

**THE
REVELATION
OF
JESUS CHRIST**

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“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants-- things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,”

Revelation 1:1

Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ

- Not: RevelationS
- Not: The Revelation of St. John the Divine

Writer: The Apostle John

- Sometime after Paul’s Execution in Rome, John moved to Ephesus and became the overseer of the Churches in Asia Minor - probably after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. . It is believed that Mary, the mother of Jesus, accompanied him there as well (cf. John 19:25-27).
- The emperor Domitian, who reigned from A.D. 81-96, claimed to have divine status and promoted the title: *Dominus et Deus noster* (‘our Lord and God’). Christians, who acknowledged Jesus as Lord and God, would not participate in Emperor worship. It was during this time that the Apostle John was arrested and brought to Rome to stand trial before Domitian. According to Tertullian, John was cast into boiling oil without effect.
- Domitian then banished John to the penal island of Patmos where he received and wrote the Revelation.
- After Domitian’s death, John was released and returned to Ephesus where he continued to minister and died in old age. Probably the only one of the 12 Apostles to do so.

Date: A.D. 95-96

Theme: The theme of the Revelation is Jesus Christ

I. APPROACHING REVELATION.

A. A WARNING - *“18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* (Rev 22:18-19) i.e. DON’T MESS WITH THIS BOOK (or the Bible)

B. A BLESSING - *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”* (Rev. 1:3) i.e. THERE IS A BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO SEEK

II. FOUR GENERAL APPROACHES TO INTERPRETING THE BOOK:

1. Ω [see ‘Interpretive Models’ in Appendix]

B. **PRETERIST:** PAST CONFLICTS OF THE EARLY CHURCH WITH JUDAISM AND PAGANISM - CS

- The preterist interpretation ... sees the whole book transpiring during the period of Roman history when the Church went through great persecution by various emperors. It interprets the book as completed and fulfilled.

1. Many rationalistic writers insist that there is no such thing as prediction and that all events described must have taken place before the visions were written. Therefore they are called Preterists.

a) Webster Definition 1: BYGONE, FORMER --Syn. past time, past action, preceding

C. **HISTORICAL:** A PROPHETIC ‘OVERVIEW’ COVERING ALL OF CHURCH HISTORY

1. CS - which sees the book of Revelation as the history of the Church’s struggle against the world systems. This goes beyond the Roman period and follows through to the present time.

D. **SPIRITUAL:** A SYMBOLIC ALLEGORY OF ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL.

1. CS - Everything is interpreted as a spiritual allegory. When you spiritualize the Scriptures you remove any authority or teaching from them, because every man is free to interpret the spiritual allegory as he desires.

E.FUTURIST: A PROPHECY WHICH, BEGINNING WITH CHAPTER 4, REFERS TO THE FUTURE.

1. "[Futurists] insist that the predictions apply mainly to events yet in the future, and will be fulfilled in the future history of the literal Israel. They assert that Israel will again occupy Palestine, that the temple will be literally rebuilt; that the holy city shall be literally trodden down for 1,260 days by the Gentiles, etc." [PNT (1889)]
2. CS - With the futurist view you can read the book and believe that it meant what it said, and said what it meant.
3. Note: Revelation is, of course, filled with a great deal of symbolism. But they are not for us to interpret according to our individual imagination. Instead, the symbols are to be interpreted according to
 - a) The Immediate Context
 - b) The Book of Revelation
 - c) The Whole Counsel of God's Word

III. WE WILL FOLLOW THE FUTURIST APPROACH IN THIS STUDY!

A. REVELATION CALLS ITSELF A "BOOK OF PROPHECY" [1:3; 22:7,10,18-19]

1. Rev. 22: 7, 10, 18-19 - *"Behold, I am coming soon! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book." ... "Then He told me, 'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, because the time is near'." ... "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." niv*

2. "Interpreters of the Revelation should bear in mind two important passages: 1 Peter 1:12 (below), 2 Peter 1:20,21 (above) Doubtless much which is designedly obscure to us will be clear to those for whom it was written as the time approaches." [Scofield]

a) *"To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into." (1 Pet 1:12)*

b) Also cf. *"12 'I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 'However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.'" John 16:12-13*

IV. THE INSPIRED OUTLINE OF REVELATION: - 1:19 - *"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this."*

A. THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN: CHPT. 1 - CS - In chapter one, John wrote the things which he had seen - the vision of Jesus Christ.

B. THE THINGS WHICH ARE: CHPTS. 2&3 - CS - In chapters two and three, John wrote the things which are - the letters of Jesus to the seven churches of Asia dealing with things concerning the Church, the ministry of the Church, and the witness of the Church in the world.

C. THE THINGS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THIS: CHPTS. 4-22 - CS - From Revelation 4 onward, the third section of Revelation, John prophesied those things which are to take place after the Church has been taken out of the world-the future which is about to unfold before us.

REVELATION CHAPTER ONE

OPENING STATEMENTS

I. THE SUBJECT OF THE BOOK - *"The revelation of Jesus Christ"* - Αποκαλυθις Ιησου Χριστου

A.CS - The head of your King James Bible says "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." That is not accurate. That is man's heading. The book of Revelation does not reveal St. John the Divine. It reveals Jesus Christ.

B. AN UNVEILING - αποκαλυθις - lit. "to uncover, unveil, reveal, etc." The purpose is to reveal - not conceal; to clear up - not confuse.

1.CS - Picture, if you will, a draped statue that is about to be dedicated in front of city hall. The band is playing, the mayor gives a speech, and the artist who carved the statue tells about designing it. Then, the dramatic moment comes and the canvas is lifted. Everybody sees this statue

that will now adorn city hall for the next century. That lifting-off of the canvas in the Greek is the word apokalypsis. It is taking off the wraps so you can see.

The book of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ. So rather than being a sealed book, as some claim, it is taking the wrap off so that we might see Jesus in His future glory.

C. AN UNVEILING OF JESUS CHRIST - Jesus is the focus of this book. Hidden when He came in humility, here He is revealed in all His Glory. If we stay focused on Jesus, this book will share its blessing with us.

D. A GLORIOUS, MULTI-FACETED REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST - Since The Book of Revelation is an unveiling of Jesus Christ, it should not be surprising that we find many images, visions, and titles for Him in it. Ω [see 'Views Of Jesus' in Appendix]

VIEWS OF JESUS

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS: [1:5; 3:14; 19:11]

THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD: [1:5]

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS: [1:5; 19:16]

THE ALPHA & OMEGA, [FIRST & LAST]: [1:17-18; 2:8; 22:13]

THE AMEN: [3:14]

THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEYS OF DEATH AND HADES: [1:17-18]

THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID: [3:7]

THE LIVING ONE: [1:17-18]

THE SON OF MAN: [14:14]

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH: [5:5-6]

THE ROOT OF DAVID: [5:5-6]

THE LAMB: [5:12-13]

THE JUDGE: [19:11]

THE WORD OF GOD: [19:13]

BOND-SLAVE

"But if the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life." [Ex.21:5-6]

WHO ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD? Here are a few of those to whom the title has been given:

ABRAHAM - The Prosperous Pilgrim;
MOSES - The Lawgiver; JOSHUA & CALEB - Men of Faith and Action; DAVID - Shepherd, Singer, Soldier, & King; JOB - Faithful in Misfortune; ELIJAH & ELISHA - Powerful Prophets of God; APOSTLES - Fishermen, Tax Collector, Political Activist, Scholar...; ALL DISCIPLES.

Notice the variety of temperaments, personalities, gifts and abilities. It's not about fitting some stereo-type of "Super Spirituality", it's making a non-negotiable commitment to the Lordship of Jesus and living it out daily.

"He said, 'Listen to My Words: When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of My servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?'" [Nu.12:6-8]

II. THE DELIVERY - *"... which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,"*

A. THE ADDRESSEES - *"... to show His servants."*

1. δουλος - a slave, bondman; one who gives himself up to another's will; devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests Ω [see 'Bond-slaves' in Appendix]

2. The Revelation is for His bond-slaves.

- Note: We make a choice to believe on (trust in) Jesus Christ as our Savior. As a result, we immediately become His Child and a Saint. We are Redeemed and Set Free. It then becomes our further choice whether we will become His Bond-Slave (doulos) or not. The first choice determines our destination (Heaven), the second will determine what the Journey will be like. Are you a doulos - a bond-slave? Is your ear pierced? ...

B. THE MESSENGER - "... And He sent and signified it by His angel ..."

1. The Revelation was 'Touched By An Angel'!
2. Angels are Often Associated with God's Work and Word
 - a) They were used in bringing the Law to Moses (Gal. 3:19, Acts 7:53, Heb.2:2).
 - b) They were active in communicating prophetic truth to Daniel (7:16-27; 8:16-26; 9:20-27; 10:1-12:13) and to Zechariah (1:9; 2:3; 4:1, 5; 5:5; 6:4-5).
 - c) Angels announced the birth of John to Zacharias (Lk. 1:11-20) and of Jesus to Mary and Joseph (Lk. 1:26-38, Matt 1:20-21).
3. Because of this, it should not surprise us to find angels involved in revealing the events and contents of the book of Revelation.
4. Note: 'Angel(s)' - *αγγελος* - is found 76x in Revelation [Ω see 'QUICK FACTS ABOUT ANGELS' in Appendix]

C. ENTRUSTED TO ONE PARTICULAR FAITHFUL SERVANT - JOHN - 1:2 "... His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw."

1. *bore witness to the word of God* - i.e. John is 'bearing witness' that this is the Word of God
2. *and to the testimony of Jesus Christ* - He is also testifying to Who Jesus is: The Coming One is the One Who Came; the Son of God is God The Son
 - a) This is the heart of Revelation: *Rev. 19:10 "And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.""*
3. *to all things that he saw* - note: in Rev. "I saw" [49x] and "I heard" [28x]
 - a) 1 John 1:1-3 "1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

D. THE 'POSTAL SYSTEM': From THE FATHER - to THE SON - to HIS ANGEL - to HIS SERVANT JOHN - WRITTEN ON A SCROLL - Sent to THE SEVEN CHURCHES - Given to ALL HIS SERVANTS (doulos)

E. *He sent and signified it* - [W.W.] The word *signified* (Rev. 1:1) is important; it means "to show by a sign." In Revelation, the noun is translated as *sign* (Rev. 15:1), *wonder* (Rev. 12:1, 3), and *miracle* (Rev. 19:20). This is the same word used in the Gospel of John for the miracles of Jesus Christ, for His miracles were events that carried a deeper spiritual message than simply the display of power.

THE SEVEN BLESSINGS OF REVELATION

1:3 - "**Blessed** is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near."

14:13 - "Then I heard a voice from heaven say, 'Write: **Blessed** are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them!'"

16:15 - "Behold, I come like a thief! **Blessed** is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed."

19:9 - "Then the angel said to me, 'Write: **Blessed** are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!' And he added, 'These are the true words of God!'"

20:6 - "**Blessed** and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

22:7 - "Behold, I am coming soon! **Blessed** is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book."

22:14 - "**Blessed** are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city!"

III. THE BACKDROP OF THE REVELATION - "*.. things which must shortly take place.*"

A. These things *must* take place.

B. These things must take place *shortly*

1. "shortly" = *en taxei*: rapidly in execution (tachometer) - lit. "quickly, speedily, " (in succession)
2. There is a storm gathering which will come upon the world quickly once it begins.
3. But note 'Immanency' - The church has always been looking for His Soon Return - cf. v.3 *for the time is near.*"

IV. A BOOK OF BLESSING - 1:3 - "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.*"

A. IT IS AN OPEN BOOK. It is not a closed book

1. "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book...." - 22:10 niv

B. THE BLESSING IS FOR ALL WHO READ, HEAR, & KEEP IT

1. The blessing is pronounced immediately to invite us into the revelation - "Do not be afraid! Open your ears to hear and your heart to embrace the words of this prophecy for BLESSINGS AWAIT YOU WITHIN THESE PAGES!"

2. He who reads it - The Pastor who presents it; The Teacher who teaches it's truths; The believer who shares it's message

3. Those who hear - "*He who has an ear, let him hear...*"

a) If we listen - really listen - we will receive blessing

4. Those who take to heart what is written in it

a) "*keep*" - lit. "keep, guard, hold on to, apply, watch"

b) This blessing is repeated at end of the book - "*Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*" (Rev 22:7)

c) cf. Lk.2:19 - "*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*"

d) This implies a blessing upon Studying Revelation!

e) It also includes '*watching for*' the things written.

5. Continuing is a key - present tense - lit. "*...is reading, ... are hearing, ... are keeping*"

C. IF YOU REALLY TAKE IT TO HEART YOU WILL:

1. Repent and Receive Jesus as Lord and Savior - A BLESSING
2. Get rooted in God's Word so you'll know the truth - A BLESSING
3. Serve Him - "as a living sacrifice" - A BLESSING
4. Rejoice in anticipation of His Coming - A BLESSING
5. Have an increasing urgency to tell others about Jesus - A BLESSING

D. THIS IS FIRST OF SEVEN BLESSINGS IN REVELATION Ω [see 'Seven Blessings' in Appendix]

V. A BOOK OF PROPHECY - "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, ...*"

A. TESTIFYING OF THE SUPREME SUBJECT - JESUS - "*... For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*" - 19:10 niv

1. The 2nd Coming of Christ is the main theme of the Book - mentioned 7 times

VI. A BOOK FOR OUR TIME - "*.. for the time is near.*"

A. THE TIME IS NEAR

1. *near* = 'eggus' near (literally or figuratively, of place or time):-- 'at hand, near, nigh, ready'.

B. ARE YOU READY

1. v.1 "*things which must take place shortly*" - Quickly, Rapidly, Soon
2. v.3 "*.. for the time is near.*" The Time is At Hand, The Time is Nigh, The Time is Ready
 - ARE YOU?

