satan. While the Old Covenant (Testament) saints did not have certain privileges as we do under the New Covenant, both will have an identical part and privileges during the Millennial reign since the entire redeemed rule with Christ.

The Tribulation saints are the last company to be resurrected and translated. This “first resurrection” is of all living saints who will reign and rule with Christ. No wicked dead will have any part in this first resurrection. They will be resurrected, for their judgment before the Great White Throne, after the thousand years. This is the second resurrection, including all the wicked dead from Adam to the end of the Millennium. Until that time, they will remain in hell until the Millennial Reign is finished. The second resurrection is unto damnation, the first unto life. Those who participate in the first resurrection will receive great blessing, and the “second death” has not power over them (20: 6). Those in the second resurrection will spend their eternity in the Lake of Fire (2: 11; 19: 20; 20: 10-15; 21: 8).

Some have questioned as to whether this Reign by Christ would be on earth. However, we do not see anything but a literal reign in a literal kingdom, just as much as any previous kingdom mentioned. This Kingdom will be the ninth that is referred to in Daniel and Revelation. To give them again in order, they are: 1) Egypt; 2) Assyria; 3) Babylon; 4) Medo-Persia; 5) Greece; 6) Rome; 7) Revised Rome; 8) Revived Greece; 9) Kingdom of Heaven (Is.9: 6-7; Da.2: 44-45; 7: 13-14, 17-27; Zec.chp.14; Re.17: 8-18). As the first eight listed have been literal kingdoms, so will the ninth.

The form of government of the ninth will be unlike the others. It will not be democratic, nor a republic, but a theocratic government. God will reign, through His Son, Jesus Christ, through David, king of Israel (11: 15; 20: 1-10; Je.30: 9; Ezk.34: 24; 37: 24-28; Ho.3: 4-5). In addition, the apostles and all saints will reign with Christ, including those who had part in the first resurrection (Ps.149: 5-9; Da.7: 18-27; Mt.19: 28; 1Co.4: 8; 6: 2; 2Ti.2: 12; He.chp.11;

Ro.8: 17; 2Th.1: 4-10; Re.1: 6; 2: 26-27; 5: 9-10; 11: 15; 12: 5; 20: 4-6; 22: 5). New Testament saints will rule in accordance to their commitment and stewardship while living on earth. It will be according to the deeds done in the body.

John saw thrones. The ones seated must be judicial or regal administrations, resting upon seats of authority. Since the Lord, sitting on His white horse was crowned; His shepherding of the nations is in His character as the conquering King. Therefore, an administration of sovereign authority must also be shown by the thrones. The saints share with Him in this shepherding of the nations, thus the need for thrones, or royal seats, for these who rule under His Supreme authority.

These so enthroned have had their judgment and obtained their reward. The time of such reward of the saints is the time of their resurrection; therefore these enthroned ones must here be in their resurrected and glorified estate.

The "judgment" which they thus receive may otherwise be expressed as the fact that they "reign." Judging power is intimately conjoined with sovereignty, or the office of reigning. David was said to have ". . . reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all the people" (2Sa.8: 15). These are enthroned "kings and priests," endowed with the prerogatives of the office. They are to reign as such, exercising royal functions. They get their power of judging and executing justice because of the promises made to the victorious children of God. While it has been a matter of promise and hope, here it is a matter of possession and actual fact.

The prevailing modern doctrine is that the world is to progress into a golden age of wisdom, righteousness, liberty, and peace. There, according to its adherents, error, false worship, vice, wickedness, oppression, and all that which is anti-Christian, will be effectually eradicated with all nations and peoples brought under the sway of a purified and all-governing Christianity. It is believed that this will be accomplished by the gradual advancement of civilization, science, reforms political revolutions, the spread of liberality, beneficence, and Christian principles, and the revival of the churches in devotion and missionary zeal, helped by increased measures of the Spirit of God working providentially in human affairs to increase the efficiency of man's efforts. This consummation supposedly is what all Christians are to look, labor, and pray for as the glorious outcome of this world's history.

People have been calling this "The Millennium," dreaming, singing, and preaching it's soon appearance. It is in much of the popular teaching of our time. While some elements of truth are admitted to, the teaching is overlaid with a system of faulty philosophy, manipulated into an article of faith, unknown to the Church in her first one thousand years of existence. It is an invention of man, even as the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception or a religiously positioned man's infallibility. No respectable creed in Christendom teaches it, nor is it found in any of the Church's books of devotion, liturgies, hymnals, or accepted songs occurring in the first fifteen centuries of the Church.

In the Millennium, the general condition of the earth and the man upon it will be vastly improved. All intimations show that this world's entire economy will be blessed with the "regeneration" and renewal of which our Savior speaks (Mt.19: 28). This whole creation ". . . shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Ro.8: 21-22.). Changes in the configuration of the earth are shown in the visions of the judgment-time that precedes the thousand years. It shows changes in the relations of sea and land, with changes in the mountains, hills, and islands, as well as changes in the sun, moon, and stars. These changes will apparently alter the whole climate, fruitfulness, and habitability of the earth. This is the time when "God shall judge the people righteously and govern the nations upon earth" (Ps.67: 4). It will be the time when ". . . the earth shall yield her increase," and when the nations shall ". . . be glad and sing for joy" (Ps.chp.77).

This is also the time when ". . . the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people" (Is.30: 26), as well as when ". . . rivers and streams of waters shall be upon every high mountain and every hill," and ". . . the increase of the earth shall be fat and plenteous," and ". . . the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days" (Is.30: 18-26). The physical condition of man will be greatly improved (Is.33: 24). Life will be greatly prolonged (Is.65: 20), with the person who dies at the age of a hundred years will do so only as a judgment for sin, with the thought being that they were yet a child at that great age (Is.65: 20-23.) Transgression and disobedience will be the only reason for death during these thousand years.

While the population of the world will have been greatly thinned down by the various judgments and plagues which will precede this Millennium, there will be such a blessedness and fruitfulness upon the human race, as well as the whole system of nature, that by the end of the Millennium the world have a multitude of people, even as the sands of the sea. This is not yet the eternal state (the new earth), in which there is no more sin, death, curse, nor tears. But, it will be a mighty stride toward it, and the stage next to it. Compared to the preceding years, under the Antichrist rule, the mental, moral, social, and political condition of the people will be like heaven itself. They shall be shepherded by Jesus and His immortal co-regents. Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of the times (Is.33: 6).

Jerusalem will be rebuilt and be the capital of this government. It will be thus, having great glory, serving as the capital and seat of worship forever (1Ch.23: 25; 2Ch.33: 4-7; Ps.48: 8; Is.2: 2-4; Je.17: 25; Ezk.34: 1-31; Joel.3: 17; Mi.4: 7; Zec.8: 3-23; Ac.15: 1-18). There will be laws and regulations to guide man and he will be expected to keep them through out eternity, not just in the Millennium. The kingdom will be an earthly one, with some having a rebellious heart against the rule of Christ. Open rebellion will not exist during the Millennium, until Satan is loosed for a season (20: 1-10). No saved person who rules with Christ in the Millennium will rebel, but there will be humans born and some of them will not follow Christ' rule willingly (Is.2: 2-4; 9: 6-7; 11: 3-5; 16: 5; 65: 20; Ps.2: 6-9; Mi.4: 3; Zec.14: 16-21; 1Co.15: 24-28; Re.20: 7-10). These human, unsaved inhabitants were not saved at the start of the Millennium and will be allowed to live through it. Outwardly they will comply with the laws and government, but their heart will not be transformed. It is likely some who show rebellion to a large extent will be executed during the Millennium, for they

will have committed crimes worthy of death and Christ will rule with a rod of iron (Is.11: 3-5; 65: 20). Laws will be in place, and quick action will be taken on those who refuse to comply.

These laws will be of two kinds: 1) outward laws that govern the natural man in the Kingdom; 2) laws governing the spiritual man. The outward laws will not rule over the desires of a free will or the spiritual aspect of man, but natural man in the Kingdom. The second will deal with spiritual things and life in the spirit, the matters of the heart (Mt.chps.5-7). Administered by Christ and the glorified saints, justice will be meted out for violation of the same. There will not be any sliding by, or a winking of the eye, but a quick execution for those who do not follow the law that has been explained and the person clearly warned about.

Nations will continue to exist as we know them. It is likely that the Gentile nations will continue to live in the locations they are today. Some changes will take place, notably in the Mediterranean Sea area, and any area concerning Israel and the promises God made to Abraham about the land they would occupy (Ge.15: 14-18; 17: 6-19; Ex.32: 13; Le.25: 23-34; De.4: 40; Jos.14: 2, 8; 2Ch.20: 7; Is.60: 21; Je.25: 5; Ezk.47: 13-23).

In addition to the fact that some nations will not exist, there is the fact that Israel will be the Chief Nation, and all who do not serve her will perish (Is.60: 12). She will indeed be the “head and not the tail” (De.28: 13). While she will be the Chief Nation, there will be the Rod of Iron that is wielded to maintain subjection to her (Ps.2: 6-9). The peace among the nations will be somewhat superficial during this age. The peace will be because of fear more than because of love for the King.

There will be a Temple in the Millennial Period for the Jews. It will be one mile square (Ezk.45: 1-4). This is not the Temple that will be built in the last days before the second coming of Christ, nor the one that Antichrist will sit in during the Great Tribulation (last 3-1/2 years) (Mt.24: 15-22; 2Th.2: 4; Re.11: 1-2). It will be destroyed when Christ comes the second time. The Millennial Temple will be built by Christ when He returns to set up His Kingdom (Zec.6: 12-13), and be His earthly throne forever (Ezk.43: 7). Priests will function in this Temple, with the descendants of Levi involved in service, as well as the sons of Zadok (Ezk.43: 19-27; 44: 9-31). See also First Kings 1: 39 and Second Samuel 8: 17; 15: 24; and 20: 25. Although there is some change in approach to salvation and mediation with God, some basic requirements will exist. Christ is our Passover, sacrificed once and forever, as contrasted to the regular offerings and sacrifices. The priesthood will be for offerings, not salvation. It will be a memorial and object lesson to show people what has been accomplished through Christ. An example we have today is the Lord’s Supper, a memorial regarding His redemptive work on Calvary.

It appears that the feasts of Israel will be in motion, as most are mentioned in Ezekiel chapters forty three through forty six. Various ordinances and activities, such as the “solemnities of the house of Israel” will be observed, not only during the Millennium, but in the new earth also (Ezk.44: 5; 45: 17; 46: 1-3; Is.66: 22-24).

There will be a literal river that flows out of the Millennial Temple eastward, from the south side of the altar, which then turns south and divides Jerusalem. Half of the river will flow to the Mediterranean Sea, with the other half flowing into the Dead Sea. It will be healed and life will again exist in it (Ezk.47: 1-12; Zec.14: 8). The great earthquake that takes place as Christ sets His foot on the Mount of Olives causes a significant topographical change (Zec.14: 4-5). This will cause an outlet to be made for the Dead Sea, purifying its stagnant waters. This is not the same river as the one in the New Jerusalem, for it will come to the earth after the Millennium has passed (22: 1-5).

Not only will the Dead Sea be revived, but the land that is so fertile will also. As the Children of Israel entered the Land, they found it to flow with milk and honey. All manner of fruits came from the soil that brought forth abundantly. As long as the Children of Israel kept the Sabbath Rests as provided in the Law, the Land continued to produce abundantly. If they turned from God's ways, He would withhold the rain, so as to get their attention (De.11: 13-17). Rain and irrigation of this time will again prove God's Word to be true, that it is an abundant land with "milk and honey" readily available. Also, numerous streams will flow from the New River mentioned above. The "mountains will drop new wine" and the "hills will flow with milk." These are not literal happenings, but descriptive terms to describe the abundance of the Land. Vineyards will produce again the gigantic clumps of grapes, and the grass lands will support vast herds of milk cows.

While the Spirit of God was first poured out at Pentecost (Ac.2: 4), with greater fulfillment of God's promise to manifest Himself on earth, there will be marvelous spiritual conditions during the Millennium (Joel.2: 28-32; Ezk.36: 25-27; Ac.1: 4-5; 2: 1-16; 2: 38-39; 9: 17; 10: 44-48; 11: 14-18; 19: 1-6). There will be prosperity for all nations, glorious peace, and universal religious activities (Da.7: 13-14, 18-27; Re.11: 15; 20: 1-21: 13). This will be also a time of universal knowledge (Is.11: 9; He.2: 14; Zec.8: 22-23). There will be great insight for the real freedom of expansion and stimulation of knowledge and understanding.

The animal kingdom will benefit from the Millennium (Is.11: 6-8; 65: 17-25; Ro.8: 18-23). Fierce natures will become tame. In the animal kingdom, those who were predators will become gentle and vegetarians (Is.11: 6-9). We must not spiritualize this. The animals in Eden before the fall were of this nature. It was the outcome of the fall that the ferocity of brute creation was exhibited. While the animals will be subdued here in ferocity, it is not until the New Earth is complete that the Edenic conditions will be fully in view (Ro.8: 23).

Missionaries will be active during the Millennium. The Jewish people will preach the Gospel during this age and forever (Is.2: 2-4; 40: 9; 52: 7; 61: 6; 66: 18-21; Zec.8: 23). Abraham was told that his seed would be a blessing to the nations and a missionary program will be a part of that. People during the Millennium will be born naturally and then be born again supernaturally. There will be those who repent and accept Christ even as today. Each will need to make that decision individually (Joel.2: 32; Ac.2: 16-21; Is.2: 2-4; 11: 9; 52: 7;

He.chps.8-10). There will be Divine healing for all (Is.32: 1-5; 33: 24; 35: 3-6; 53: 5; Ma.8: 17), so that there is none feeble (Ps.105: 37; 107: 20).

This period will be the most wonderful to live in, for: 1) there will be no tempter (20: 1-10; Is.24: 21; 25: 7); 2) there will be universal peace (Is.2: 4; 9: 6-7; Mi.4: 3-4); 3) no war, with all material being used constructively instead of destructively (Mi.4: 3); 4) peace and prosperity, all knowing the goodness of God in reality (Ma.1: 11); 5) universal prosperity (Is.65: 24; Mi.4: 4-5); 6) no unemployment since money will not be spent on evil enterprises as today (Ma.3: 7-10). The prosperity will be especially prominent, for tithing that was before the law and under the law will be practiced during the Millennium and used to further the Gospel (Ge.14: 20; 28: 22; Le.27: 30-33; Nu.18: 21; Ne.10: 37; Pr.3: 9-10; Mt.23: 23; 1Co.9: 7-18; 16: 1-3; He.chp.7). Without graft and politics as we know it today, there will be plenty for all to enjoy, with no need for special taxes.

Human life will be prolonged (Is.65: 20; Zec.8: 4) for those living or born during this time. Some will live a thousand years and forever if they do not join Satan's last rebellion at the end of the Millennium. The man who dies at one hundred will be considered still a child. This appears to be a return to the Patriarchal years, with man living to the extent he did before the flood. Whether due to atmospheric change or the healing qualities of the water of the New River which flows from the sanctuary, we do not know. However, the Scriptures say that there is healing for the nations from the trees that line this River (Ezk.47: 12).

There will be an increase of light (Is.30: 26; 60: 18-22), which may relate to the increase of man's longevity, since light has healing properties. The moon-lit nights will be as bright as day and the day seven times brighter than we know today (Is.60: 19-20). The Holy Land will be illuminated by the Shekinah Glory of the Lord, so it will make no difference whether the sun shines or not (Re.21: 23-24).

The earth will be transformed to its wonderful original condition of beauty (Is.35: 1-10; 55: 12-13; Ezk.36: 8-12; Joel.2: 18-27; 3: 17-21; Am.9: 13-15; Ro.8: 18-23; 2Pe.chp.3). Man will have a great opportunity to mold his character, after the laws of Divine government, to be like Christ (Ps.chp.2; Re.5: 10; 11: 15; 20: 1-10).

God will institute the Millennial Period for several purposes:

1. There will be no rebellion and all enemies will be under His feet (1Co.15: 24-28; He.2: 7-9; Ep.1: 10).
2. He will fulfill His everlasting Covenants made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and others (Ge.chp.26; 28: 3-5; 2Sa.chp.7).

3. Israel will be restored as head over the nations that have ruled over her (Ac.15: 13-17; Is.11: 11; Ezk.20: 33-44; De.chp.28).

4. The saints will be exalted to rule and serve as kings and priests, according to God's promises and their commitment and works (Ro.8: 17-21; 14: 10-11; 2Co.5: 10; Php.3: 20-21; Co.3: 4; 1Pe.1: 10-13; 5: 1, 4; Re.2: 26; 5: 10; 11: 18; 12: 5; 20: 4-6; 1Co.chp.6).

5. All things will be gathered together to be one in Christ as before the rebellion (Ep.1: 10; Ac.3: 20-21).

6. The nations will be judged in righteousness, with the earth restored to its rightful Owner (Is.2: 2-4; 11: 1-11; Mt.25: 31-46 Da.7: 9-27; 1Co.chp.6).