VII.A BOOK OF GRACE AND PEACE - [Rev. 1:4-5] - *“ 4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,”*

A. A GREETING FOR NEEDY HEARTS - *“Grace to you and peace”*

1.GRACE - the unearned, undeserved, favor of God.

a)God's Riches At Christ's Expense

b)God loving the unlovable, healing the incurable, forgiving the unforgivable ...

c) Grace is God doing what is impossible for us - saving the sinner - " 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus replied, 'What is impossible with men is possible with God'." - [Lk. 18:24-27 niv]

2.PEACE - The Lord "takes life's broken pieces and gives us unbroken peace."

a)Revelation is a book of peace. Not peace between men on earth, but peace in the hearts of those who give their allegiance to the Prince of Peace - Jesus. Here and now, He gives a peace that passes understanding, and will soon establish a kingdom of Peace.

b)When we receive God's grace through faith in Jesus - the result is PEACE WITH GOD -

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." [Rom. 5:1]

c)When we remain in God's grace by abiding in Jesus - the result is THE PEACE OF GOD dwelling in our hearts - [Phil. 4:6-7]

3.THE GOOD NEWS is that God gives this crazy, hurting world a greeting of grace and peace in JESUS CHRIST.

a)Peace in our hearts that can be carried through all the circumstances of life.

(1)"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (Jn.16:33)

(2)"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (Jn. 14:27)

B.A GREETING FOR NEEDY TIMES - BACKED BY THE TRIUNE GOD - FATHER, SPIRIT, AND SON! -

“...from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth.....”

1.NOTE: The Opening Greetings in 17 of the 19 N.T. letters include Grace and Peace. All but three of those are from the Father and the Son. But none can match the Triune greeting found here of the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

a)Ω [See 'The Trinity' in Appendix]

C.GRACE AND PEACE FROM THE FATHER - *“..from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty”*

1.4xs - Always of The Father

a)1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from **Him who is and who was and who is to come**, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

b)1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End*," says the Lord, "**who is and who was and who is to come**, the Almighty."

c)11:17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, **The One who is and who was and who is to come**, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned.

d)16:5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, **The One who is and who was and who is to be**, Because You have judged these things.

2. GOD, THE ETERNAL ONE, WHO ALWAYS IS AND WHO ALWAYS WAS WHO WILL ALWAYS BE
- a) Isa 57:15 - "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."
3. THE GREAT I AM - [Ex.3:14] "I AM WHO I AM" or "I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE" - Whatever our need is - He is the answer
- a) JEHOVAH-JIREH - "The LORD will provide" [Gen.22:13-14]
- b) JEHOVAH-RAPHA - "The LORD Who heals you" [Ex.15:26]
- c) JEHOVAH-NISSI - "The LORD is my Banner" [Ex. 17:8-15]
- d) JEHOVAH-SHALOM - "the LORD is Peace" [Jud. 6:24]
- e) JEHOVAH-TSIDKENU - "the LORD our Righteousness" [Jer.23:6]
- f) JEHOVAH-SHAMMA - "the LORD is There" [Eze. 48:35]
4. AND YOU ARE PASSIONATELY, SUPREME and COMPLETELY LOVED BY HIM!
- a) Zec 2:8 - "For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you; for **he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.**" (and John 3:16)

D. GRACE AND PEACE FROM THE SPIRIT - *".. and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne.."*

1. THE SEVEN SPIRITS? - THE 7-FOLD SPIRIT OF GOD

- a) CS - Here (and in Rev 3, 4, and 5) we read of the seven Spirits before the throne of God. The number seven indicates the completeness of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- b) Ω [See 'The Significance of Numbers' in Appendix]
2. cf. also Isa. 11:2 - "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him - the Spirit of Wisdom and of Understanding, The Spirit of Counsel and Power, the Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the LORD..."

7 SPIRITS • FOUND 3 MORE TIMES

3:1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, "These things says He who has the **seven Spirits of God** and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.

4:5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the **seven Spirits of God.**

5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the **seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.**

7 Ministries of the Holy Spirit

1. **ABIDES:** "... He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--" John 14:16
2. **TEACHES:** "... He will teach you all things, ..." John 14:26
3. **REMINDS:** "... and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." John 14:26
4. **CONVICTS:** "... He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" John 16:8
5. **GUIDES:** "... He will guide you into all truth; ..." John 16:13
6. **PROPHECIES:** "... and He will tell you things to come." John 16:13
7. **GLORIFIES JESUS:** "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you." John 16:14

E.GRACE AND PEACE FROM THE SON - THE SUPREME SUBJECT OF THE REVELATION - *"5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth."*

1. THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

- a) The Faithful Expression of God: Col 1:15 - "He is the image of the invisible God.." cf. Heb. 1:1-3,
(1) John 14:9 "Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
- b) The Faithful Witness of God: 1Tim 6:13 "I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate,"
(1) Luke 23:3 "Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say.""

2. THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD - Two Implications

- a) Col 1:15-18 "15 He is the image of the invisible God, **the firstborn over all creation**. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**, that in all things He may have the preeminence."
- b) A Title of Prominence - **the firstborn over all creation**
(1) Ps 89:(20-29) - "27 Also I will make him My firstborn, The highest of the kings of the earth."
(2) David was not the first-to-be-born (8th of 8); neither was Jacob; etc.
- c) A Victory for Believers - **the firstborn from the dead**
(1) 1Cor 15:20-23 "20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."

3. THE RULER OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

- a) This is the title and position that Jesus will have during the Kingdom Age - King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Rev. 19:11-16).
- b) "13 I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed." (Dan. 7:13-14)
- c) Rev 17:14 "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."
- d) Rev 19:16 - "And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."
(1) cf. Domitian - "Deus et Dominus" - "God and Lord" - No! Our savior is ruler over all

VIII.A BOOK OF LOVE [Rev. 1:5b-6] - ***"5 ... To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."***

A.THE PROFESSION OF HIS LOVE - " ... To Him who loved us..."

1.WE LIVE IN A LOVELESS WORLD

a)Jesus said that in the last days *"the love of many will grow cold.."*

2.GOD MADE THE FIRST MOVE IN LOVE - Jn. 3:16

• "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving" (Carmichael)

a)JESUS CAME TO MAKE GOD'S LOVE KNOWN TO US - *"Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me, I have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I Myself may be in them."* [Jn.17:25-26 niv]

b)JESUS DIED TO DEMONSTRATE GOD'S LOVE FOR US - *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."* [1Jn.4:10 niv]

c)NOTE: PAUL PRAYED THAT WE MIGHT KNOW THE LOVE OF GOD - *"... And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."* [Eph.3:17b-19 niv]

3.IT'S UP TO US TO RESPOND

a)BY RECEIVING HIS LOVE: Jn.1:12, 1Jn. 5:11-12, etc

b)BY RESTING IN THE STRENGTH OF HIS LOVE: - *"...For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* [Rom.8:35-39 niv]

c)Eph 5:2 *"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."*

4.IN CHRIST JESUS WE HAVE GOD - TELLING US THAT WE ARE LOVED BY HIM - Present tense! - ***"... to Him Who loved*** [is continually loving] ***us."***

a)WoW!!!

B.THE PROOF OF HIS LOVE - ***"To Him Who ... washed us from our sins in His own blood"***

1.HE HAS WASHED US (FREED US niv) FROM OUR SINS

a)Rom.5:6-8 niv - *"You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

2.HE PAID THE PRICE

a)Gal.1:3-4 - *"Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."* niv

3.IT WAS A HORRIBLE PRICE - 1Pet.2:24 - *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree..."* niv

a)Paid because of Love

b)Ω [see 'What Held Jesus To The Cross' in Appendix]

4.BECAUSE OF HIS LOVE WE BELONG TO THE FATHER, THE SON, THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE KINGDOM OF GOD, THE GLORIOUS FUTURE

5.THUS WE LOOK FORWARD TO HIS COMING TO BRING SALVATION - *"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation."* (Heb. 9:28)

C. THE PURPOSE OF HIS LOVE - **"6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and**

Father.." - "9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." (Rev.5:9-10)

a)Ω [see 'AND HAS MADE US KINGS & PRIESTS' in Appendix]

2. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ISRAEL ON CONDITION IS OURS BY FAITH

a) Ex. 19:5-6 - " 'Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' ... " niv

b) 1 Pet. 2:4-5,9-10 - "As you come to Him, the living Stone - rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." ... "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light." niv

3. OUR PRIESTHOOD INVOLVES A TWO-FOLD MINISTRY

a) Minister to the Lord on behalf of the People - and to the People on behalf of the Lord

b) CS - In the Kingdom Age we'll be a kingdom of priests, going before Christ for the people and representing Christ to the people.

- Quick Side-Note: **to His God and Father** ? How do we reconcile references like this where the Father is called 'His God'? The key is understanding the essential truth that Jesus is both Fully God and Fully Man (Isa. 9:6 - "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; ... Mighty God, Everlasting Father ...").

(a) When He declares "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." He is, of course, speaking as God the Son.

(b) When He prays to the father, He is speaking as the Son of Man

i) cf. John 11:41-42 - "41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.""

4. OUR RESPONSE AS KINGLY PRIESTS IS TO PRAISE GOD FOR HIS LOVE TOWARDS US - **"to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen."**

a) 1 Pet. 2:9 - "... that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you...." niv

b) PRAISE INCREASES AS THE DAY DRAWS NEAR

(1) Rev. 1:6 - "... To Him be GLORY and DOMINION for ever and ever! Amen."

(2) Rev. 4:11 - "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive GLORY and HONOR and POWER..."

(3) Rev. 5:12 - In a loud voice they sang: 'Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain, to receive POWER and RICHES and WISDOM and STRENGTH and HONOR and GLORY and BLESSING!'

(4) Rev. 7:12 "Amen! BLESSING and GLORY and WISDOM, THANKSGIVING and HONOR and POWER and MIGHT be to our God forever and ever. Amen!"

c) ARE MY PRAISES TO GOD INCREASING - or Decreasing?

D. WHAT A GLORIOUS BLESSING TO REST IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS LOVE, WALK IN THE POWER OF HIS LOVE AND STAND IN THE PURPOSE OF HIS LOVE

IX.A BOOK OF HOPE - Rev. 1:7-8 - "7 Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen. 8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

- THE VICTORY SHOUT OF ALL ETERNITY... "Behold, He is coming!"

1. The Promise Given in The Garden

a) Gen. 3:14-15 NLT - "14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you will be punished. You are singled out from all the domestic and wild animals of the whole earth to be cursed. You will grovel in the dust as long as you live, crawling along on your belly. 15 From now on, you and the woman will be enemies, and your offspring and her offspring will be enemies. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.""

b) From the very beginning of God's relationship with His People, the promise of His Coming has been the foundation upon which all ultimate hopes have been built. The very Curse brought by sin contained the first assurance - a Promised Seed would come Who would conquer our Enemy, reverse the Curse and restore us to fellowship with our Creator. **The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - was coming!**

2. The Promise Spoken by The Patriarchs

(1) Through the Old Testament, we follow what's been called 'the scarlet thread of Redemption' - the line from Eve to Noah to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Israel), and then on through Moses to David and his lineage. Finally closing out the OT with a declaration that God would send Elijah to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. **The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - was coming!**

b) Gen. 22:8 - "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together."

c) Gen. 49:10 - "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people."

3. The Promise Heralded by The Prophets

a) The Promised Prophet

(1) Dt. 18:15-19 - "15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 16 For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die." 17 The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account."

b) The Almighty Son

(1) Isa 9:6 "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

c) Messiah The Prince Will Come

(1) Dan 9:25 - "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; ..."

(2) Mal 3:1 - "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts."

d) Then there was silence. Silence for 400 years! Until ...

4. The Promise Announced by Angels

a)"26 ... the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ... 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."" (Luke 1:26-33)

5. The Promise Celebrated Every Christmas: The Promised Seed - The Messiah - The Savior - HAD COME !

a)Jesus came to Reveal God to Us, to Fulfill the Law for us, to Take our Sins upon Himself, and Restore our fellowship with the Creator. He came and saved us. He transferred us out of the Dominion of Darkness and into the Kingdom of Light. He brought us from spiritual death to Life. We are Alive! We are Free! We are His!

6. The Renewed Promise Given by The Promised One! He gave us His Holy Spirit to seal our relationship, to be our strength, and to guarantee what was yet to come. But **He also gave us a promise: I WILL COME AGAIN ! ...**

a) Given Before His Death

(1)"1 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again** and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." (John 14:1-3)

b) Repeated After His Resurrection

(1)Acts 1:9-11 - "9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same **Jesus**, who was taken up from you into heaven, **will so come** in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

c) Echoed by The Apostles

(1)Titus 2:11-13 - "11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 **looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,**"

d) Celebrated by Us Today - BEHOLD, HE IS COMING!

7. THAT CONTINUES TO BE THE HOPE AND STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH TODAY - **JESUS IS COMING!**

a) IN THE GARDEN - He is coming! - The Seed who will destroy the Serpent.

b) IN THE FLOOD - "*As the days of Noah, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man.*" - He is Coming!

c) IN THE TYPES OF THE O.T. DELIVERANCES - He is coming!

d) THE HIGHEST NOTE OF ALL THE PROPHETS - He is coming!

e) THE GOOD NEWS FOR ALL MEN - "*A Child is born*" - He has come!

f) THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH - "*Prepare the way of the Lord*".. "*open your hearts*" - He is coming!

B. THE HEIGHT OF ALL EXPERIENCES - "**Behold, He is coming!**"

1. No other sight compares with it. Not the creation, the garden, the flood, the parting of the sea, the manna, the awesome fire & smoke on Mt. Sinai, the star of Bethlehem, the Mt. of Transfiguration, not even the resurrection or ascension. Nothing compares with the final return of our God and Savior JESUS CHRIST.

C. THE HEART OF OUR STRENGTH - *"Behold, He is coming!"*

1. Hold on to the Blessed Hope with all your heart and it will hold you through the darkest valley.
"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." [Lk.21:28 niv]
2. When you're feeling down - look up and remember - HE IS COMING!
3. 1Cor.15:19 - *"If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men."* niv
4. That's when the Sons of God will be manifested
 - a) Romans 8:19-25 - "19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."
 - b) 1 John 3:2 - "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
5. Ω [see 'Seven Mentions Of His Coming' in Appendix]

D. HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS - *"Behold, He is coming with clouds.."*

- Clouds Are Consistently Associated With Jesus' Return. What do they Represent?