7. The eternal government God wanted originally as a righteous one will be realized (Is.9: 6-7; 11: 1-9; Da.2: 44-45; 7: 13-27; Lk.1: 32-33; Re.11: 15; 19: 11-16; 20: 4-6).

All of this will be realized as God sends forth Jesus, with the angels and glorified saints, to put down rebellion on planet earth. The Kingdom of God will be permanently established at this point upon earth, as it was in the beginning (Mt.24: 29-31; 25: 31-46; 2Th.1: 7-10; Re.19: 11-21; 20: 1-10).

C. Satan's Doom (Post Millennial)

Satan will be loosed from the bottomless pit by the angel who bound him. Though he has been bound for a thousand years, without any influence upon men, he will again tempt men to rebel against God. He will deceive ("*planao*" – to cause to wander or go astray) the nations again, relating to doctrinal error and deceit. During the Millennium, there will be millions of natural people born who have had a period to accept Christ as their Savior and Lord. It is these people, subject to the lower Adamic nature, that will follow the influence of Satan. The goal will be the overthrow of God and His rule, as before. He will lead them against the saints at Jerusalem. This will be his last invasion of the Holy Land. Satan will be embittered by his forced confinement, and will vent his anger upon the people of God. This will be a refutation of the claim that the miseries of perdition will lead to Satan's repentance. He will not change from the hateful, malignant being he has been since his fall.

It seems such a pity that after the world has rested from evil influence for a thousand years that this arch-enemy of peace should again be loosed upon it. There seems to be some necessity for it (Re.10: 3). It is not unimportant that Satan should have this opportunity to

prove how his imprisonment has not changed him nor reformed his malignity. Neither judgment nor mercy has the least effect upon him. He will remain to the last the same depraved and wicked being. Perhaps it will also be necessary for the millennial nations to be taught that, even after having been so far redeemed as to live a thousand years of holy obedience, they still are unable to stand without the special help and grace of Almighty God. Either way, this brief period of Satan's last freedom will prove that he is still Satan, and that man is still man.

In verse eight, the Scripture refers to “Gog and Magog,” which is the Gentiles that will be deceived and do Satan’s bidding at this time. This is not the Gog and Magog of before the Millennium, but a different people from the east and west after the Millennium. There will be a vast multitude that are born during the Millennium, and many apparently do not get a heart change, so they will be ready to believe his lies as before. A very great number will follow him as he gathers from the “four quarters of the earth” to go to battle (Re.20: 8-9). This will be a world-wide revolt, conducted across the “breadth of the earth” which comes to encamp against the saints. Satan has only one enraged plan, powered by his hatred of the Son of God, the Seed of the woman. He will fail in this last mad attempt, as he has before.

Seeking to take the city of Jerusalem, they will lay siege to it. He who has deceived the nations is deceived himself, for he has never quit believing that he is more powerful than God. This last war of this world will be bloodless, as the vast armies will be devoured by fire from God. Satan then is cast into the Lake of Fire, where the beast and false prophet have been since Armageddon. All wicked rebels will eventually spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. This is the sixth Doom (Re.20: 10). With this last failure to unseat Christ in this assault on Jerusalem, Satan will be hurled into the Lake of Fire where he finds the Beast and the False Prophet awaiting him, with their common judgment being torment for ever and ever.

No one has yet entered into this final torment (*Gehenna* in the Greek, *Tophet* in the Hebrew). It has been prepared for the Devil and his angels, but none are there now. The first persons that ever go into this place are the Beast and the False Prophet, at the close of the battle of the great day of God Almighty (Re.19: 20). Next, Satan himself will be cast there, but more than a thousand years afterward (Re.20: 10). We see that the Beast and the False Prophet are still alive and suffering at the time when Satan is cast in with them. Then follows the casting of all the wicked, along with Death and Hades (Re.20: 14-15).

Interestingly, it appears that this Millennial Dispensation will be like other one-thousand year periods, with man failing to obey God in its duration and ending. God will have tested man in innocence, under conscience, self-government, and lastly under the influence of the Holy Spirit while free from satanic influences, but all to find failure in man. Man will prove himself to be hopelessly, incurably, and incorrigibly bad outside of the changed heart condition (2Co.5: 17). There is nothing left for God to do to the man who reverts to open rebellion after he has lived in a universal peaceful and blessed environment. Without any other recourse, God will follow through with His plan to renovate the earth with fire (2Pe.3: 7).

D. Great White Throne Judgment

Verse eleven of chapter twenty starts the Judgment at the Great White Throne. God is the One who sits on that Throne, from whom the heavens and earth fled from His “face.” This Greek word is “*prosopon*” and means “countenance, aspect, appearance, surface, front view, outward appearance.” It can also mean “person.” It indicates God who has an outward appearance and a real body. This word is used nine times in Revelation (4: 7; 6: 16; 7: 11; 9: 7; 10: 1; 11: 16; 12: 14; 20: 11; 22: 4). Other places it is used in the New Testament it references a bodily presence and its actual appearance.

A resurrection occurs, though no trumpet is sounded. The sounding of the trumpet is for those in Covenant with the King, but these are not His people or friends. His eternal power reaches into the sea, graves, Hades and all the depositories of the souls and bodies of the unholy dead. This entire vast multitude will suddenly stand in the presence of the throne and He Who sits upon it, from who they will dread to look.

While the believer will rejoice at the presence of God, those facing the Great White Throne Judgment will be very somber, with a gloom and deep sorrow coming over the rejecters of Christ. They will come before the Throne to receive their judgment, a final sentence of eternal banishment from the presence of God.

Some things we can see from this portion of Scripture:

1. God is the Judge (He.12: 23-24; 13: 4; Re.6: 10; Ac.17: 30-31).
2. God the Son is a Judge (Jn.5: 19-27; Ac.10: 42; 2Ti.4: 8; Re.19: 11).
3. Those judged at the Great White Throne are wicked people, of the whole human race (Ac.17: 31; Ro.3: 6; Re.20: 11-15).
4. This judgment will not include the beast, false prophet, goat nations, and the tares (whose sentence was pronounced before the start of the Millennium – Mt.13: 30, 39-43, 49-50; 24: 51; 25: 30, 41, 46; Re.14: 9-11; 19: 20-21; 20: 10).
5. It is a specific judgment at a definite time (Mt.10: 15; 11: 24; 12: 36; Ac.17: 31; 2Pe.2: 4; Jude.6-7).

6. This judgment takes place in heaven, at the throne of God, after the earth has been renovated by fire (21: 1-5).
7. The renovation of the earth will take place at this judgment also (2Pe.3: 7).
8. All the secrets of men will be revealed (Ro.2: 16; 1Ti.5: 24; 1Pe.1: 17; Re.20: 12-13).

This is not a general judgment, for there is no such thing in Scriptures. The Church is not in this judgment, nor Israel. This is not the judgment mentioned for the nations either (Mt.25: 31-46). This is a judgment of the dead only, with books opened, but not the Book of Life.

1. Every deed done will be revealed by the “Books” that are opened.

God keeps good records, and all of every man’s activities are under Divine scrutiny. There will be no opportunity for man to be saved here. Men judged here will suffer in everlasting torment according to the direct proportions of his sins while on earth. The alcoholic will be an alcoholic in hell, the filthy still filthy, without any recourse or opportunity to have a change (Re.22: 11). There will be no avenue for the lustful to get relief from his lust, and withdrawal pains will continue the torment. The thing that a man allows to stop him from receiving Christ in this life will be the thing that will torment him for eternity, reminding him of his foolishness.

Judgment is given as the works have been. There is a just gradation in the sorrows of the lost, as well as the rewards of the righteous. Every just allowance will be made to modify the guilt of sinners and palliate their deficiencies and crimes, whatever the case may be. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? (Ge.18: 25).

2. There will be Books of God’s Words opened also.

The basis of judgment for all mankind is already with us, the Word of God. John tells us that Jesus will not judge men for their unbelief, but the Word that has been spoken (Jn.12: 47-50).

3. The Book of Life has names recorded in it.

The Lamb's Book of Life has recorded all the names of all humanity that has or will ever exist. There are no names being added, for God knows all names, before the foundation of the world. However, a person who rejects Christ, for the final time, has his/her name blotted out of that Book (Ex.32: 32-33).

In this judgment, hell and death are personified. We understand this to mean the grave, which holds the body until the judgment, and hell as the compartment which holds the souls of the wicked dead until their resurrection. Since death and hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, they will not be found in the New Earth (Re.20: 11-15). A man's body resides in the grave, and his soul goes to the appropriate place, either the presence of God or hell at the time of death. Now God will reunite the body of the lost man with the soul of that man for his appearance before the throne (Mt.10: 28).