1. Actual Clouds - Representing His Power

- a) Ex. 19:16 - *"Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled."*
- b) Ps 104:3 - *"... Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,"*
- c) Mk. 13:26 - *"Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."*
- d) Acts 1:9-11 - *"9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.""*

2. 'Dark Clouds' - Representing His Wrath

- a) Zep 1:14-15 *"14 The great day of the LORD is near; It is near and hastens quickly. The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter; There the mighty men shall cry out. 15 That day is a day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness,"*
- b) Ps 97:2 - *"Clouds and darkness surround Him; ..."*

3. A 'Cloud' of Witnesses - The Heavenly Host of Returning Saints and Angels

- a) Heb 12:1 - *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,"*
- b) Jude 1:14 *"14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,"*
- c) 30 *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt.24:30-31)*

d) *Rev 19:11-14 "11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses."*

e) *"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him." (Dan.7:13)*

E. NO ONE WILL MISS HIS FINAL RETURN - ***"and every eye will see Him,"***

1. Every Eye Will See Him - No Matter Where They Are

a) *Mt 24:26 -27 "26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. 27 "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be."*

b) Every EYE - not just mind - this will not be a vision - but a Coming in such powerful splendor that it will penetrate every corner of the Universe! They'll see Him from the earth, the Sea, the heavens - even the grave

2. This Completely Repudiates Any Ideas Of A 'Secret Coming' Of Jesus

a) CS - When God comes again, it's not going to be a secret coming. The whole world is going to know when He returns. "And every eye shall see him." This refutes the theory that the coming of Jesus Christ was a secret event in 1874, 1878, 1917, 1918, or one of the many dates that people have given for His coming. When you confront them, quoting "Every eye shall see him," they say that Jesus came in a secret chamber, and only the real initiated knew that He came. But Jesus said: *"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it."* (Mt 24:26)

(1) Ω [see 'THE SECRET COMING OF JESUS' in Appendix]

b) Does this matter? cf. The Millerites

(1) William Miller calculated (according to his interpretation of Daniel's prophecies) that Jesus would return in 1843 - then 1844. Many became followers and even gathered together to await the Lord's coming and experience it together. When Jesus didn't come, they experienced what is called 'The Great Disappointment'. After this many people came up with a variety of explanations. Ellen White (prophet of the SDA Church) had a 'vision' that the 'Investigative Judgment' took place in the Sanctuary in Heaven (Heavenly Holy of Holies) in 1844. Then it was re-calculated that the Lord returned to the earth invisibly in 1874 beginning the Millennium and in 1878 He began His Kingly Rule.

(2) The Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Herbert W. Armstrong's World-Wide Church of God, and others sprang from this movement.

3.EVEN THOSE WHO PIERCED HIM - *"..even they who pierced Him;"*

a)This will be the fulfillment of Zech.12:10 - *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."*

b)They will realize that HE WAS PIERCED FOR THIER SINS - *"4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."* (Isa.53:4-6)

4.JOHN SAW THIS WITH HIS OWN EYES - *"33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe."* (Jn 19:33-35)

5.THOSE WHO PIERCED HIM WILL SEE HIM

a)Some infer from Zech. 12:10 that this is a general reference to the nation of Israel - not to be taken literally - No Way!

b)This vision will penetrate to wherever they are and they will see it! Fulfilling what Jesus said - *"63 ... And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!" 64 Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."* (Matt. 26:63-64)

6.IT WILL BE A PIERCING SIGHT FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE EARTH - *".. and all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him."*

a)Mt 24:30 - *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."*

b)The word for mourn is lit." to be cut" - speaking fig. of the cutting of the heart that is experienced in grief and mourning.

c)The realization that our sins pierced Him is one that pierces our hearts. But better to be pierced by that realization now than to wait until it's too late - then the mourning will become an eternal gnashing of teeth.

F.HIS COMING IS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN - *"So shall it be! Amen."*

1.HIS COMING IS ONE GUARANTEE YOU CAN BANK ON

G.THE SEAL ON THE GUARANTEE - 8"*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,*" says the Lord, "*Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty.*"

- JESUS IS GOD

A.12 *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."* (Rev.22:12-13)

B.Col.1:19; 2:9 niv - *"For God was pleased to have all His fulness dwell in Him" ... "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."*

C.CS - In describing His eternal nature, God declares that He is the Alpha and Omega. That is the Greek for A and Z—the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet. God is the totality. He is the beginning and the ending. It all started with God and it all ends with God. He is, He was, He is to come. He is eternal. In Revelation 21:6 Jesus says the same thing. From this we conclude that Jesus also is eternal—co-eternal with the Father, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending.

1. "I have a great need for Christ; I have a great Christ for my need." - Spurgeon

2. "I am convinced that the need of the hour is not so much to discuss the Bread, as to break it and pass it out to the hungry multitudes." William White.

- Ω [see 'A LOOK AT SOME TITLES FOR GOD' in Appendix]

- Ω [see 'JESUS: THE ALPHA & OMEGA' in Appendix]

THE THINGS WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN

I. THE ONE WHO WALKS AMONG THE LAMPSTANDS - Rev. 1:9-20 - **9 I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."**

A. JOHN THE SCRIBE - "9I, John,"

a) Note: John is mentioned by name 5 times in the Revelation- 1:1,4,9; 21:2; 22:8.

2. "**your brother**" - Note John's humility - could have said 'John, The Apostle'.

a) CS - "God is no respecter of persons," [25] which means that God is as interested in you as He is in Billy Graham and as He was in Dwight Moody, Charles Finney, John Wesley, John Knox or Martin Luther. God didn't love them any more than He loves you. God didn't listen to them any more readily than He will listen to you.

b)

3. "**and companion**" - synkoinonos - 'fellow-partaker'. John was not just a brother in name. He was a brother in the common experience of suffering for the sake of their Lord and Savior.

a) "**in the tribulation**" - θλιψις thlipsis - pressure (literally or figuratively):-- afflicted(-tion), anguish, burdened, persecution, tribulation, trouble.

(1) 1Thess 3:3-4 - "3 So that none of you should be shaken by the troubles through which you are passing. You yourselves know that we are destined to meet with such things. 4 For, even while we were with you, we warned you beforehand that we were certain to encounter trouble. And so it proved, as you know." TCNT

(2) cf. 1Pet.4:12-13 - "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed." niv

(3) John 16:33 - "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.""

• A Key Principle

- Suffering Without Purpose Destroys Us
- Suffering With Purpose Develops Us
- In Jesus, Suffering Can Always Have Purpose
- Ro 5:1-5 "1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
- NLT for 3-4 "3 We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they are good for us--they help us learn to endure. 4 And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation."

b) "**and kingdom**" - most likely, in context, referring to the future Kingdom - Millennial and beyond

(1) Lk 12:32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." niv

(2) Acts 14:22 - "...We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God." niv

THE KINGDOM

I. A PRESENT POSSESSION

- Col 1:13 - "He Has Delivered Us From The Power Of Darkness And Conveyed Us Into The Kingdom Of The Son Of His Love,"

II. A DAILY PERSPECTIVE

- Rom. 14:17 - "for The Kingdom Of God Is Not Eating And Drinking, But Righteousness And Peace And Joy In The Holy Spirit."
- Heb 12:28 - "Therefore, Since We Are Receiving A Kingdom Which Cannot Be Shaken, Let Us Have Grace, By Which We May Serve God Acceptably With Reverence And Godly Fear."

III. A FUTURE PROMISE

- 2Tim. 4:18 - "And The Lord Will Deliver Me From Every Evil Work And Preserve Me For His Heavenly Kingdom. To Him Be Glory Forever And Ever. Amen!"
- Rev. 11:15 - "Then The Seventh Angel Sounded: And There Were Loud Voices In Heaven, Saying, "The Kingdoms Of This World Have Become The Kingdoms Of Our Lord And Of His Christ, And He Shall Reign Forever And Ever!""

4. "**and patience**" - endurance - 'hupomone' from 'hupomeno' - to abide under
- a) *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.* (James 1:4 niv)
 - b) *As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.* (James 5:11 niv).
5. "**of Jesus Christ** [that are ours in Jesus niv]"
- a) These are ours in Jesus. Some of these are among the 'unpopular' promises of God.
6. The Glory that awaits us enables us to be patient in the difficulties that surrounds us.
- a) *We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Thess 1:3 niv)
7. Also Note:
- a) '**brother**' focusses on relationship. Believers have a family bond through their common connection with Jesus Christ which makes us children of God and, therefore, brothers and sisters in His Kingdom Family.
 - b) '**companion**' - '**fellow-partaker**' - focusses on shared experience. As Believers follow the Lord together, in the fellowship of a local church congregation, they build a strong, vital bond of unity through the common experiences they share together.
 - (1) This is just one of the reasons we're called to invest ourselves in the life of the church.
 - (2) And why church hoppers and 'lone rangers' experience stunted spiritual growth and miss out on the blessings of edifying relationships that are a by-product of co-laboring together in the Lord.
- c) HOW WELL ARE YOU CONNECTED? WHAT ARE YOU DOING ABOUT IT?

8. "was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ."

- a) John, who was overseeing the churches in Asia Minor, was exiled to the Island of Patmos because of his ministry and his influence as one of the few remaining Apostles of Jesus Christ.
 - b) According to Eusebius, the early church historian, when Domitian came into power (A.D. 81-96) he emphasized his role as Divine Ruler and required his subjects to demonstrate allegiance to himself through Emperor worship. This led to increased persecution against Christians. Domitian had John arrested, brought to Rome, condemned and boiled in oil. John miraculously survived this and so was exiled to a penal colony on the small, barren, rocky Island of Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor, about 32 miles from Ephesus in the Aegean Sea. After his exile on Patmos (c.96 A.D.), John returned to Ephesus where he eventually died.
- Ω [see 'PATMOS' in Appendix]

B. JOHN GETS 'BEAMED UP' - "10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day," - DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES ...

1. IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY - The revelation came on a Sunday.

- a) "*On the Lord's Day*" may be the first usage and "coinage" of the phrase which became a standard description later.
 - b) CS - "It seems that early in the Church Sunday was referred to as the Lord's day, being the eighth day and the first day of the week. Sunday was the day in which Jesus rose from the dead. It was a day when the Church was accustomed to gathering together. Paul told the Corinthians to bring their offerings when they gathered together on the first day of the week so there would be no collections when he came. [31] In Acts the Christians gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread. [32] Early in Church history Sunday was called the Lord's day. It was not a change that was brought about by Constantine, which the Seventh-Day Adventists would have you believe. In fact, Tertullian, who wrote almost two centuries before Constantine, said that Sunday should be the only day on which the Church would have communion, because Jesus rose on the first day of the week. Of course that was his logic and not necessarily true, but it shows that the first day of the week was set apart early in Church history as a time for the worship of Christ. John may have been saying that he was in the Spirit or in a spiritual trance on Sunday."
- Ω [see 'KEEPING SABBATH' in Appendix]

2. TRANSPORTED IN THE SPIRIT UNTO THE DAY OF THE LORD

- a) CS - With equal authority from the Greek, Rev. 1:10a could be translated, "I was in the Spirit unto the day of the Lord" rather than "on the Lord's day." This would mean that the Lord took him out in time to the day of the Lord, and John recorded these events as though he were actually there.
- FULFILLING A PERSONAL PROPHECY? - John 21:20-22 "20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me.""
- b) John probably couldn't solve the issue himself
 - (1) cf. Paul 2 Cor. 12:2-4 - "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know - God knows. And I know that this man - whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows - was caught up to paradise." niv

3. BOTH ARE LIKELY TRUE: It was probably on the Lord's day that He was in the Spirit and was transported unto the Day of the Lord in order to "see" and "hear" the things which he was commanded to write about.

4. ***"and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,"*** - Actual trumpets play an important part in the Heavenly scene and the Lord's return. However, this is a description of the power of the Lord's Voice.

- a) i.e. 'like a stack of Marshall Amps set on 10'
- b) Revelation is a Loud Book: 'loud' = 'megas' - loud or great found 75xs in Revelation
 - Ω [see 'REVELATION IS A LOUD BOOK' in Appendix]
- c) More on the Voice of the Lord in v.15

5. ***"11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."***

- a) DANIEL'S PROPHECY WAS SEALED
 - (1) Dan. 12:9 - *"He replied, 'Go you way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.'" niv*
- b) PAUL WASN'T PERMITTED TO TELL WHAT HE SAW
 - (1) 2Cor.12:4 - *"And I know that this man - whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows - was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell." niv*
- c) BUT JOHN IS TOLD TO WRITE 12X IN REV.
 - (1) Only once is John told not to write (10:41)
 - (2) The Revelation isn't a private affair - but for all who serve the Lord. [Rev.1:1]
- d) More on 7 Churches in Chapter 2
 - [Ω see 'Writing Materials' in Appendix]

C. WHAT JOHN SAW - *"12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."*

1. Note: This is the only description we have of Jesus in the N.T. other than the brief descriptions of the Transfiguration.

- a) Matthew 17:2 *"and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light."*

2. However, there are many other places where we see similar descriptions:

- a) Daniel 7:9-14 *"9 I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; ... 13 I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed."*

- b) Ezekiel 43:2 *"And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory."*

3. **"seven golden lampstands,"** - lit. "light holders" - These were stands for the Light - not the Light Itself.



a) This would be reminiscent of the golden menorah in the Tabernacle - a candelabrum with three branches protruding from each side of the main stem.

(1) Ex. 25:31-40; 37:17-24

(2) However, the description here is of 7 separate lampstands

b) These lampstands are identified as the 7 Churches which are in Asia - v.20 - "... the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."

c) The Church is to be a Lampstand from which the Spirit shines

(1) Matt. 5:14,16 - "You are the light of the world..." "...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."



4. **"13 and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man,"**

a) **"Son of Man"** is a title used 85x in the Gospels - all but 2x by Jesus Himself.

(1) Dan. 7:13 - "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power;..." niv

b) **in the midst of the seven lampstands** - Where is Jesus? In the midst of the churches!

(1) Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

(2) CS - Jesus is in the midst of His Church as we gather together in His name. He is present with us. He has promised to bestow upon us His love, His grace, His kindness, His mercy, His word.

c) Note: It was the High Priest who was to trim the lamps and keep the oil supply filled.