Man who is here will know why he is being punished, the reason for the judgment, and will be without excuse of the sentence. There will be no criticism of the sentence, for his conscience will divulge his sins (Ro.2: 12-16). The law will be clear and the Gospel will be a basis for the judgment (Ro.2: 12-16; Re.20: 11-15; Jn.12: 47-48). The wicked here are judged, not to see whether they should be punished, but as to the degree of punishment. Many kind and lovable people will be here, simply due to the fact that they never received Christ as their personal Savior. While some will receive a lighter sentence of punishment, none will escape the judgment they are worthy of.

The dead are here mortals who have died and gone to hell. This is the second death (Re.20: 14). Hell (Hades) is the present place of confinement for those who did not receive Christ. They are conscious and in torment until the resurrection (Ge.42: 38; Nu.16: 30-33; De.32: 22; 2Sa.22: 6; Ps.55: 15; 116: 3; Is.14: 9; Lk.16: 19-31; Ep.4: 7-11). Hell has degrees of punishment going on now, just as heaven has degrees of reward. The degrees of punishment could come from a man's consciousness of the evil deeds he has committed; along with the number of times he refused to commit himself to Christ. Everlasting life is described by the Greek word "*aionion*" which means "forever." This same word is applied to the punishment they will receive (Mt.25: 41, 46; Mk.9: 43-47; Lk.12: 5; He.6: 2; 10: 26-31; Re.14: 9-11; 19: 20; 20: 10-15; 21: 8). Fallen angels will be judged at this time also. These are they who were reserved in darkness in everlasting chains, which judgment Jude calls the "judgment of the great day" (Jude.6). With the execution of the sentence given at this judgment, earth will be purged of all evil, and righteousness will reign upon the New Earth.

Some have tried to say that man who does not know Christ at his death simply is annihilated to an unconscious state of nonexistence. This cannot be true. Since the Scriptures speak of a "second death," there must be a location or activity that is taking place at that death. The action is that man is now being separated from God eternally, entering a state of utter hopelessness. In all Divine judgment, we can see that man is very much aware and sensitive to the pains of hell, and will be so in the Lake of Fire also (Lk.16: 19-31). In Jesus' statements about the rich man, He said it was a "certain" man who was so blessed, but so cruel that he would not give even the crumbs of his table to the beggar, Lazarus. In the course of time, both died, but the end results were much different, with Lazarus going into

Abraham's bosom, and the rich man winding up in hell. The torment he experienced there is graphic, for he said that he desired just a little water to touch his tongue, for he was "*. . . tormented in this flame*" (V.24). Abraham's statement shows us God's justice, with Lazarus being comforted, and the rich man receiving his just reward.

XVI. ETERNAL KINGDOM – RENOVATION BY FIRE

The last two chapters of the Book of Revelation have new and wonderful things shown to us of the ages to come. A New Heaven and New Earth, with a New Jerusalem, will be for new people, living under new conditions. There will be a new light, new Temple, and a new paradise. The conditions will be as the beginning, with a perfect, eternal state that the Garden offered.

We should notice in these last glimpses, a finished Redemption that ends up with the same images as when the first chapter of human history began. Worlds move in circles; and God's providence with man moves in an immense one. It started with Paradise, and then moves through some strange paths, until it has fulfilled its grand revolution by coming back to where it started. It does not repeat itself, but goes forward to rest forever in the results of that wonderful experiment called grace. Genesis is the Book of beginnings; the Revelation is the Book of the endings of what was previously begun. It is a circle that welds the two ends of the history of man into the golden ring of eternity.

A. New Heaven & New Earth

The "first heaven" and the "first earth" will pass away, and there will be no more sea. There will be a renovation by fire which will bring about this New Heaven and New Earth. By New Heaven, we can understand a new atmosphere for the New Earth. This renovation will not cause the current earth and heaven to cease to exist. God's Word holds together all the fibers, units, and cells of this material existence. God's spoken Word created every law of physics, as well as establishing and maintaining it in its concrete position or order as God ordained. Verses ten through twelve tell us that there is a reservation for fire to come and take care of that which has been marred by sin. It will occur after the Millennium and Satan's being put in his final place, the Lake of Fire, and during the Great White Throne Judgment (2Pe.3: 7).

While the original creation was marred by the fall of Lucifer and his casting out, we understand that earth was not created "formless and void." Isaiah tells us that God did not create it to be uninhabited (Is.45: 18 RSV). Isaiah and Ezekiel infer that Lucifer was in charge of earth originally (Ezk.28: 12-19; Is.14: 12-14). With the rebellion, it is apparent that there was destruction of the earth as we know it. There is much speculation as to whether there was a "pre-Adamic" race (supposedly what we now know as demons), which seek to re-embody themselves in human beings so as to again inhabit the earth. Others claim the demons to be wicked angels who fell with Satan and were not bound until their judgment. Be

that as it may, God instructed Adam and Eve to “. . . Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth . . .” (Ge.1: 28). Yet we know that there are no human remains to ante-date man as of the Genesis account.

Peter speaks of the original earth being “overflowed with water” (2Pe.3: 6). He is not speaking of the flood of Noah’s time, for he speaks of what exists since the restoration of the earth (Ge.1: 3-31) by the same word kept in store or “reserved unto fire” (2Pe.3: 7). Here he then adds that we look for a New Heaven and New Earth (2Pe.3: 13). The earth then has passed through one stage and will pass through two more stages: 1) the Original earth which perished by water; 2) the earth that will be renovated by fire; 3) the New Earth which shall exist forever. Whether there were geological ages between Genesis chapter one, verses one and two, we do not know, though science says so. However, we do know that the earth was returned to its habitable form for humans by God through six periods He called “day.” Notice that the Word of God does not contain the word “create” after Genesis 1: 1, until verse twenty one, where the fifth days work is described. Looking closely at His Words to the earth, “Let the earth bring forth grass...” gives us clearly the idea that it was simply as with the spring of the year when the earth “brings forth” all kinds of plant life.

If we study closely the word “made” in verse sixteen, we see it is not the same Hebrew word as was translated “created” in verse one. It does not imply a creative action, but perhaps a breaking away of that which caused the earth to be shrouded in darkness, so that the sun could shine through. It appears the animal life had to be recreated on the fifth day where the word “create” is used again. Likely all animal life was destroyed in the catastrophe of the fall of Lucifer. Fossils tend to support this idea, pointing to animal and plant life, but there are no fossils of man. This would support the point of man not existing on a Primeval Earth. Man is a creation of this present earth, not the primeval one.

So what does this have to do with our subject? Between the “baptism of water” and the “baptism of fire” that will renovate the earth and heavens, there will have been two minor events which affected the structure of earth. The flood of Noah’s day, already past, was cataclysmic, bringing climate changes as the “fountains of the great deep” were broken up. Subsidence of land took place, forming oceans and mountains, and the atmosphere of earth lost some of its life sustaining properties. The second minor event will come about when Jesus sets His feet on the earth to set up His Millennial Kingdom. The Mount of Olives will split, mountains and valleys in Palestine will be leveled, the Dead Sea will rise, and the contours of that land changed (Zec.14: 4-10; Ezk.47: 1-12). The effects of the flood of Noah’s day will be reversed and human life will again be prolonged to the extent of those pre-flood (Is.65: 20).

God’s throne will come down from Heaven to be with men forever, even as the HolyCity comes from the Heavens to be with us. The fire of renovation will simply change things from one state to another, without obliterating it any more than the Flood of Noah’s time obliterated the earth. The earth, and its inhabitants, and all the works, whether of nature or art, shall be renovated by fire. This will be a destruction of stately palaces and gardens as well as all the desirable things that worldly-minded men seek and place their happiness in.

This renovation by fire will change the surface of earth, removing the things that sin brought into existence, such as thorns and thistles, disease germs, pests, etc. As well, all the works of men must submit and pass through the fire, which shall be a consuming fire to all that sin has brought into the world. It will be a refining fire to the works of God's hand, that the creation shall be made clearer so that the saints may much better discern the glory of the Lord therein (2Pe.3: 10-12; Re.20: 11, 21: 1). It will be a purifying of the atmosphere of all evil spirits as well as destructive agencies. Just as the framework of the Primeval Earth was not destroyed or annihilated by the flood, neither will the framework of this earth will not be either.