(1) Leviticus 24:2-4 "2 Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. 3 Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron [the High Priest] shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; it shall be a statute forever in your generations. 4 He shall be in charge of the lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD continually."

d) Jesus is our High Priest forever. Hebrews 4:14 "... we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,"

(1) He pours forth the 'oil' of the Holy Spirit into our hearts to make us a Light for Him!

5. **"clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. "**

a) Symbols of - Righteousness, Priesthood, Purity, Divinity

b) Gold is a symbol of Divinity.

6. **"14 His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow"**

a) The Ancient of Days - Dan. 7:9 - "... the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire;"

7. **"and His eyes like a flame of fire."** - He sees all, knows all, and refines all who come to Him

a) Hebrews 4:13 "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

b) Malachi 3:2 - "But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire And like launderer's soap."

c) 1 Corinthians 3:13 "each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is."

8. "15 His feet were like fine brass as if refined in a furnace,"

a) Brass/ Bronze = Judgement - Like the bronze altar where sin was judged (Ex. 27:1-8) or the Bronze Serpent lifted up in the wilderness (Num. 21), which was a symbol of Jesus as our Sin-Bearer Who took our Judgement (John 3:14-15).

b) HIS FEET WILL TRAMPLE OVER HIS ENEMIES

(1) Isa. 63:1-6 - "2 Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no-one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing." niv

(2) cf. Rev. 19:11-16 - "13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood," niv

(a) Ps. 110:1 - "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'." [cf. 1 Cor. 15:24-28]

9. "and His voice as the sound of many waters."

a) Ezekiel 43:2 "And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory."

b) THE VOICE THAT CALLED THE WORLD INTO BEING

(1) Ps. 33:6 - "By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made.."

c) THE VOICE THAT WILL RAISE THE DEAD

(1) Jn. 5:28-29 - "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out - those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned." niv

d) NOTE: "white noise" - His Voice Will be Heard on Every Frequency!

10. "16 He had in His right hand seven stars,"

a) These Stars are identified as the Angels of the 7 Churches - v.20 "... The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches ..."

b) Jesus not only walks in the midst of the churches, He holds the Angels of the Churches in His Hand!

11. "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword,"

a) Eph. 6:17 "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;"

b) Hebrews 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

(1) Note: This type of sword was used by the romans for killing by a stabbing action

c) A picture of the Power of the Word of God spoken by The Son of God!

(1) Isaiah 11:4 "... He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked."

(2) 2 Thess. 2:8 - "And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of His mouth and destroy by the splendor of His coming." niv

d) Note: We will be judged by what we've done with His Words - John 12:48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day."

12. "and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."

a)Ps.84:11 - *"For the LORD God is a sun and a shield.."* niv

b)Ps. 104:2 - *"He wraps Himself in light as with a garment.."* niv

c)Matt. 17:2 - *"There He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light."* niv

d)*"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light."* (Rev. 21:23)

e)1 Timothy 6:14-16 *"14 that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen."*

13.NOTE: CS - This is the only description of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. We have one description of Him in the Old Testament in Daniel.[38] Revelation 1:13-16 is not a description of a suffering Savior but of our exalted Lord in His glory in heaven. John sees Him in His glory and describes Him in that glory. Jesus said in His prayer in John 17, "Father, I would that they that you have given me, might see me in my glory that I had with thee before the world was." [39] He asked for that glory to be returned, and then He asked that we might see Him in that glory. Here John sees Jesus and what He'll look like when we see Him. His face is shining like the sun at noontime. His head and His hair are like wool, white as snow. His eyes are like flames of fire and His feet like fine brass heated to the point of incandescence. His words sound like a great waterfall. Out of His mouth is a sharp two-edged sword.

D.JOHN'S RESPONSES ARE A PICTURE FOR US

1.He Heard The Voice of Jesus

2.He Turned Around [Repentance]

a)Dan. 12:10 - *"None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand."*

b)2 Cor 4:3-4 - *"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God."*

3.He Saw Jesus Like Never Before

4.He Fell at His Feet

5.He Experienced the Touch of Jesus

E. JOHN'S REACTION - "17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."

1. The sheer power and Glory of this vision of Jesus caused John to fall at His feet in a complete collapse.
2. The intensity of Daniel's visions caused him to be sick for days.
 - a) "And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it." Daniel 8:27, NKJV.

F. THE LORD'S RESPONSE - ENCOURAGEMENT - "But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."

1. "He laid His right hand on me" - The Touch that brings Life and Strength and Healing and Hope!

a) Note: "**right hand**" - is found over 100+ times in the Bible where it carries a significance beyond designating right vs left.

(1) The Position of Preeminence and Honor -

(a) Ps 110:1 - The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My **right hand**, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."

(b) 1Pe 3:22 who has gone into heaven and is at the **right hand** of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

(2) The Hand of Power

(a) Ps 118:16 The **right hand** of the LORD is exalted; The **right hand** of the LORD does valiantly.

(b) Ex 15:6 "Your **right hand**, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your **right hand**, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.

2. "Do not be afraid;"

a) John had heard those words from Jesus before in a similar setting.

(1) "1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." Matthew 17:1-7

b) "Do not be afraid" or "Fear not" found over 43x in Bible spoken by or from God or an angel.

(1) "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

(2) "Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent;" Acts 18:9

3. Many may say to us "Do not be afraid;" but it makes a difference when the One Who says it is the One Who Can Also Say ... "I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. ..."

a) There is only One Who fits this description: Jesus! ...

b) The message? Do not be afraid. He is God and He is *for* us!

c) "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31

G."*... And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*"

1. Keys are a symbol of Access & Authority

a) If I have the keys, then I can gain Access. If the keys have been given to me, then I have been given authority over the lock and whoever and whatever it confines - and I can control who gets in and who gets out.

2. Jesus has the Keys of Hades.

a) In order to understand what it means that Jesus has the keys of Hades, we need to see that there is a History Attached to Hell - a past, present and future. And it's very helpful for us if we understand the History of Hell.

(1)[Ω see 'The HISTORY of HELL' in Appendix]

(2)CS - Jesus triumphed over hell. He triumphed over death. He rose triumphant. He said, "I have the keys of hell and death," by which He was speaking of releasing the prisoners. In Luke's gospel, Jesus described hell as being in two compartments divided by a gulf. On one side they were being comforted, the other tormented. Isaiah prophesied concerning Jesus Christ: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek... to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." [43] Referring to those that had died, those that were captive in hell, in the grave, Jesus said, "I have the keys of hell and of death." He opened up Hades and released those souls that were in prison. Paul said that He who has ascended is the same one who first descended into the lower parts of the earth. When He ascended He led the captives from their captivity. [44] Peter said that Jesus went and preached to those souls that were in prison. [45] Jesus opened up hell and delivered Abraham and the others who by faith were believing and waiting for the coming Messiah.

3. Jesus also has the Keys of Death Itself.

a) "14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Hebrews 2:14-15

b) "54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

4.[Ω see 'JOHN THE VETERAN' in Appendix]

II. THE INSPIRED OUTLINE OF REVELATION "*19Write,*"

A. "*the things which you have seen,*" - Chpt.1

B. "*and the things which are*" - Chpts. 2-3

C. "*and the things which will take place after this.*" [meta tauta] - Chpts. 4-22

1. "After these things [meta tauta] I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this [meta tauta]." (Rev. 4:1)

III.THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING COMES FROM JESUS - *"20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches."*

A.INSIGHT

1.7 Lampstands = 7 Churches

2.7 Stars = 7 'Angels' of the 7 Churches

B.THE KEY: COMING TO JESUS AND HEARING HIS WORD.

1.Mk. 4:10-11 - *"10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables". niv*

a)cf. Rev. 1:12 - *"..And having turned I saw.."*

C.WHO ARE THESE ANGELS? [see next Chapter]

1.[Ω see 'PROPHETIC VISION AS HEAVENLY LANGUAGE' in Appendix]

WHAT IS NOW

TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

REVELATION CHAPTERS 2 & 3

I. THE SEVEN CHURCHES - *"To the seven churches which are in Asia"*

A. THEY ARE TO BE UNDERSTOOD FROM 4 PERSPECTIVES

1. LITERAL: As Messages to 7 literal, historical Churches [Roman Asia = our Asia Minor]
2. PROPHETIC: As a Prophetic Overview of the Church Age
 - a) The 7 Churches contained problems faced by all churches at all times. However, prophetically we see that certain traits will be dominant at different times.
3. GENERAL: As Messages to All Churches of All Times - i.e. "if the shoe fits - wear it!"
 - a) Truly, we can find representatives of each of the 7 Churches in the world today. cf. The Persecuted Church (Smyrna) today.
4. PERSONAL: As A Word to Each Of Us Who Has Ears to Hear
5. NOTE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBERS - SEVEN Churches
 - a) There were more than 7 Churches in Asia. Why were only 7 addressed in Revelation?
 - b) CS - The number seven is mentioned over and over throughout this prophecy. Seven is sometimes called God's perfect number because it represents completeness or totality. Seven days make a complete week, seven notes comprise the musical scale, and seven colors are in the rainbow. Thus, seven churches would indicate the complete Church.

B. THEY FOLLOW A PATTERN (see example below)

1. CHURCH
2. CHRIST
3. COMPLIMENT
4. COMPLAINT
5. COUNSEL
6. REWARD

7. [Ω see '7 Churches Chart' in Appendix] ???

- a) "Each message begins with a description of Christ given by Himself and then includes a description taken from the vision in Chapter 1.
- b) To each Church Jesus declares His knowledge concerning them...
- c) To each church there is a blessing to the overcomers. It is interesting to note that in every church, even the most apostate, there are the individual overcomers who truly know Jesus Christ."

	Ephesus The Apostolic Church Rev. 2:1-7	Smyrna The Persecuted Church Rev. 2:8-11	Pergamum The Indulged Church Rev. 2:12-17	Thyatira The Pagan Church Rev. 2:18-29	Sardis The Dead Church Rev. 3:1-6	Philadelphia The Church Christ Loved Rev. 3:7-13	Laodicea The Lukewarm Church Rev. 3:14-22
	A.D. 33-100	A.D. 100-312	A.D. 312-606	A.D. 606-Tribulation	A.D. 1520-Tribulation	A.D. 1750-Rapture	A.D. 1900-Tribulation
Commendation	Good works, labor, patience	Works, tribulation, poverty	Works. Held fast my name, has not denied my faith.	Good works, love, service, faith, patience.	Works. A name that you live	Works. Missions. Little Strength. Kept my word. Not denied my name.	Not one word!
Condemnation	You have left your first love.	Not one word!	You have false teachers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans	You allow Jezebel to teach idolatry and compromise	You are dead. Works not complete	Not one word!	You are lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.
Counsel	Remember from where you are fallen and repent.	Rear not. Be faithful.	Repent.	Hold fast what you have until I come.	Watch. Strengthen the things that remain. Remember hold fast and repent.	Hold fast what you have.	Buy gold tried by fire and white raiment. Anoint your eyes. Be zealous and repent.
Challenge	Will give to eat of the tree of life.	Will not be hurt by the second death.	Will give hidden manna and a white stone.	Will give millennial leadership and the Morning Star	Will be clothed in white raiment. I will not blot his name out of the book of life	Will make him a pillar and write upon him the name of God and My new name	Will grant to sit with me on my throne.

II. THE ANGELS OF THE CHURCHES - *"To the angel of the church "*

A. WHO ARE THESE ANGELS? *"20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, ... The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, ..."*

1. PASTORS? Many expositors say that these are the pastors of the churches. They mention that the greek word *aggelos* has the basic meaning of "messenger"

a) CS - "They generally refer to divine messengers, supernatural beings created by God. But the word literally is "Messenger". The "seven stars" are the 'messengers' of the seven churches. They could refer to the ministers of those particular churches."

b) cf. Dan. 12:3 - *"Those who lead many to righteousness will shine like the stars in the universe."* niv

2. MESSENGERS?

a) 7 *Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.* (Col 4:7-8) niv

b) Phil. 2:14-16 - *"... you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.."*

3. ANGELIC BEINGS?

a) Although the word can mean "messenger", of the 188 times it appears in the N.T., it refers to real angels in all but only about 6 instances. It appears 76 times in the Revelation and clearly refers to angels in all other instances [except, perhaps, for the 'Mighty Angel' of Chpt. 10].

b) Stars are elsewhere identified with angels

(1) *"Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit."* (Revelation 9:1)

EPHESUS: The Apostolic Church

Revelation 2:1-7

INTRO: Although the church has little to fear from the outside, it has much to be concerned about on the inside, for the church is not perfect - but far from it. Even at the time of John's writing, the fire of love had begun to wane a bit in the early Church. When they first started out they were fervent. They went everywhere preaching the Gospel. The love of Christ was driving them throughout the world. Now, they were already becoming a bit established, leaving the first love."

I. THE CHURCH - *"To the angel of the church of Ephesus write:"*

A. Ephesus was the capital of proconsular Asia, which was the western part of Asia Minor. In the time of the Romans it bore the title of "the first and greatest metropolis of Asia." Home of the magic arts and of the mystery-cults. It was distinguished for the Temple of Diana; and for its theater, which was the largest in the world, capable of containing 50,000 spectators. It was, like all ancient theaters, open to the sky. Here were exhibited the fights of wild beasts and of men with beasts.
B. NOTE: CS - "Historically, Ephesus is the early Church, the Apostolic Church that existed up until the time of the death of John (c.99 A.D.).

1. [Ω see 'Ephesus' in APPENDIX]

II. CHRIST - 2:1b - *"These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:"*

A. HIS CARE - He holds the angel of each church in His hand

B. HIS CLOSENESS - He walks among His churches

C. THE HIGH PRIEST CARING FOR THE CANDLES

1. W.A. Criswell - "It was the assignment of the High Priest to go into the Holy Place and there to trim and light and care for the seven golden lampstands. In the glorious picture of our Lord here in the Revelation, He is dressed in His regal and priestly robes, and He is walking in the midst of these seven golden lampstands. As He walks among His lampstands, He pours in sacred oil, He takes out the impurities, He trims the wick and He makes the light to shine. He walks among His churches with eyes as a flame of fire, with penetration and with accuracy. He sees everything among His people. Our eyes are covered with the smoke of the world and we cannot see very well. But our Lord sees perfectly and penetratingly."