This renovation will end the “day of the Lord” and begin the “day of God” (2Pe.3: 10-19). In the Greek, to “pass away” is “*parerchomai*” which means to “go by, or away from, in the sense of from one condition to another.” Never is this word used to indicate the cessation of existence. This word is used often in Scripture, and is often speaking of such things as the passing of time and events that happen (Mt.7: 28; 9: 10; 11: 1; 13: 53; 24: 6; Lk.21: 7; Jn.14: 29). It is also the word used to describe the infallibility of God’s Word. In this the idea is that God’s Word would be less likely to fail or change than to change heaven and earth (Mt.5: 18; 24: 34-35; Mk.13: 31; Lk.16: 17; 21: 32-33).

The verses referred to in Second Peter speak of a heat so intense that it melts the elements. This word for “element” is “*stoicheion*” which means “something orderly in arrangement, element, principle, or rudiment.” This has to do with foundation principles, regarding the questions involved, and in Galatians 4: 3, 9; Colossians 2: 8, 20; and Second Peter 2: 10, 12). Here the word embraces the principles of sin and the present sinful world system. It embodies all sinful nature, disease, bad spirits, and corruption, including a part of the present bondage and corruption that have to be destroyed (Ro.8: 18-25).

The word “melt” is “*luo*,” meaning “to loose, put off, unbind, untie, or set free,” as in several places in Scripture (Mt.21: 2; Lk.19: 30, 33; Jn.1: 27; 11: 44; Ac.7: 33). It has also been rendered as “dissolve” (2Pe.3: 11-12). These passages indicate a renovation of the present heavens and earth which will loose them from the bondage of the sinful world system, and liberate them by changing their state (Ro.8: 21-23). The teaching of Scripture is that “creation” is presently in a state of captivity, from which it will be loosed at this time (Ro.8: 19-23).

The fervent heat within this planet will destroy what is not of God. There will be no ultimate demise of this planet by nuclear or hydrogen warheads. Yes, they will probably be used again, during the Battle of Armageddon, but they will not stop the existence of life here. The word “fervent” is of the nature of internal heat, not external. What is already in the earth, the heat energy of the smallest element of creation, will be what does in sin. Every element we see has the power of fire in it, due to the activity of protons and neutrons. It is the same power that holds this planet together (Co.1: 16-17).

This also connects with the word that has been translated as “works” – “*ergon*.” It refers to the acts of men, both religious and general. So this Scripture is saying that these things will

be loosed by fire and the sinful things of this world system will melt (“*teko*” – Greek). It is to loosen the earth and heavens from the evil influence of this present world. It will be a fulfillment of the promise of a renovated earth wherein “dwelleth righteousness.” It will be a cleansing and removal of all that is a result of the curse and its corruption which makes things unclean.

In Revelation 20: 11, we see the word “fled.” This comes from the Greek word, “*pheugo*.” It means to “flee away, to shun, or to vanish.” While it can be used both figuratively and literally, it is here a figurative happening, as in Revelation 6: 14 and 16: 20. Revelation 20: 11 is the same picture as Second Peter chapter 3.

When we see the word translated “new” (Re.21: 1), the Greek word is “*kainos*” which means “to be renewed or new.” This has to do with a freshness of character, not new in existence. The Greek word “*neos*” gives the idea of “newly made” as in the wine that Jesus made from plain water (Mt.9: 17). But this is not the word used here. So we can safely say it is the present heaven and earth being made new in character; that is, it will be renewed and loosed from the old curse with its influence and effects.

The Scriptures do not indicate that all would be renovated, but that which needs to be changed. Mankind and animals will remain, even as from the past (Ro.8: 18-25). Hebrews also indicates that some things will be destroyed, while other things will remain the same (He.12: 26-28). God has His creation at heart, and what does not have to be destroyed will be preserved. The fire will consume the wicked and rebellious things, but other things that are ordained by God will remain.

The word “*kainos*” is used in the statement of “old things” passing away and all things are “become new” (2Co.5: 17). This regeneration means that the old order of things passes away, and there is a fresh, new order in the individual. John was shown that there will be a renovation, whereby the curse is removed and the new order is brought into reality.

Other passages refer to the New Heavens and New Earth (Is.65: 17-19). The New People will rejoice in this most glorious world. Jerusalem will be a place of rejoicing, her people full of joy. Jerusalem is said to be an eternal possession, so she will still exist (2Ch.33: 4; Je.17: 25; Ezk.43: 7). In this eternal city, all tears will be wiped away, with Israel’s seed and name remaining forever (Is.66: 22-24). There will be new moons and Sabbaths, and all flesh shall worship before God forever.

Only righteousness will exist in this new state. Revelation 21: 1 also says that there will be no more sea. It does not mean that water has left planet earth, for other passages declare otherwise. Rather, it is the ideal of oceans, which now cover about three-fourths of the earth not existing. There will be rivers, lakes, and smaller seas. Likewise, there will be changes in

the land (Ps.72: 8-10, 17; 97: 1-6; Is.60: 10; 66: 18-24; Ezk.47: 8-48: 38; Zec.9: 10; 14: 8). Obviously, without the large oceans, there will be no islands as we now know them, but the seas will continue to exist (Je.5: 22; 31: 35-36; Ps.146: 6; Pr.8: 29; Ac.4: 24; 14: 15; Re.10: 6; 14: 7). Water will not disappear from earth (Ge.8: 22; Is.chp.35; Am.5: 8; 9: 6). Likely at this time there will be the same “mist” that came up from the earth that watered the ground as in Eden. Paradise restored shall be the order of the Day. A Perfect Kingdom will be in motion during this period (1Co.15: 24-28).

B. New People – New Conditions

God speaks out of heaven that His tabernacle is “with men.” He proclaims that a Tabernacle will come from heaven to reside among men (“meta” – Greek translated as “with”). This will be in company with men or amid (Mt.26: 58; Mk.1: 13; Mt.9: 15; 2Th.1: 7; Re.14: 13). This refers to natural men on earth, for the glorified ones have already been on earth for a thousand years, during the Millennial Reign. God is coming to the natural man who has lived through the Millennium without rebelling against God’s Kingdom, as those who followed Satan who were consumed by fire. They will be an imperishable people, even as God intended from the first. God will “tabernacle” with men, that is, in the midst of them (Jn.1: 14; Re.7: 15; 12: 12; 13: 6). At this time He will truly be “Immanuel, God with us” (Ps.68: 16-18; Is.7: 14; Zec.2: 10-11; 8: 3; Mt.1: 23; Re.22: 5). Every tear will be wiped away (Is.25: 8). This is to “erase, abolish, or utterly wipe away.” The same Greek word means to “smear out, obliterate, or wipe away.” All that has caused sorrow and regret will be removed.

The effect of this wiping away of tears comes because there is no “more death, sorrow, crying, nor pain, for the former things have passed away” (Re.21: 4). Sin and its curse will have been taken away. While the end-result of sin is death, the devil who caused this death and destruction, and the natural man who succumbed to his influence, will no longer be on earth’s surface. Men will experience that which has been prophesied from of old, a virtual utopia existence (Ex.32: 13; Ps.25: 13; 37: 9-11, 22, 29, 34; 69: 36; 82: 8; Is.60: 21; Mt.5: 5; 25: 34). Conditions will be conducive to good in the earth. The human race will not have the difficulties that were caused by Satan being free to influence man. Humans will not die in this existence, though animals will be able to, for there will be sacrifice.

God will wipe away the tears that have come because of sin in this existence. But not only will He wipe away the tears, he will also see that there is no more death. Jesus will come to intervene, and death will no longer stalk mankind. Also, sorrow will be done away with. Health problems, financial adversity, relationship difficulties will all be put away, dealing with the personal sorrows that mankind now deals with. Too, there will be no more pain. This will especially be prominent to the ones who have been and are still being tortured for their faith, even unto death.

There are those who will not be in heaven, namely, the fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, and liars. All these will have their part in the Lake of Fire. No longer will these be used by Satan to bring tears to the Believer’s heart.