III. HIS COMMENT - 2:2-3 - *"I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 "and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."*

A. NOTHING IS HID FROM HIM - *I know* - Heb. 4:13 - *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.*

B. THEIR FAITHFUL SERVICE -

1. *your works*, - ergon - "energy"

a) An energetic church full of good and godly activity. Good works are appreciated - we need to be an active church

2. *your labor*, - kopon - work that costs something

a) They were full of work that takes commitment, sacrifice, planning. Hard work is appreciated - we need faithfulness & commitment

3. *your patience*, Perseverance

a) hupomene - "to abide under" - they stuck with their commitments whether or not they saw immediate fruit even if it invited persecution and hardship

b) *"and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary."* - Perseverance is needed and appreciated

C.THEIR FIRM STAND - ***"3 ... and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;***

1.PATIENT IN SERVICE - IMPATIENT WITH DECEIVERS

a)DECEIVERS WILL COME

(1)Acts 20:29-31a [to the Ephesians] - *"I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!..." niv*

b)WE MUST TEST THEM

(1)1Jn.4:1 - *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."* niv

(2)Acts 17:11 - *"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."* niv

(3)Matt. 24:4 - *"... 'Watch out that no one deceives you.'"* niv

c)CS - "In the early Church there were itinerant ministers who went from church to church. There were two companies: those who were apostles (they claimed apostleship and the authority of apostleship), and those who went around as prophets ministering to the local bodies. In time these traveling ministers became a problem in the Church because of false prophets. These deceivers would come into a church and really rip things up. To guard against this, a manual was written to warn the Church against the false prophets and how to spot them [The Didache - Teaching of The Twelve [Ω see 'DIDACHE' in APPENDIX]. If one came along and prophesied, "Thus saith the Lord, 'Prepare a big turkey dinner'!"—he was not to eat of it. If he ate of it, he was a false prophet. If he declared to you by the Spirit that you were to give him gifts, he was a false prophet. He was to stay for two days. If he stayed any longer and tried to sponge off you, he was a false prophet. This advice was intended to keep these itinerants on the move and to prevent them from profiting from the churches."

D.THEY HAD FORSAKEN THEIR FIRST LOVE - 2:4 - ***"4 "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love."***

1.LEFT BEHIND [NOT LOST]

a)You don't lose it, you leave it. If you lose something, you never know where to pick it up again. If you leave something, you know where to pick it up again. Jesus tells us how to pick it up again."

2.THEIR FIRST LOVE - αγάπη

a)Matt. 24:12 niv - *"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love [αγάπη] of most will grow cold."* [note: even "agape" can grow cold and be left behind]

E.THEIR FAITHFUL SERVICE HAD BECOME FORGETFUL SERVICE

1.They had forgotten the most important thing - loving JESUS

a) Jesus exhorts them to ***"Remember therefore from where you have fallen;"***

b)"I can have a lot of things going for me. I can be the hardest and most diligent worker in a church. But if I have not love, it profits me nothing."

F.FORGETFUL SERVICE BECOMES COLD, LOVE-LESS, SERVICE

1.THEY HAD LOVE-LESS ORTHODOXY

a)Note: there were no doctrinal issues here

b)"Ephesus was a church that was still going through the motions but they had left the emotions. They were no longer motivated by the love of Jesus Christ. They were now being motivated by pressure, habit, form, or ritual."

2.THE LOVE OF GOD SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPELLING THEM

a)2 Cor. 5:14-15 - *"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him Who died for them and was raised again."* niv

G.HIS CORRECTION • REMEMBER-REPENT-RETURN - 2:5a - ***"5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works,"***

1. REMEMBER - REGAIN GOD'S PERSPECTIVE

a) WE HAVE BEEN SEATED IN THE HEAVENLIES

(1) Eph. 2:6-7 - *"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus."* niv

b) WE HAVE FALLEN FROM A GREAT HEIGHT

(1) 1Cor. 13:1-3 - *"If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."* niv

c) WE LOSE OUR FIRST LOVE WHEN WE NO LONGER ABIDE IN HIS FIRST LOVE

(1) 1Jn. 4:19 - *"We love because He first loved us."*

(2) Are we helpless then? No! We Need to Follow His Counsel

2. REPENT

a) Ps. 51:10-12 - *"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."* niv

b) "To most of the churches Jesus said, "Repent." There were only two to whom He didn't have to say "Repent."

3. RETURN - HOW DO WE RESTORE OUR FIRST LOVE? - ***".. do the first works,"***

a) SEEK HIM

(1) Hos. 10:12 - *"Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the LORD, until He comes and showers righteousness on you."* niv

(2) cf. Ps. 73:25-26 - *"Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."* niv

b) MAKE THIS PRAYER YOURS

(1) Ps. 27:4 - *"One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek HIM in His temple."* niv

c) cf. Marriage Model - cf. Ephesus - "darling, dear"

H.HIS WARNING - 2:5b - ***"...or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place--unless you repent."***

1. "Unless there was a repentance, a return to that first love, Jesus would remove the candlestick from its place. Where was its place? In the presence of Christ, for He walked in the midst of the candlesticks. Jesus is saying, "I will not stay around a loveless church." This is a very solemn consideration."

a) What do *you* do with a burned out light bulb?

2. A CHURCH WHERE JESUS IS NO LONGER PRESENT

a) This is not a matter of salvation - it is a matter of fellowship

3. A CHURCH LIKE SAMSON - DOESN'T KNOW THE LORD HAS DEPARTED

a) Judges 16:20 - *"Then she called, 'Samson, the Philistines are upon you!' He awoke from his sleep and thought, 'I'll go out as before and shake myself free.' But he did not know that the LORD had left him."* niv

4. A CHURCH THAT IS NO LONGER A WITNESS FOR JESUS

a) Light is dimmed by distance from HIM

b) Loveless Christianity becomes 'Lightless' Christianity

c) Like Laodicea - luke-warm, ready to be rejected, with Jesus on the outside, knocking to get in and become one with us in the sweet supper of loving communion.

I.HIS ENCOURAGEMENT - 2:6 - ***"But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."***

1.THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANS?

a)The only clear identity is from the word itself

(1)"Nicolaitans" comes from 2 words meaning: "overcome" and "laity" - i.e. to "overcome [or rule over] the laity [people]"

b)The reference to the "false apostles" is consistent with this

(1)Those who falsely seek authority do it in order to rule over others

(2)Jesus called them "wicked men"

(a)Jesus gave us the pattern - Mk.10:42-45 - *"Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.'* niv

(b)1Pet. 5:3 - Be shepherds ... *"not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."* niv

c)Beware of the Nicolaitans of today

(1)Those who claim a greater authority than you

(2)Those who claim to have "new revelation" from GOD

2.Jesus hates everything that separates us from Him - ***"...the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate."***

IV.CLOSING - 2:7a - ***"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."***

A.AN EAR TO HEAR COMES FROM A HEART TO DO

1.Jn.7:17 - *"If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own."* niv

2.This is a call to individuals - avoid the "convoy mentality"

B.HIS REWARD - 2:7b - ***"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."***

C.THE TREE OF LIFE IS OURS IN JESUS - FIRST PLACED IN THE GARDEN - KEPT FROM FALLEN MAN - RETURNED IN THE NEW JERUSALEM

1.Rev. 22:1-2 - *"1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."*

SMYRNA: The Persecuted Church

Rev. 2:8-11

I. THE CHURCH: - *8 "To the angel of the church of Smyrna write:"*

A. "Historically, Smyrna is the church that followed Ephesus. It continued for the next couple of centuries (2nd to 4th centuries) and went through such tremendous persecution from the Roman government. It is thought that perhaps as many as six million Christians were martyred for their faith during the Roman government's attempt to wipe out Christianity."

B. Smyrna received its name from one of its principal products - myrrh, which is fitting for this message regarding suffering

1. Myrrh was produced by crushing the plant so the fragrance would be released - a picture of the fragrant testimony that often results from persecution.

2. Myrrh was included in the formula for the sacred anointing oil - Ex.30:22-30

a)- *"The LORD said to Moses, 'Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much that is, 250 shekels of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels of fragrant cane, 500 shekels of cassia - all according to the sanctuary shekel - and a hin of olive oil. Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil. Then use it to anoint the Tent of Meeting, the ark of the Testimony, the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy.'"*

3. Myrrh was presented, along with gold and frankincense, at the Lord's birth - Mt. 2

4. Myrrh was offered [along with wine] to the Lord on the Cross - Mk.14

5. Myrrh was used to embalm the dead - used in preparing the Lord's body for burial - Jn.19

6. Myrrh will *not* be included with the gold and frankincense which will be presented to Him after His return

a) Isa.60:6 - *"... And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord."* niv

II. CHRIST: - *8 ...These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:"*

A. "By reminding them of His triumph over death, He's giving them courage and strength."

1. "54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 55 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?' 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

III. COMMENT

A. AFFLICTED AND POOR - because of their stand for Christ - *9 "I know your works, "*

1. **tribulation**, - thlipsis - crushing pressure - used of the grinding of wheat into flour by the grinding millstone - also used of pressure which squeezes juice out of the grapes

2. **and poverty** - lit. 'abject poverty, beggary' - same words for poor and rich in Jas. 2:5

a) *"...Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him?"*

3. The Trade Unions [guilds] were organized around pagan gods and their temples - the people would have had no problem with Christianity if the Christians would have added a statue of Jesus to the Pantheon as one more god. It was the refusal of the believers to do this that separated them from their culture and marked them as anti-social and destructive bringing job discrimination and persecution.

4. Smyrna was the center of Caesar worship. In 196BC it was the first city to erect a temple to Rome. In 26AD it won the honor of building a temple to Tiberius, the reigning emperor. It was by law that every subject of the Empire was forced to take a pinch of incense and burn it in the temple dedicated to the Emperor. He had to confess, in the burning of that little pinch of incense, that Caesar was lord. The worship was not a test of his orthodoxy; it was a test of his political loyalty. For, after he burned the incense and said that Caesar is lord [Kaisar Kurios], he could go his way and worship any god and goddess he pleased. But this was the one thing a Christian would not do. Thus they were viewed as disloyal traitors to the state.

5.2 Tim. 3:12 - *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, while evil men and impostors go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

B. YET THEY WERE RICH - (**but you are rich**);

1. 2 Cor. 8:9 - "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." niv

a) Acts 3:6 - "Then Peter said, 'Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.'" niv [cf. story of St. Francis and the Pope]

C. OUR PERSPECTIVE OF POVERTY VS RICHES will depend on whether we look by carnal sight [materialism] or by spiritual faith

1. Matt. 6:19-21 - "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." niv

2. cf. Laodicea - Rev. 3:17 - "'Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked--"

3. There are False teachers hurting the church today

a) Teaching God wants us all to be materially rich & wealthy

b) Teaching that wealth reflects our faith

c) Teaching us to name it and claim it

4. They are robbed of the truth

a) • 1 Tim. 6:3-10 • - 3 If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4 he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5 and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain. 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. niv

(1) Lk. 16:10-12 - "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

(2) Jas. 4:1-4 - "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."

D.SLANDERED BY FALSE JEWS - SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN - "9 ...and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan."

1.False Jews

a)"Most of the persecution that came in the early Church was instigated and inspired by the Jews. Wherever Paul went, the Jews followed him and stirred up agitation against him."

b)Note: There was, historically, a large Jewish community in Smyrna which was very active in persecuting the church.

2.As false Apostles are "ministers of Satan", so false Jews are a "synagogue of Satan".

a)2 Cor. 11:13-15 - "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." niv

b)Rom. 2:28-29 - "A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, not is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. such a man's praise is not from men, but from God." niv

(1)cf. also Rom. 9:6-8

(2)Jn.8:39-41,44 - [Jesus to Jews] 'You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.'

3.There Are "Judaizers" Today - Legal Zealots - Spiritual Elite

a)Gal. 3:10-11 niv - "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law,' Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith'." Acts 15:1,5,8-11

(1) - "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: 'Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.' ... Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, 'The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.' ... [Peter] 'God, who knows the heart, showed that He accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.'"

b)Col. 2:13-17 - "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ." "When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." niv

E.DO NOT FEAR - 10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer...."

1.Not even death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus

a)Rom. 8:38-39 - "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." niv

b)Jesus is the First and the Last - Who Died and now Lives.

2. [Ω see 'WHY SUFFERING FOR BELIEVERS?' in Appendix]

F. THE DEVIL WILL TEST YOU - *"...Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days."*

1. "The devil works through people even as God works through people. We need to realize that Satan is behind the inspiration and works of many people." (the ultimate 'conspiracy')
2. The "ten days" could refer to the ten great periods of persecution under the Roman government in the 2nd & 3rd Centuries.
 - (1) NERO - 64-68AD
 - (2) DOMITIAN - 90-95AD
 - (3) TRAJAN - 104-117AD
 - (4) AURELIUS - 161-180AD
 - (5) SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS - 200-211AD
 - (6) MAXIMIN - 235-237AD
 - (7) DECIUS - 250-253AD
 - (8) VALERIAN - 257-260AD
 - (9) AURELIAN - 270-275AD
 - (10) DIOCLETIAN - 303-312AD

(a) One problem with this is the fact that various commentators give different lists of Emperors and persecutions. [cf. Smith, Lockyer, Fruchtenbaum, etc]
3. Or it may refer to a General but short Period of Time
4. Also: Ten = the number of Man's completion
5. The Basic Truth - Smyrna could expect more persecution including imprisonment

G. BE FAITHFUL - *"...Be faithful until death,..."*

1. "If the "angel" refers to the local bishop of the church, the bishop of Smyrna was Polycarp, a disciple of John, martyred in his 90's."
 - a) When asked by his heathen judges to recant his Christian faith, he replied, "For score and six years have I served the Lord, and He never wronged me: How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?" When pressured further he said: 'Since thou art vainly urging that I should swear by the fortune of Caesar and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me. I am a Christian.' Later again he said, 'I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not change.' - Polycarp replied: 'Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little, is extinguished. But thou art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment reserved for the ungodly. But, why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.' His prayer in the flames was: 'I thank Thee that Thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day and of this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs in the cup of Thy Christ.' and died.