All things will be renewed in this existence (vs.5-8). All who desire can drink of the fountain of life freely, with those who overcome inheriting all things. Yet the evil will have their part in the Lake of Fire, the Second Death. Natural people will continue to exist in the New Earth (Ge.9: 12; Ex.12: 14; Le.3: 17; Nu.10: 8; De.5: 29; 12: 28; 2Sa.7: 24-26; 1Ch.23: 25; Ps.12: 7; 146: 10; Is.51: 8; 59: 21; Je.31: 35-36; Ezk.37: 24-28; Lk.1: 55; La.5: 19; Da.4: 3; Jo.3: 20). A “thousand generations” is spoken of in the Old Testament also (De.7: 9; 1Ch.16: 15; Ps.105: 8). This Hebrew expression means “perpetual generations.” We see it thus stated in Genesis (Ge.9: 12). Other things seen as eternal are:

1. Aaron’s priesthood, as well as his seed (Ex.29: 9; 40: 15; Nu.25: 11-13; 1Ch.23: 13).

1. Burning incense on the altar (Ex.30: 8; 2Ch.2: 4)

1. Covenants (Ge.9: 16; Ex.31: 16; Nu.18: 19; 1Ch.16: 17; Je.32: 40; Ezk.37: 26)

1. Sacrifices, offerings, and peace

1. The land promised to Abraham (Ge.13: 15; 17: 6-8; Ex.32: 13; Le.25: 23; De.4: 40; Jos.14: 2, 9)

1. Ceremonial cleansings (Ex.30: 17-21; Nu.19: 29)

1. New moons and Sabbaths (Ex.31: 16-17; 2Ch.2: 4; Is.66: 22-24)

There will be a perpetual natural life of men and multiplication of the animal kingdom (Ge.9: 9-17). The natural seed of David and his throne and kingdom will be eternal, ruled by Christ, the Son of God forever (2Sa.7: 11-17; 1Kg.2: 45; 1Ch.17: 7-14; 2Ch.13: 5; Ps.89: 3-4; Is.9: 6-7; Da.2: 44-45; Mic.4: 7; He.1: 8; Re.11: 15; 22: 5). Each of these references uses the words, “everlasting,” “forever,” or “perpetual.” All these words denote the eternity of God.

God created all things to be controlled by man (Psalms chapter eight). This includes the planets and universe. Man’s possessive rights give access to this portion of God’s creation in the future restoration. Natural people will continue to propagate, though likely at a slower

rate. Yet there will be a substantial increase in human population, requiring more than just this planet as the eons pass. While this planet will hold far more people than currently, without the oceans covering most of the planet, yet as time passes, the planets of the universe will become a part of man's domain also.

C. The Bride of Christ

The HolyCity, New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven. It is a habitation prepared for the Bride (now Wife), by her Husband. It is a "new" city as in Revelation 21: 1, which indicates it is renovated as the New Heavens and New Earth. However, because this City has not been subject to the sinful corruption of earth, it will not need renovation. Here the meaning is "freshness" or newness of character. The New Jerusalem has been in existence, since the heavens and earth were created (Ps.11: 4; 93: 2; Is.6: 1; 66: 1; Re.4: 2-10; 5: 1-13; 7: 9-17; 8: 3; 22: 1-3). The word "Jerusalem" is always spoken of in a literal sense and so we see it here, as a literal heavenly city.

The city of God is not the accumulation of human progress, the works of men, for that end was Babylon. The HolyCity is not a linear and cumulative preparation for the celestial Jerusalem. The old things that are erased (first heaven and first earth) are characterized by death, suffering, and separation. All that has been of man, his supposed grandeur, was simply transitory and passing, under the sign of suffering and separation.

It is also called the "holy city" (21: 2; 22: 19). "Holy" is never used to deal with the character of a symbol, but something actual and real. So this is a holy and pure city that is separated unto God. This city is also called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (vs.2, 9). Many take this to be symbolic of the Church, but it clearly represents a literal city, with a redeemed people inhabiting it.

The "Bride of Christ" is the New Jerusalem. Of course the New Jerusalem will contain the Body of Christ, who will inhabit it. A city is not really the buildings, but its inhabitants. Only the inhabitants are important, and the buildings simply are there for what is important. There is a very close relationship between the two. The more accurate rendering is that the New Jerusalem is the Bride of Christ, as Scripture plainly states. The Bride of Christ is made up of all saints of all history, not just believers of the Church age (New Testament).

God is the source and origin of the New Jerusalem. It comes from heaven to earth to be the eternal dwelling place of God and His heavenly people. It is "prepared" meaning ready and provided for. As a bride is ready for her husband, so the New Jerusalem is ready to be the dwelling place of heavenly saints, that God may tabernacle with them forever (Re.21: 3). Jesus went to prepare for His people many places of residence or abode (Jn.chp.14). He has been making a place in the mansion already prepared or built, in the Father's house (See "prepare" as in Mt.20: 23; 22: 4; 25: 34; 26: 17; 1Co.2: 9; 2Ti.2: 21; Re.12: 6; 16: 12). So we

see it is not a bringing into existence when referring to “preparing a place,” but making that place which already exists ready for habitation. The New Jerusalem will be located on this earth. Nations of men on earth will bring honor, glory, and recognition to it, requiring it to be on earth (Vs.24-26; 22: 1-5). The glory of God will be reflected throughout the City. It is likened to a jasper stone, a beautiful light of the radiant glory of God. It is the Lamb that is this light.

Some things we should say about the City:

1. There will no longer be any religion there, since the power has been abolished.
2. There is no political form in the City.
3. There is no “authority,” for it exists by spontaneity of all toward all.
4. There is no submission to the common good, because there is no submission required in perfect love.
5. There is no collective being, for each is individualized.
6. There is no “hive” or organism there.
7. There is only and exclusively Love.
8. There is a perfect relation of love with all constraint and all “cause” of cohesion being abolished.

D. Attributes of the City

This City is different, both in the elements of its construction, as well as the composition of its inhabitants and the conditions therein.

1. It has walls that are “great and high.”

Three gates are on each of its four sides. Ezekiel described the eternal earthly city of Jerusalem that would be at the beginning of the Millennium (Ezk.48: 30-35). There is a similarity between these two Jerusalem's, but they are different cities, both materially and eternally. No doubt they are to be a part of the same earth, but no indication is given as to their proximity.

The saints raptured before the Millennium will occupy the New Jerusalem. The earthly city will be somewhat of a miniature of the heavenly city. During the Millennium, glorified saints will rule with Christ, having thrones in various places on earth, which will remain after the New Jerusalem, comes down to the earth. Saints will abide in the New Jerusalem, but their thrones will remain in their previous locations. Christ will occupy an earthly throne during the Millennium in the Temple (Ezk.43: 7), as well as the heavenly throne in the New Jerusalem with the Father God.

The twelve gates will each have one Tribe of Israel's name inscribed upon it, as well as on the earthly Jerusalem (Ezk.48: 30-35). Angels will guard the gates, and the twelve apostles names will be in the foundations of the walls. Some say that Matthias will be the twelfth name inscribed, some say Paul. No matter, the correct names will be there. Both Old and New Testament saints are included in these great promises.

An angel with a "golden reed" will measure the city, gates, and walls. This reed, twelve and a half feet long (Ezk.40: 5; 41: 8; 43: 13), measures the four-square city, which could well be a cube (though it might be a pyramid), about fifteen hundred miles on a side. It is a gigantic area, measuring about 3.375 billion cubic miles. Its surface area would cover the eastern half of the United States of America. Places of dwelling or "mansions" are throughout. Billions could be accommodated there without a problem. The walls of the city are about two hundred fifteen feet high (144 cubits x 1.5 feet = 215 feet).

2. The materials of the City are diverse.

While the walls are jasper, the city is going to be "pure gold, like unto glass." There are various beautiful stones used to make the foundation of these walls. Each is precious, perfect, priceless, and beautiful. The streets, which we would normally pave with tarmac, are of transparent (appearing through – Greek derivative) gold. Also, the gates are made of one, giant single pearl. Concerning these gates, they shall never be closed. No person who lives in a megalopolis today leaves their home unlocked, for fear of criminals taking their belongings. Not so in the New City, as THE light will always be there, and locks will be unnecessary.

3. The Heavenly Tabernacle is a literal Temple in the New Jerusalem.

The idea that is conveyed here is that the very presence of God and the Lamb will be in the sanctuary in a very real sense. The Tabernacle will be a sanctuary for God's people in the eternal state. While we can sense His presence when we worship Him in spirit and truth, worship on earth has not had the personal presence of God and the Lamb as objects of worship in either the earthly Tabernacles nor in our churches. The over comer will have authority in the Temple of God and there will be no more going out.

4. The City will be lit by the Presence of the Lord.

While we cannot look at the sun during the light of day, the light of the City will be greater than all the light of the sun, moon, and stars together. The glory of God in all its brilliance defies description, surpassing the sun by great extremes, though it has increased seven-fold during the Millennium (Is.30: 26). This City will not need the sun or moon, though they will shine on for other parts of the earth. The glory of God will be a dazzling light shining out of the transparent City and go beyond our ability to describe.

There will be no more curse or evil, but the abiding blessing of God's presence and glory in this City. God's servants will reign with God and Christ forever in this new estate. We shall see "His face" and His name shall be in our foreheads (Re.22: 3-4).

The light of God will be so glorious and abiding that night no longer can exist in that City. The inhabitants of the City need no sleep. This does not apply, however, to "the nations" on the earth. We see that day and night succeeded each other before Adam fell. He needed the night for rest even in his innocence. He lived in an earthly body, and that body needed sleep. Likewise those who then live in the flesh will need sleep. So the reason for the Covenant with Noah that said, ". . . *while the earth remaineth, day and night shall not cease*" (Ge.8: 22). But in the City where the glorified saints reside there will be no more night. No darkness of any order, whether physical, mental, or moral shall have a place there. Yahweh's Shekinah glory will illuminate the heavenly City, and its inhabitants shall themselves be light, for *they*, "*shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever and ever*" (Da.12: 3).

5. There will be traffic in and out of the City.

The gates of the City will not close, and natural men will carry on natural activities, just as before. Planting, harvesting, building, and multiplying will take place. Men will pass into the New Jerusalem, with leaders from various places coming to give glory to God in the holy City. They will use the fruit of the earth to express their love to Him.

The new nations will come into the City, bringing honor to Him. The inhabitants or citizens of these new nations will be those who kept themselves from the lies of Satan, whose hearts were changed and are still on earth to repopulate it. What about the renovating fire. Surely

God will keep those who do not fall to Satan's temptation to again come against God after the Millennial Reign, when Satan is loosed for a little season. How they are kept we do not know, but they are the antitype of Noah's Ark. Since the descendents of Abraham shall inherit this earth for a "thousand generations" (some say 33,000 years), then they will have to be transplanted to earth again if the renovating fire truly burns up all that is of an ungodly nature. Isaiah tells us that in the New Heavens and New Earth, "your 'seed' and your 'name' remain" (Is.66: 22). With a Tree of Life as in the Garden, someone of a natural existence must eat of it, or it has no reason to exist. A sinless human race will inhabit this planet and probably others as eternity unfold. We are the "first fruits" of His creatures (Ja.1: 18), and of the increase of His Government there shall be no end (Is.9: 7); with saved nations to repopulate earth, not imparting the taint of sin to offspring, we see a greater possibility of use of the universe.

6. There will be a New River in the HolyCity.

This river issues forth crystal clear water, not that which is contaminated. It has life-giving properties, though we should not see it as the actual cause of eternal life. Its source is the throne of God, probably at the top of the PyramidalMountain some see as the geography of the City. Water will be in abundant supply in the City. Other relative Scriptures say there will be living fountains of water, all of it crystal clear (Re.7: 17).

Some interpreters of this Book cling to the notion that waters, in prophetic language, always mean peoples. However, here they give it up, for peoples do not issue from the throne of God. Various ideas are made of this water: 1) Some make it baptism; 2) Some make it saving knowledge; 3) Some make it the grace of God; 4) Some make it the giving of peace to the perturbed nations; 5) Some make it the "renewing and sanctifying influences by which the nations are to be imbued with spiritual life" 6) Some make it a mere Oriental image of abounding happiness and plenty; 7) Many, admitting to a picture of Paradise regained, still cannot get beyond what is purely earthy.

Nothing said points to these waters ever touching the earth, nor dwellers on the earth. It is a heavenly river, belonging to a heavenly city, for the use of a heavenly people. Its waters are of a nature answering to that of the golden City to which they belong. People on earth have never known such a city, but it is a sublime reality, the home of the Lamb and His glorious Bride/Wife. The Psalmist sang, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the City of God, the holy place of the Tabernacles of the Most High" (Ps.46: 4). It is the river of God's pleasures, where they that put their trust under the shadow of His wings shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of his dwelling place (Ps.36: 7-9). Heaven is no place of drought.

7. There will be a Tree of Life there for the healing of the nations.

Streets lined with trees and the banks of the River of Life will also be shaded. These are not just shade trees, but fruit trees, which bear a different kind of fruit each month. The fruit of these trees is for the Over comers (Re.2: 7). The leaves of the trees will bring healing to the nations that inhabit the New Earth. There will be no sickness, for all will be preserved in health, even as Adam would have been had he made the right choice in the Garden (Ge.3: 22-24).

"In the midst of the street of the city, and on either side of the river," John saw "the Tree of Life (in numerous specimens) producing twelve fruits (or kinds of fruit), according to each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree unto the healing of the nations." The trees of the City are fed by the rivers of "living water." It would appear that there are twelve rivers, since there are twelve streets accessed by twelve gates. Just one river would not correspond to the fact of twelve streets having trees lining them. The word for river is translated in the plural (8: 10; 16: 4), and the plural is given for fountain (7: 17; 16: 4). Each month these trees produce a different fruit each month. Their leaves are of particular purpose, providing healing or the preservation of natural life for the coming generations. These are distinct Divine provisions for the pleasures of life for all peoples on the planet.

8. There will be a New Throne in the City.

All earthly cities have places to worship, and this City will be no different. Here, there will be no Temple; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb of God are the Temple of it. Heaven will have come down to earth, and the earth will be the residence of God.

Several thrones are seen in Revelation. In the first three chapters of this Book, Christ appears in the sanctuary, walking amid the golden lamp stands, speaking to His churches. No throne is visible, for the Church is only the Kingdom in process of formation. This time relates to the period of Israel's pilgrimage in the wilderness. Later chapters have a throne appear, but with surroundings that indicate a special dispensation with regard to the old earth which is partly retributive and partly remedial. It is the throne of the Judgment period which holds only during "the day of the Lord." Here Christ is engaged in enforcing the principles of His Kingdom and claims by visitations of successive judgments upon the world. This period answers to the reign of the Judges, when the Ark and its accompaniments were yet in the movable and temporary Tabernacle, and the Kingdom was not yet established.

At the rejoicing over the fall of Babylon, this particular throne disappears. Now appears only the thrones of the ones who for a time rule the nations with a rod of iron. This period answers to the warlike reign of David, when the preparations for the Temple were in the making. The last rebellion, typified by Absalom rising up against his father, having been put down, the "Great White Throne" appears which is the final judgment throne. There are no signs of

blessing here, just the consigning of all the unholy dead to their final doom. Then the HolyCity and the full establishment of the Kingdom of peace will come. This period is represented by the reign of the wise and peaceful Solomon, when the Temple took its place on MountMoriah. At this time there "was neither adversary nor evil." In the HolyCity the throne then takes its position, as the final throne of God and the Lamb, with reference to the earth and man. A single throne, it is the seat of all the authority and power ever after, put forth for the regulation and government of human affairs. Its occupants, the only administrators of its dominion, are God, the Lamb, and His glorified saints. "And they shall reign to the ages of the ages." No more dirty or underhanded politics. No more false religion. No more rabble rule or oppressive tyranny. The reign of righteousness will have come, and it will fail no more forever.

9. There will be food in this City.

It is sometimes asked whether the glorified saints are to eat in heaven. Yes, they can eat, although under no need or compulsion to eat. This will be even as we can enjoy a rose, and yet not suffer from its absence. Our Savior did eat after his resurrection of the coarse food of mortals. The angels ate of cakes and Abraham's dressed calf (Ge.18: 6-8).

There is much that is spiritual in eating. It was by eating that the fall and all its consequences came into the world. All the holy appointments of God in the old economy had eating connected with them. The highest impartation of Christ and His salvation to His people on earth is done in connection with a sacred eating and drinking. Several times Jesus referred to eating and drinking in the Kingdom of His glory. He likened the whole provision of grace to a banquet or feast. There is also the scene of the Marriage Supper, to which the Apocalypse refers. The implication here is that there will be eating in this EternalCity. It will consist of fruits, the monthly production of the Tree of Life. The inhabitants there drink Life-water, and they eat Life-fruits.

10. There will be no sin in this City.

The first Paradise was glorious, but sin entered and the curse came, under which earth and man have been laboring for 6,000 years. With all the glory described by the Apostle, we might still hear the question as to its permanence - will sin not again insinuate itself? Adam had an unabridged right to the Tree of Life, but lost it. That Tree, and all the Garden in which it grew, became off-limits to him, leaving the world smoking under the anger of Yahweh toward sin. The curse came upon man and all his seed. It came upon innocent nature with which Adam stood connected, even to the very ground. Could it happen again, even with Paradise regained? NO! We see plainly the assurance here inserted, that "every curse, or accursed thing, shall not be anymore." The relief from this possibility will be an eternal relief. Its disappearance from all this scene of things will be an everlasting disappearance.