H. BEYOND THE CROSS THERE IS A CROWN - *" and I will give you the crown of life."*

1. cf. Paul - 2 Tim. 4:6-8 - *"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have run the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day - and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing."* niv
2. There Are Various Crowns [Ω see 'CROWNS' in Appendix]
3. THE CROWNS ARE TO BE GIVEN TO CHRIST
 - a) Rev 4:9-11 - *"9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: 11 "You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

I. WHAT HE DOES NOT SAY - NO REBUKE FOR SMYRNA

1. "Jesus has nothing bad to say about the church of Smyrna. No call to repentance. Smyrna is the church that will be purified by persecution."
2. "The purifying fires of affliction caused the lamp of testimony to burn more brilliantly."

IV. CLOSING - **11** *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. ..."*

A. WHO HAS AN EAR?

1. Those Who Belong to God

a) Jn. 8:47 - *"He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."* niv

2. His Sheep.

a) Jn. 10:4-5, 27-30 - *"When he [the good shepherd] has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ... "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."* niv

B. VICTORY OVER THE SECOND DEATH - **"11 ... He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."**

1. "The second death is explained to us in Revelation 20."

2. Rev. 20:14-15 - ***"14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."***

3. REMEMBER:

a) Jn. 16:33 - *"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* niv

b) 2 Cor. 4:16-18 - *"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."* niv

PERGAMOS: Married to the World

Rev. 2:12-17 [Notes taken from Raul Ries, Chuck Smith, Chuck Missler and Ray Stedman]

· INTRODUCTION: This church is in sharp contrast to the church at Smyrna. Smyrna was enduring persecution; this church was faced with enticement and corruption.

I. CHURCH - *"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write,"*

A. Pergamos means "Elevation" and "Marriage" gamoj *gamos* = marriage (mono(1)gamy, bi(2)gamy, poly (many)gamy, etc.) [Ω see 'Meaning of Pergamos' in Appendix] - It represents the church married to worldly government and power. As the church became *married* to governmental authority and *elevated* to a place of acceptance, it declined in spiritual blessing and power.

B. Prophetically, this is the period from the accession of Constantine in 320 A.D. to the rise of the papacy in the 6th century. During that period of time the great councils of the church were held. But it was also the time when the church became married to the world. Constantine brought many pagan practices into the church where they were accepted. It was the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church.

1. [Ω see 'Pergamos: The Church Married to the World' in Appendix]

C. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. From 231 BC to 133 BC Pergamos had been the capital of the Attalia Kingdom, which was one of the parts into which the empire of Alexander the Great broke up. In 133 BC its dying King had willed it into the possession of the Roman Empire. Pergamos had become the capital of the province of Asia by declaration of the Romans and that honor was retained down to AD 130.

2. Pergamos had one of the most famous libraries in the world, containing over 200,000 books.

3. Pergamos was also the center of the worship of "Asklepios" the god of healing whose emblem was the Serpent (John describes Pergamos as the place where "*Satan's seat is.*"). The Temple had its medical words, schools, priests, and votaries.

4. Behind Pergamos there arose a conical hill which was dotted with the temples and the shrines of the pagan gods. Two of the greatest shrines were the Shrine of Zeus and Athena which were Greek gods.

5. Zeus is said to have been born there. The great altar stood on a foundation 125 ft by 115 ft, over 50 ft high, set in a colonnaded enclosure (Satan's throne? Rev 2:13).

6. Pergamos was also a city where Caesar worship was intense, a city dedicated to glorying in the worship of Caesar.

7. In Pergamos a Christian's life was in jeopardy because of his commitment to Jesus Christ.

II. CHRIST - *"These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:"*

A. That is the symbol of the Word of God coming from his lips. cf. Hebrews 4:12

B. When Peter finished his message on Pentecost, the people were cut to the heart. They cried, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" That's the power of the Word.

III. COMMENT

A. - 13 *"I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is...."*

1. Also referred to as the city *"where Satan dwells"*

2. 'Satan's throne' may refer to the great altar of Zeus on the hillside overlooking the city. It was a great chair, or throne, forty feet high, and anyone could look up there at any time and see it.

3. BAR May/June 2006: "In sum, the "throne of Satan" in Revelation 2:13 would have evoked both Zeus and the Roman emperor for the earliest audiences of Revelation."

4. [Ω see 'Satan's Throne' in Appendix]

B. *"And you hold fast to My name,"*

1. *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

C. "...and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells."

1. "Jesus knows the works of the church of Pergamos— holding fast to His name in a pagan world, not denying the faith even at the martyrdom of Antipas, one of its members.
2. We do not know much about this man. Tradition says he was roasted to death in a brass bull that was heated to a white heat.
3. *Antipas "Against All"*: Simeon Metaphrastes has a legendary story that Antipas, in Domitian's reign, was shut up in a red-hot brazen bull, and ended his life in thanksgivings and prayers. Hengstenberg makes the name symbolical, meaning one standing out "against all" for Christ. [C.M.]

D.14 "But I have a few things against you, ..."

E. "...because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality."

1. The worship of these pagan deities was usually marked by the most abominable practices. The pagan temples had priestesses who were actually prostitutes, and the revenue for most of the pagan temples was gained through prostitution. Part of their religious rites involved sexual orgies with these priestesses. In that area of Asia the Gnostics said that everything material was evil. Their belief was that God had nothing to do with the material world. Therefore, it didn't matter what you did with your body.
2. In Pergamos some were saying, "We can do whatever we want! We're Christians and we're covered by grace. The body doesn't count, anyhow.'" They advocated worshipping in these pagan rites. This was the doctrine of Balaam—the worship of idols and committing fornication.
3. You can read about it in Numbers 25. Balaam was a false prophet who had been hired by Balak, the King of Moab, to curse Israel, but every time he tried to curse them words of blessing came out of his mouth. So Balaam advised them to have beautiful maidens parade before the young men of Israel, enticing them into sexual immorality. Since these women were worshipers of idols by that means he introduced idol worship into the tribes of Israel.
4. The counterpart we face in our churches today is the practice of pornography and fornication among Christians and the acceptance of couples living together without marriage. That is the error of Balaam.

F.15 "Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate."

1. The church had gone from the 'deeds' of the Nicolaitans to the 'doctrine' of the Nicolaitans.
2. "the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes"—the establishment of a priesthood.
3. It is also seen today in spiritual leaders who are lifted up above the laity.

G.16 "Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."

Satan Is Real

In Character: murderer (Jn 8:44); deceiver (Rev 12:9; 2 Cor 11:3); liar (Jn 8:44); sinner (1 Jn 3:8)

and Domain: vast demonic kingdom (Mt 25:41; Rev 12:7); world System (1 Jn 5:19); local; not omnipresent.

Satan's Titles

- "adversary" 1 Tim 5:14; 1 Pet 5:8
- "accuser of the Brethren" Rev 12:10
- "god of this world" 2 Cor 4:4
- "prince of the power of the air" Eph 2:2
- "the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience" Eph 2:2
- "the enemy that sowed tares" Mt 13:39
- "the wicked one" 6X

1.The way you handle either error, of course, is with the sharp, two-edged sword! The Word of God exposes both the error of immorality and the error of priestly superiority. That is one reason why the exposition of Scripture is resisted in many churches.

H.Here are some of the Pagan Practices introduced into the church by many Anti-Christian pagan origins which robbed the church of its fire and its evangelistic fervor.

1.Prayers for the dead (AD 300) / Worshipping Saints and Angels (AD 375) / Mass first instituted (AD 394) / Worship of Mary began (AD 431) / Priest began dressing differently than layman (AD 500) / Extreme Unction (AD 526) / Doctrine of Purgatory introduced (AD 593) / Worship services conducted in Latin (AD 600) / Prayers diverted to Mary (AD 600)

IV.CLOSING - 17 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."*

A.*"hidden manna"* = life in Jesus Christ. He said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger."

B.*"a white stone"* = the stone of acceptance or approval used in voting. A white stone signified a "yes" vote and a black stone a "no" vote. Some clubs have adopted a similar practice today. White or black balls are dropped into a ballot box whenever an applicant is considered for membership, and he is rejected, or black-balled," if someone drops in a black ball. Jesus said that He will give us a white stone- "Accepted." I've been accepted by God in Christ.

C.Notice both the manna and the new name are secret things. It is a picture of close intimacy.

When Israel encamped on the plains of Moab, on the east of Jordan, Balak sent for Balaam to curse them.

- But God only allowed him to Bless Israel.
- Num. 22-24
- Though Balaam could not curse Israel, he gave Balak counsel that brought God's judgement upon them: Have your young women entice the Israelites into sexual immorality and idol worship.
- Num. 25:1-9, Micah 6:5
- Balaam 'loved the wages of unrighteousness'
- 2 Peter 2:15-16
- Balaam was later slain by Israel
- Nu 31:8

THYATIRA: Corrupted by the World

Rev. 2:18-29

I. THE CHURCH - *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write"*

A. A relatively unimportant city at the time - Located between Pergamos and Sardis

1. Expendable from a military view point - used to slow down forces advancing towards Sardis
2. Mostly trade guilds with pagan worship and patron gods
 - a) It was known for its dyeing arts - especially purple colored items
 - (1) Lydia, Paul's first convert at Philippi, was "a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira" [Acts 16:14].

II. CHRIST - 18" ... *"These things says"*

A. *the Son of God,*

1. The only use of this phrase in Rev. although it is affirmed throughout the book.

B. HE COMES TO REFINE - *Who has eyes like a flame of fire,*

1. Heb. 4:13 - "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."
2. 1 Cor. 3:12-15 - "If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." niv

C. HE WARNS OF JUDGEMENT - *and His feet like fine brass:* [see Chpt. 1]

1. "2 Hear, all you peoples! Listen, O earth, and all that is in it! Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, The Lord from His holy temple. 3 For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place; He will come down And tread on the high places of the earth. 4 The mountains will melt under Him, And the valleys will split Like wax before the fire, Like waters poured down a steep place." Micah 1:2-4
2. "**Brass**" always symbolizes judgment in the Scriptures.
 - a) The Altar of Sacrifice, the Laver of washing and all the utensils associated with the sacrifices were to be of bronze. Exodus 27

III. COMMENTS

A. THEY WERE GROWING IN GOOD WORKS vs. 19 - *"I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and as for your works, the last are more than the first."*

1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR DEEDS

- a) Motivated by love and faith
 - b) Expressed in service and patience
 - c) Increasing in degree
 - (1) "We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess 1:3) niv
2. But good works don't make up for bad doctrine

B.THEY WERE TOO TOLERANT OF EVIL - vs. 20 - *"Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."*

1.THEY WERE TOLERATING 'JEZEBEL'

a)"That Jezebel system is the introduction of idolatry into the Church and spiritual fornication. These things also took place with the nation Israel and, thus, Israel was rejected by God."

b)SHE CLAIMED TO BE A PROPHETESS

(1)Note: There was a greater dependency upon prophecy in the early church.

(a)1Thess. 5:19-21 - *"Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil."* niv

(2)But Why Didn't They Test Her?

(a)1Cor.14:29 - *"Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said."* niv

(b)1Jn.4:1 - *"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."* niv

(3)She Was Teaching God's Servants

(a)Why did they allow her to teach?

i)1Tim. 2:12 - *"I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent."* niv

ii)cf. Tit.2:3-5 - *"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God."* niv

c)SHE WAS MISLEADING THEM INTO SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

(1)*"sexual immorality"* - lit. 'fornication' - either literal or figurative.

(2)*"eat things sacrificed to idols"* - idolatry - participating in the worship rituals of other gods.

(3)THE BOTTOM LINE - SPIRITUAL ADULTERY - v22 *"...those who commit adultery with her.."*

d)SHE WAS LIKE THE JEZEBEL OF THE O.T.

(1)1Kings 16:30-33 - *"Ahab son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him. He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to provoke the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger than did all the kings of Israel before him."* niv

(2)She personally supported 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah

(a)1Kings 18:19 - *"..And bring the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."* niv

(b)Asherah = Venus, the Goddess of Fertility and Sexual Pleasure

(c)The 'groves' and 'Asherah poles' mentioned in the scriptures were actually idol phallic symbols worshipped through orgiastic feasts which included both male and female temple prostitutes.

(d)This was the same kind of sexual and spiritual immorality that was involved with much of the pagan temple worship and feasts. The eating of food sacrificed to idols was actually a prelude to sexual immorality and spiritual adultery.

(3)Jezebel Used the Power of the State to Get What She Wanted. - 1 Kings 21

2. JEZEBEL REPRESENTS THE RISE OF CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH OF ROME

a) THE DOWNWARD PROGRESSION

(1) The Deeds of the Nicolaitans - to the Teaching of the Nicolaitans - to the marriage of the church to the World and the exaltation of the priesthood over the people - to the church exalting itself above the Word of God and leading God's people into the "deeps things of Satan" - thus making God's people liable to judgement if they do not repent.

b) CORRUPTIONS IN THE CHURCH OF ROME [Ω see BIBLE & CHURCH OF ROME in Appendix]

3. 'She' may refer to a prominent Church leading the way toward increasing corruption.

C. REPENTANCE - 21 *"And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent."*

1. REPENTANCE IS IMPORTANT TO GOD

2. GOD IS WILLING TO WAIT FOR IT - *I gave her time*

a) 2 Pet. 3:8-9, 15 - *"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord, a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." ... "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation..." niv*

(1) 1 Tim. 1:16 - *"But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life."*

3. OUR LIVES DEPEND UPON IT

a) Lk. 13:1-5 - *"Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them - do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, No! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." niv*

b) THEN WHAT IS IT? - A Definite change of heart, mind, soul, and strength

c) [Ω see REPENTANCE in Appendix]

4. UNWILLINGNESS TO REPENT BRINGS JUDGEMENT - 22 *"Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds."*

THE LORD IS COMING FOR A FAITHFUL CHURCH

"² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. ³ But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

THE UNFAITHFUL CHURCH FACES TRIBULATION

5.

a) "The question is not, shall I repent? For that is beyond a doubt. But the question is, shall I repent now, when it may save me; or shall I put it off to the eternal world when my repentance will be my punishment?" - Samuel Davies - Encyc p.203 [2721]

6.THERE IS A LIMIT TO GOD'S PATIENCE WITH THE UNREPENTANT - JUDGEMENT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT LIMIT

a)WE REAP WHAT WE SOW - WE CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM GOD - 23 *"I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works."*

THIS IS A LIFE AND DEATH ISSUE

- MOST LIKELY REFERS TO SPIRITUAL DEATH
 - THE CONSEQUENCE OF FOLLOWING A FALSE CHURCH IS A FALSE SALVATION
- b) • IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT OUR ACTIONS - IT'S ABOUT OUR MINDS AND HEARTS

7.REPENTANCE IS THE ONLY HOPE- *"..unless they repent of their deeds."*

a)Note: She was unwilling - it was her choice

D.TO THE REST - 24 *"Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. 25 "But hold fast what you have till I come."*

1.THE 'DEPTHS OF SATAN'?

- a)The Gnostics claimed to have further revelation and superior insight into the things of the Spiritual Realm.
- b)The Problem: Which Spiritual 'Realm' is it?
- c)They were actually embracing Doctrines of Demons - The Prince of Demons
- d)"4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."" Genesis 3:4-5

2.JESUS DOESN'T PUT BURDENS ON PEOPLE - HE LIGHTENS THE LOAD

a)HIS BURDEN IS LIGHT

(1)Matt. 11:28-30 - *"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* niv

(2)Heb. 4:9-10 - *"There remains, then, a Sabbath rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his."* niv

(3)"The paradox of faith is that the church on fire is the church at rest."

b)NOTE: LAW IS SO CONTRARY TO GRACE

(1)LAW INCREASES IN COMPLEXITY - GRACE REDUCES TO SIMPLICITY

3.WHERE IS REST FOUND?

a)REST IS FOUND IN HOLDING FAST TO JESUS -

(1)What did they have? - JESUS!!! What do we have? - JESUS!!!

(2)How long should they hold fast? - UNTIL HE COMES!!!

E.REWARD

1.WHO IS HE TALKING ABOUT? - 26 *"And..."*

a)*he who overcomes*, - by Repentance & Faith

b)*and keeps My works until the end*, - Who does His will

(1)John 6:28-29 - *"Then they asked Him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.'" niv*

2. WHAT WILL HE GIVE? - *"...to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 `He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' --as I also have received from My Father; 28 "and I will give him the morning star."*

a) AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS

(1) All that we are under now - will be under us then - in Jesus

(2) "The rod of iron signifies the type of reign during the Kingdom Age. People will be forced to be good. Our duties as the Church reigning with Christ will be to enforce His righteousness."

b) THE MORNING STAR

(1) Rev. 22:16 - *"I, Jesus, ... am... the bright Morning Star."*

3.29 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." "*

• **WHAT ABOUT US? WHAT'S OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD?**

- John 17:14-18, NKJV. - "14 *"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 "They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."*

SARDIS: The Protestant Reformation

Rev. 3:1-6

I. CHURCH: *"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ..."*

A. The Church of Sardis represents the Protestant Reformation.

B. NOTE: History of the City of Sardis

1. Although the city is set on a steep mountain with cliffs on three sides falling straight down from the walls, it was conquered twice because of an over confidence and lack of watchfulness. Once in 549 B.C. by Cyrus of Persia and once in 214 B.C. by Antiochus the Great (III). Each time they found a way to climb up the cliff and did so under the cover of darkness.

2. Cyrus' soldier, Hyeroeades, saw a Lydian soldier on top of the Sardis battlement drop his helmet to the bottom of the cliff. As he watched, the Lydian soldier climbed over the battlement and picked his way slowly to the base of the cliff to recover his helmet, and so climbed back to his place of sentinel duty. Hyeroeades carefully watched as this happened and then, that night, with a picked band of Persian soldiers, he made his way up to the height. It was absolutely unguarded, and thus Sardis fell into the hands of the Persians. Thus Jesus warns them *"Be watchful! ...if you will not watch I will come upon you as a thief."*

C. "Sardis": Greek plural of uncertain derivation; lost through antiquity?

- [Sardius = "Red stone"?] 'odem; i.e., the red stone (with a yellow shade); cf. Ex 28:17; 39:10; Ezek 28:13. Much used by the ancients for seals, as being tough yet easily worked, beautiful, and susceptible of high polish; the best stone for engraving. Josephus (the best authority, being a priest, therefore having often seen the high priest's breastplate) calls it the sardonyx, the first stone in the high priest's breastplate, in Ant. 3:7, section 5, but the sard or sardine, B.J. 5:5, section 7. Both sardine and sardonyx are varieties of agate.
- He on the heavenly throne "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine" (Rev 4:3). As the jasper (or else diamond) represents the divine brightness or holiness, so the red sardine (our cornelian) His fiery wrath; the same union as in Ezek 1:4; 8:2; Dan 7:9. Named from Sardis in Lydia, where it was first found. The Hebrews got their high priest's sardines in Arabia, and from Egypt (Ex 12:35).
- Sardion (Grk: sardion): in Rev 4:3; 21:20: the 6th foundation of the New Jerusalem. According to the Septuagint, sardion was the 1st stone, 1st row, of the breastplate. Vulgate (Jerome's Latin Bible, 390-405 A.D.) translates sardius; the King James Version translates "sardine" (stone) (Rev 4:3) and "sardius" (Rev 21:20); the Revised Version (British and American) translates "sardius."
- The sarda of Pliny's time was much used by the seal engravers. There were three Indian varieties, all of them transparent, one of them red in color; there was then no precious stone in more common use; those of honey-color were less valued. It probably included both the sard and the carnelian of the present day (cryptocrystalline silica).

II. CHRIST: *These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars:*

A. Jesus holds the full measure of the Holy Spirit and the Angels/Pastors of the Churches

B. Why does Jesus use this title with this particular church? Most protestant denominations today are very uncomfortable with the Holy Spirit—which has been a major cause of division within the church. [C.M.]

III.COMMENT:

A. ***"I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead."***

1.ονομα. *onoma* = label; being covered by a name. This word appears three times in six verses in this letter. Sardis has a name [or label] and yet *are* dead! [C.M.]

2.They had great advertising and P.R., but they were dead.

a)Note: The Protestant Church has the problem of putting its Reputation above the truth - even its orthodox reputation. This is Pride - which hardens us to needed rebukes and keeps us from the personal renewal that comes with an on-going readiness to repent.

3.Note: If We try to save our Name[Reputation] we will lose it. but if we lose it for Jesus it will be given back 10-fold when He acknowledges us before the Father and His angels.

a)"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it. but whoever loses it will save it."

(1)cf. Saul's desire to have Samuel honor him before the people, even after the LORD had rejected him.

(a)1Sam. 15:30 - "Saul replied, 'I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God.'" niv

4.Mt. 23:27-28 - "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness." niv

B.2 ***"Be watchful,..."*** [Be on your guard - lit. "be a watcher"]

1.Matt. 24:42 - "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

2.Matt. 26:40-41 - "Then He returned to His disciples and found them sleeping. 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?' He asked Peter. 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.'" niv

3.WHEN WE ARE ASLEEP ...

a)We don't know what time it is. We can easily be robbed

b)We are living in a dream world - it's not real. To wake up is to face reality

C. ***"...and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die,"***

1.Concentrate your efforts on where there is life - fan the flame that is still burning!

2.How Do We Gain Strength?

a)Ps. 84:5 - "Blessed is the man whose strength is in the LORD." niv

b)Wait on the Lord - Isa.40:28-31 - "28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."

(1)Not a passive waiting, but an active, attentive listening

(a)cf. Ps. 46:10 - "Be still and know that I am God.."

i)"Still" - lit. "put your wings down"

ii)"Know" - "intimate knowledge" like Adam knew Eve

iii)We are kidding ourselves if we say we want to hear from God and yet continue to clutter our lives with the noises of an unnecessarily busy life or home - too busy to hear - too talkative to hear - too much noise [TV, Radio, Psychological Noise, etc.].

D. "...for I have not found your works perfect before God."

1. Not Perfect = not fulfilling their full purpose & potential

2. "One thing about the Protestant Reformation—it didn't reform enough. Their reformation was incomplete. The Lord says, 'I've not found your work complete before God'."

a) cf. Plane accident - A coach and pilot were in a jet which had an oxygen malfunction which caused them to go unconscious. The plane, on auto pilot, just stayed on course out over the sea until it ran out of fuel and they plunged to their death.

b) A dead church is often one which, by its action, has come to define its mission or purpose to be the maintaining of its programs - thus, as long as it maintains its programs it tells itself that it is still alive.

E.3 "Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent..."

1. Remember & Hold Fast = The Watchword of The Apostles

a) "12 For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease." 2 Peter 1:12-15

b) "1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:1-2

c) "1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" Galatians 3:1-3

2. Don't settle for dead orthodoxy - put it into living action through obedience - lit. "keep holding to it"

a) Phil. 4:9 - "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of Peace will be with you."

3. Note: Why put repent after obey?

a) Possibly because this church had a knack for looking right outwardly [superficial obedience] when they weren't right inwardly.

b) repent = once for all

F. "...Therefore if you will not watch,"

1. "I will come upon you as a thief,"

a) Many today scoff at His coming. They are unprepared and will be surprised.

2. "and you will not know what hour I will come upon you."

a) Note: Strong negative in greek - completely unaware of the time of His coming.

b) 1 Thess. 5:2-9 - ... "But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief." niv

c) [Ω see 'BE READY: The Ten Virgins' in appendix]

G.4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy."

1. GOD ALWAYS HAS A REMNANT - A 'MASTER'S MINORITY'

a) Matt. 7:13-14 - "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." niv

(1) NARROW WAY? ONLY WAY? - THE OPEN WAY!

(2) NARROW-MINDED? BRAINWASHED? - WE'VE CHOSEN THE ONE WHO WASHES OUR BRAINS

b) cf. ELIJAH IN THE CAVE - 1 Kings 19:14,18

(1) "... "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel - all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him." niv

(2) Rom. 11:5, Ezra 9:5-9

(a) "Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God and prayed: 'O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to You, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. From the days of our forefathers until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

"But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in His sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. Though we are slaves, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and He has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem." niv

(b) Zec. 8:12 - "The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people."

c) THE 'MASTER'S MINORITY' HAVE A LIVING FAITH

(1) They had not become "defiled" by contact with a "dead body"

(a) cf. Num. 19:11-13 - "Whoever touches the dead body of anyone will be unclean for seven days. ..."

i) He must purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean. Whoever touches the dead body of anyone and fails to purify himself defiles the LORD's tabernacle. That person must be cut off from Israel. Because the water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean; his uncleanness remains on him."

ii) cf. Jesus vs. The Pharisees in the Marketplace - Mark 6&7

iii) They were walking in God's Grace - not Man's Approval

2. THE REMNANT ALWAYS HAS GOD

a) FELLOWSHIP - **"They shall walk with Me"**

(1) Not just walk after His statutes - walk with Him

(2) cf. Enoch - Gen 5:24 - "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."

(a) Heb. 11:5-6 - "By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."

b) RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH - **"... in white"**

(1) Isa. 61:10 - "I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." niv

c)FAVOR - ***"for they are worthy.."*** - the gracious gift of God

(1)2 Thess. 1:5 - *"All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering."* niv

IV.CLOSING:

A.WE OVERCOME BY FAITH IN JESUS - ***He who overcomes***

1.3 *This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.* (1 John 5:3-5 niv)

B.WE SHINE BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE - ***"..shall be clothed in white garments"***

1."*8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;"* Philippians 3:8-9

C.WE ARE SECURE IN HIS LOVE - ***"... and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels."***

1.Our names are sealed by the indelible ink of His blood -

a)cf. the BOOK OF LIFE vs. THE LAMB'S BOOK OF LIFE [Ω see 'The Book of Life' in Appendix]

2.Our names will be spoken by the One who can speak universes in and out of existence

a)The One Who calls us by name will also present us by Name.

(1)"*To Him Who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy--"* (Jude 1:24)

D.THE KEY - EARS TO HEAR - ***"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."***

PHILADELPHIA: Faithful Church of the Last Days

Revelation 3:7-13

I. CHURCH - 7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:"

A. Philadelphia = "brotherly love"

B. The city was 28 miles southeast of Sardis. It was noted for its agricultural produce. But it was afflicted with earthquakes which destroyed the city several times, most recently about A.D. 37. The City was named for the King of Pergamum, Attalus Philadelphus, who built it.

C. The church of Philadelphia is God's faithful church in the last days. God help us that we would be the church of Philadelphia.

II. CHRIST - "...`These things says... "

A. He who is holy,

1. Lk. 1:35 - "The angel answered, '... the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.'" niv

2. Isa. 43:3 - "For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior" niv

a) Isa. 54:5 - "For your Maker is your husband - the LORD Almighty is His name - the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth."

b) Isa. 57:15 - "For this is what the high and lofty One says - He Who lives forever, Whose name is Holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and the revive the heart of the contrite.'" "

c) Ps. 99

B. He who is true,

1. Rev. 19:11 - **Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.**

2. cf. Jn. 14:6 niv

C. He who has the key of David,

1. Isa. 22:22 niv - "I will place on his [Eliakim] shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open." Key = Authority

a) note: We give trust and authority to those we give our keys

2. "6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this." (Isa 9:6-7)

D. JESUS IS IN SOVEREIGN CONTROL - "**He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens**"

1. Jn. 19:10-11 - "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" Jesus answered, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." niv

2. All of history is like a river following a course which He has directed. Within that river are currents which are not of His making or desire, but are within His permissive will and are used for His purposes.

III.COMMENTS

A.8 *"I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; ..."*

1.OPPORTUNITIES?

a)1 Cor. 16:8-9 - *"But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me."* niv

b)2 Cor. 2:12-13 - *"Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-by to them and went on to Macedonia."* niv

(1)OUR OPPORTUNITIES?: - A man went to Spurgeon and said: 'Mr. Spurgeon, I have it in my soul to win people to Christ. What shall I do?' Spurgeon asked, 'What is your job?' The man replied, 'I'm an engineer on the railroad.' Spurgeon asked, 'Is your fireman a Christian?' The man replied, 'I don't know.' 'Then go back and find out and start with him', was Spurgeon's response.