11. This City will demonstrate the fullness of our salvation.

Nothing that is tainted with sin shall enter this City. No one who is associated with sin shall have anything to do with this City. Only those who are free of sin shall enter. Salvation comes in three tenses:

- a. We have been saved from the penalty of sin (past tense)
- b. We are being saved from the power of sin (present tense)
- c. We will be saved from the very presence of sin (future tense)

XVII. CONCLUDING INVITATION

John hears the final words of the Revelator, confirming the truths, and declaring that the sayings are faithful and true. It was God who sent His angel to show John what things must shortly come to pass. With the pronouncement and declaration that this Book is truth, there comes an abdication of the throne by Jesus to put all things into the Father's hands (1Co.15: 24-28). Christ will have put all enemies under His feet, through His Body (He.10: 12-14). While there have been abdications of thrones in history, none have been like this. Some were forced, some voluntary. Some came because of physical infirmity, or to secure some successor. The reason Christ will do so is that He has finished the work given Him as the Son of Man, and so He will merge what has been accomplished back into the Son of God, so the Divine Godhead shall be able to act in its unity, hereafter and forever, with God being All in All. Time will cease here, and the period known as the Ages of Ages shall begin. Paul called them the "Ages to come" (Ep.2: 7). While we do not know what the plan is for the Ages of Ages, we can know that we will be but at the beginning of it. Eternity is still very young.

We must note here that the Revelation is absolute truth and certainty. These Scriptures manifest a positive authority on all subjects delivered to us. This is true, even when reason tells us nothing and the presentations are so marvelous as to stagger belief. Jesus spoke with such clearness and simplicity, commanding all wisdom to the degree that people who heard Him were amazed, proclaiming, "Never man spoke like this man." It is the word of inspiration, going in perfect freedom where angels dare not tread. It declares itself with all that assured certainty which belongs only to Omniscience. Even with regard to all the astounding and seemingly impossible wonders of this Book, the absolute truth of every jot and title is guaranteed with the abounding fullness of the complete knowledge of everything involved. The word to John was, "Write, because these words are faithful and true."

A forgery this revelation cannot be. All the churches named in its first chapters, from the earliest periods succeeding the time of its writing, with one accord, accepted and honored it as from their beloved Apostolic Father. Papias, Bishop of Hieropolis, a disciple of John, a colleague of the Seven Angels of these churches, and who gave much attention to the collection of all the memorable sayings and works of the Apostles, accepted and honored this Book as the genuine production of the Apostle John. Nor is there another Book in the New Testament whose genuineness and inspiration were more clearly and strongly attested on its first appearance, and for the next three and a half centuries.

We should also note in this Epilogue the repetition of the benediction upon those who treasure what is written in this Book. In the opening verses John wrote: *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand"* (Re.1: 3). Now Jesus Himself says, in a voice uttered from his glorious throne in heaven, *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this Book"* (Re.22:7). This is in addition to the seven times repeated admonition, *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"* (Re.2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). No other Book in the Holy Canon is so intense, emphatic, constant, and full from end to end in its expressions of the good to be gained and the ill to be avoided by the hearing and learning of its own particular presentations.

John again tried to worship the messenger, but it is evident he was an angel, for he refused the worship. His explanation was that he was also a fellow servant and one of his brethren of the prophets. The angel's exhortation was for John to keep the sayings of the Book and to worship God. The church of today has some of the same problem John had, but from a different angle. Some today worship a style of worship or a leader of worship more than they do Jesus. Some worship a man who preaches the Gospel, rather than the one the Gospel points to.

We should notice also the effect which these revelations had upon the Apostle at the time. They were so wonderful and shown by the knowledge and understanding of the angel who communicated them, that John was filled with great adoration. Twice he fell down before the feet of the angel to worship him. He meant no idolatry. He was simply carried away by the wisdom and intelligence of his heavenly guide to the point he could not but think that it was God himself. The presentations made it hard to distinguish whether it was God Himself speaking, or by a created messenger that He spoke. Because of the Lord Jesus saying, *"Behold I come quickly;"* and not distinguishing between Him who spoke, and the messenger through whom he spoke, John *"fell down before the feet of the angel."*

The Apostles held Christ to be a worshipful being, and that He was none other than true God as well as true man. In hearing Christ speak, and his instant adoration for Christ, he made the mistake of not perceiving that it was a created angel speaking for Christ, and not Christ Himself in the form of an angel. Even the holiest people make mistakes from their human impulses:

1. Moses when he broke the tables of the Law
2. Peter when he avoided the Gentile Christians at Antioch. Innocent mistakes can be injurious and need to be promptly corrected.

Here was a danger of two sins, one on the part of John in giving worship to the angel instead of Christ, and one on the part of the angel in accepting worship which belongs only to Deity. Though John was in doubt, the angel corrected John's mistake on the spot. The incident shows that no saint or angel worship has the approval of heaven. If it was wrong to worship this heavenly messenger, in and through who came forth the very voice of Jesus, how can it be right to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, to whom is assigned no such dignity or office? The impulse and intention may be devout and good; but it is a great mistake.

It is interesting the direction given to John about what to do with these revelations. Whether from Christ directly, or through the angel whom Christ sent to show him these things, command was given him to "*Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this Book.*" Some take this as antithetical to the command given Daniel with regard to his prophecies (Da.8: 26; 12: 4, 9). But that is plainly a mistake. There is no reference here whatever to Daniel.

In the reading of this Revelation, we can see that people receive it differently. The messenger angel made a statement about this (Re.22: 11). We might translate it as, "*Let the unjust one do injustice more and more, and the filthy one defile more and more, and the righteous one do righteousness more and more, and the holy one sanctify more and more.*" While it can be taken as referring to the eternal fixedness of character, both for the bad and good, when once these apocalyptic scenes have been fulfilled, there will be a seal of permanence in the spiritual condition, rendering the unjust one unjust forever, and the righteous one righteous forever. But, that is hardly the main thought. The meaning has immediate reference to the non-sealing, that is, the writing and publication of "the words of the prophecy of this Book," and the nearness of the time of their fulfillment.

This statement is to set forth the writing and publishing of these revelations, and the holding of them up to the view of all people, no matter the non-effect or ill effect they may have upon the wicked and unbelieving, or upon the antichrist and his adherents, who is emphatically the unjust and unclean one. Though "*wicked men*" *will wax worse and worse* (2Ti.3: 13), even using what is written of them as a license for their wickedness, this is not to prevent the freest and fullest proclamation of the whole truth. It is saying to allow the unjust one to be more confirmed in his unbelief and wickedness, as well the filthy one to go on in his idolatries, moral defilement, and blasphemy. These things, though they will come to pass, are to not restrain the making known of what shall come to pass.

There is another side to the question. If it is a wicked thing to what is wicked, the life of what is living requires it. Believers must be forewarned or they too will be deceived and perish.

And if the wicked are made extremely wicked, the righteous and holy will be holier. Without such it cannot be defended and kept as they need to be. Therefore, let not this Holy Book be sealed up nor its prophecies shut off from proclamation. There is always a twofold effect from the preaching of the Divine Word. It is quick and powerful, and never leaves people where it finds them. It either makes them better, or it makes them worse. If it does not absolve, it condemns the more. Without a softening to penitence, it hardens to more iniquity. How awful, that the propensity for sin does not cease at the grave for those entwined in it.

Final instructions must have come from the Lord, for it says, *“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be”*

(Re.22: 12). He is coming and His reward to men is with Him. An offer is made to all men, to come and *“ . . . take of the waters of life freely.”*

Our lives have set forth a chain of events that we do not yet see the end of. Some have forged links of good, others links of evil. As an example, we see the lives of men from the 1850's that brought millions and millions into the Kingdom. It started with Dr. Kimball, who let Dwight L. Moody to the Lord on the streets of Chicago. Moody influenced F.B. Meyer who later influenced J. Wilbur Chapman. Chapman was an influence in Billy Sunday's life, a great evangelist in America. Then Sunday influenced Mordecai Ham, who later let Billy Graham to the Lord. In no way could Dr. Kimball have any idea that his influence would extend into the 21st Century through Billy Graham. It was his faithfulness to do what he was called to do, that could not be rewarded just at his death. Therefore, he will be properly rewarded in eternity for what his influence did long after he was gone from this life.

The other side of this is the ones left in a state of self-imposed despair. They, outside the realm of heaven, face eternity in the Lake of Fire. They are described as “dogs.” The Jews who mixed the grace of the Lord Jesus with the Law of Moses were dogs. Today we would call these people who preach salvation by works. Some, identified as sorcerers, are likely those who have dealt with drugs, in order to have a thrill. The English words, such as pharmacy or pharmaceutical come from the word “*pharmakia*,” which is the word for drugs.

The Book is ended with a promise and a prayer. Jesus testifies that He will come quickly, and John, in anticipation and response, prays *“Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

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