2.FAITH?

a)Acts 14:27 - *"On arriving there[Antioch], they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."*

3.RAPTURE?

a)Rev. 4:1-2 - *"After this [meta tauta] I looked and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this [meta tauta].' At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it."* niv

b)note: Noah and the Flood - God closed and opened the door to the ark.

4.JESUS?

a)Jn.10:9 - *"I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture."* niv

b)Heb. 10:19-20 - *"...we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body."* niv

B.for you have a little strength,

1.Contrary to certain teachings today "We're not really powerful. We have a little strength. Thank God for the little strength that we have.

2."*9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

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

1.**Kept My word** - "guarded & watched over it"

a)"You have kept my word." God help us to be faithful to the Word, to study the Word, and to keep the Word as the paramount issue within the Church."

b)"Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you--guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." 2 Timothy 1:14, NIV

2.**Not Denied My Name** - Their faith and deeds were consistent

a)"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven." Matthew 10:32

b)"Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God." 1 John 4:15

3.Ps. 138:2 - *"I will bow down toward Your holy temple and will praise Your Name for Your love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your Name and Your Word."* niv

D.9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--

1.False Jews - Just as false Apostles are "ministers of Satan", so also false Jews are a "synagogue of Satan".

a) 2 Cor. 11:13-15 - *"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve."*

b)Jn.8:39-41,44 - *"Abraham is our father," they answered. 'If you were Abraham's children,' said Jesus, 'then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. You are doing the things your own father does.' ... 'You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*

2. As in his letter to Smyrna John uses the words "synagogue of Satan." This was not an attack against Jews in general but a reference to those Jews in Philadelphia who denounced Jewish Christians before Roman officials for not being "true Jews." In Philadelphia as elsewhere Jewish Christians had been excommunicated from their synagogues. John's earlier gospel refers to this: "For already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22). Jews were exempt from participation in the emperor worship cult, but Jewish Christians, because of their exclusion from the Jewish community, did not enjoy the same legal protection. [from: www.welcometohosanna.com/REVELATION]

E."--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you"

1.Matt. 19:28 - *"Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."* niv

2.1 Cor. 6:2-3, (Phil. 2:10-11)

a) - *"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!"*

F.10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

1.HE WILL RESCUE US - 2 Pet. 2:9 - *"If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment."* niv

2.FROM THE HOUR OF TRIAL

a)*from* - "ek" = lit. "out of"

b)*The Hour of Trial* - "hour" - A specific time of tribulation

c)*"which shall come upon the whole world"* - "the inhabited earth"

3.THE GREAT TRIBULATION

a)cf. Exodus vs. Noah and the Ark - *"As it was in the days of Noah..."*

4.THE EARTH-DWELLERS - *"those who dwell on the earth"*

a)This is a term used in Rev. to designate the masses of unregenerate people who will be on the earth at that time [Ω see 'THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH' in appendix]

IV.CLOSING:

A. 11 ***"Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown."***

1.2 Tim. 3:14-17 - *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of..."* niv

2. THIS SHOULD BE THE FOCUS OF THEIR LIMITED STRENGTH

a) note: when our resources are limited we must prioritize where they are expended, thus we see our Lord's top priority - that we hold on to what we have.

B.12 ***"He who overcomes, ..."***

1. AN EMBLEM OF HONOR - ***I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God,***

a) Note: Philadelphia had the custom of honoring people by placing a pillar in one of their temples with the person's name inscribed on it.

(1) 1 Tim. 3:15 - *"...God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth."* niv

(2) cf. 1 Kings 7:15-22

(a) Jachin = "he establishes"

(b) Boaz = "in him is strength"

2. PERMANENT FIXTURES - ***and he shall go out no more***

a) Note: Philadelphia had suffered many earthquakes in which only pillars remained. here's a picture like parable of the man who built his house on the rock.

(1) The Wise Man - Matt. 7:24-27

(a) A Tree Planted by Streams of Water - Ps.1

(b) "bearing" vs. "non-bearing" walls

C. ***"...And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name."***

1. NAMES?

a) Rev. 22:3-4 - *"3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads."*

b) Rev. 21:2 - *"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

c) Jer. 23:5-6 - *"5 'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."*

D.13 ***"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."***

LAODICEA: Lukewarm Church of Last Days

(Revelation 3:14-22)

I. CHURCH: *14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,"*

- A. Laodicea stood midway between the hot springs of Hierapolis and the cold waters of Colossae.
 - 1. (It was fed by an aqueduct from Hieropolis, the water being lukewarm when it arrived.)
- B. It was militarily indefensible
- C. It was a city of merchants, bankers, and gold refiners. At the junction of roads leading from Ephesus and Smyrna and handling caravan trade as far east as the Yellow River in Punjab by the China Sea, much wealth flowed through Laodicea.
- D. Textile manufacturing was also a source of considerable revenue. Laodicea was known for the quality of black wool produced from a particular strain of sheep bred in the Lycus valley and for the cloth and carpets manufactured from it. A famous school of medicine was there, especially known for an ophthalmic ointment (a mixture of oil and the collyrium powder—described by Aristotle as “Phrygian powder”).
- E. Paul was in communication with this church earlier.
 - 1. Col. 2:1; 4:13-16 - *"I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally." ... "After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea."* niv
- F. Laodicea - "the rule of the people"
 - 1. The Lukewarm Church of the Last Days is one that is ruled by people, rather than the One and Only Head of the Church - Jesus.
 - 2. cf. Damage of Congregational, Democratic Form of Church Government ...

II. CHRIST: *"These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:"*

A. *the Amen*, - Amen = "So be it!"

- 1. *"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God."* (2 Corinthians 1:20)

B. *the Faithful and True Witness*,

- 1. *Rev. 19:11 - "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war."*

C. *the Beginning of the creation of God*

- 1. *Colossians 1:15-18 - "15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."*

III.COMMENTS: - 15 *"I know your works..."*

A.that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot.

1.**hot** - fervent

2.**cold** - closed to or against the things of God

B.16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, "

1.LUKEWARM

a)Water piped to city from hot springs in Hierapolis, a few miles north. By time water reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm mineral-water! [visitors often vomited]

2.APATHETIC, INDIFFERENT

a)Heat gives off energy - Cold absorbs energy - Lukewarmness doesn't give or receive energy - it just stagnates

(1)no salt, tasteless

(2)Matt. 5:13 - *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."* niv

(3)Salt creates a thirst - Brings out flavor - Preserves from spoiling

(4)Col.4:6 - *"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."* niv

3.WHY IS COLD BETTER THAN LUKEWARM?

a)The Laodiceans felt they didn't need a thing - ***"I ...have need of nothing"***

b)Lukewarmness is an effective "inoculation" against catching the real thing. If we are insulated from feeling our need, we won't open our hearts to the One Who can meet it.

(1)Duet. 8:2-3 - *"Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you s keep His commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD."* niv

4.I will vomit you out of My mouth. - A strong statement of repulsion and rejection.

5.17 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor [beggarly], blind, and naked--"

a)Laodicea was a financial center - it had plenty of worldly gold.

b)BEWARE OF THE DECEITFULNESS OF RICHES

(1)Parable of the Soils - Mk.4:18-19 - *"Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful."* niv

(2)1Tim. 6:9-10 - *"People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."* niv

(3)cf. Jas. 2:5-7; 5:1-5

C.18 "I counsel you ..."

1. to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich;

- a) "Their trust in materialism has brought them to a lukewarm state. "You cannot serve God and mammon." Mixing the two will lead you into becoming lukewarm."
- b) Job 23:10 - *"But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold."*
- c) Zech. 13:9 - *"This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on My name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are My people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"*
- d) 1Pet.1:7 - *"These [all kinds of trials] have come so that your faith - of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire - may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."*
- e) cf. process of refining gold... [add to Appendix?]

2. and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed;

- a) Laodicea was famous for garments made out of a slick, black wool.
 - (1) Isa. 61:10-11 - *"I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations."*
 - (2) Rom. 3:21-24 - *"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."*
- (a) cf. 2Cor. 5:1-10

3. and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

- a) A medical school was located in Laodicea at the temple of Asclepius, which offered a special salve to heal common eye troubles of the region. The eye-powder of Laodicea, was world-famous. It was exported in tablet form; and the tablets were ground down and applied to the eyes."
- b) 2Cor.4:3-6 - *"And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, Who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."*

D.19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

1. Learn the lesson of Christ's Rebuke and Discipline

- a) 1 Cor. 11:31-32 - *"But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."* niv
- b) Heb. 12

E. Therefore be zealous - be HOT!

1.2 Tim 1:6 - Fan into flame the gift of God

F. and repent

- 1. Don't get down on God when He chastens you. Rejoice! This is His first cure for being lukewarm. The second cure for lukewarmness: be zealous. Get out of that lukewarm rut. Get out of that tepid state. Become zealous for the Lord. The final cure for lukewarmness is to open your heart to God and repent."

IV.CLOSING:

A.20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me."

- 1.Where is Jesus? - OUTSIDE THE CHURCH
- 2.What is He doing? - ASKING TO COME IN
- 3.What is He expecting? - INDIVIDUALS TO LET HIM IN
- 4.What happens when we let Him in? - WE ENJOY THE FELLOWSHIP OF A MEAL TOGETHER
 - a)Note: This is the main meal of the day to which guests would be invited and honored.
- 5.cf. Luke 12:35-36 - 35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, 36 like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him." niv

B.21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

- 1.Ephesians 2:4-6 - 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, niv
- 2.Rom. 8:16-17 - "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory." niv

C.22 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

- 1.By the Grace of God we can go from the Lukewarm state of Laodicea to the Throne of Christ. All by a simple, sincere, surrender to the Sovereign Savior.

A PROPHETIC OVERVIEW OF THE CHURCH IN HISTORY

I. EPHEBUS: THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

A. "Historically, Ephesus is the early Church, the Apostolic Church that existed up until the time of the death of John (c.99 A.D.).

B. Although the church has little to fear from the outside, it has much to be concerned about on the inside, for the church is not perfect - but far from it. Even at the time of John's writing, the fire of love had begun to wane a bit in the early Church. When they first started out they were fervent. They went everywhere preaching the Gospel. The love of Christ was driving them throughout the world. Now, they were already becoming a bit established, leaving the first love."

II. SMYRNA: THE CHURCH UNDER ROMAN PERSECUTION

A. "Historically, Smyrna is the church that followed Ephesus. For the next couple of centuries (2nd to 4th centuries) it went through tremendous persecution from the Roman government. It is thought that perhaps as many as six million Christians were martyred for their faith during the Roman government's attempt to wipe out Christianity."

B. "Jesus has nothing bad to say about the church of Smyrna. No call to repentance. Smyrna is the church that will be purified by persecution. They'll be martyred and experience great tribulation. Tribulation never hurt the Church. It always had a purifying effect."

III. PERGAMOS: THE CHURCH MARRIED TO THE WORLD

A. Pergamos means "Elevation" and "Marriage" - It represents the church married to worldly government and power. As the church became married to governmental authority and elevated to a place of acceptance, it declined in spiritual blessing and power.

B. Prophetically, this is the period from the accession of Constantine in 320 A.D. to the rise of the papacy in the 6th century. Constantine adopted many pagan practices and brought them into the church where they were accepted. It was the beginning of the Roman Catholic Church.

IV. THYRATIRA: THE CHURCH CORRUPTED BY THE WORLD

A. The 'Jezebel' of Thyratira represents the rise of corruption in the Church of Rome. The Jezebel system is the introduction of idolatry into the Church and spiritual fornication.

B. Note: The Downward Progression - The Deeds of the Nicolaitans - to the Teaching of the Nicolaitans - to the marriage of the church to the World and the exaltation of the priesthood over the people - to the church exalting itself above the Word of God and leading God's people into the "deeps things of Satan" - thus making God's people liable to judgement if they do not repent.

V. SARDIS: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

A. One thing about the Protestant Reformation—it didn't reform enough. Actually, the Protestants continued to use the many pagan customs adopted by the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira. They still had infant baptism. They still had so many pagan symbols. They still had the pagan holidays. Their reformation was incomplete. The Lord says, "I've not found your work complete before God."

VI. PHILADELPHIA: THE FAITHFUL CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS

A. The church of Philadelphia is God's faithful church in the last days. God help us that we would be the church of Philadelphia.

B. "We're not really powerful. We have a little strength. Thank God for the little strength that we have. "You have kept my word." God help us to be faithful to the Word, to study the Word, and to keep the Word as the paramount issue within the Church. And we've not denied the name of Jesus Christ; we've not denied Him and who He is."

VII. LAODICEA: THE LUKEWARM CHURCH OF THE LAST DAYS

A. The church of Laodicea is the lukewarm church of the last days. A human institution without spiritual life. Laodicea - "the rule of the people"

B. 3:15 - "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm--neither hot nor cold-- I am about to spit you out of my mouth." niv

AFTER THESE THINGS

The Throne in Heaven

Revelation Chapter 4

Here we get a view of the heavenly scene. Study Revelation 4. Fix it in your mind. You don't want to look like a country bumpkin on his first trip to the big city when you get to heaven. You don't want to be looking around and asking everyone, "What's that!?"

Key Concept: The Tabernacle was a Copy or Shadow of the True Sanctuary in Heaven

A. Heb. 8:1-2,5 - *"1 The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man." ... " They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: 'See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain'."* niv

I.THE OPEN DOOR - ***"1 After these things [meta tauta] I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this [meta tauta]."***

1.1:19 - *"Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this [meta tauta]."*

B.We have now come to the end of Church history upon the earth and the final message to the churches. In His messages to the last four churches, Jesus spoke of His second coming. He warned the churches of His return. "Behold, I come quickly," He said.

C. "Voice... Like a Trumpet"

1.1Thess. 4:16 - *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.* niv

2.1Cor. 15:52 - *in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* niv

D.THE PRE-TRIBULATION RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH?

1. ***"After this"*** After the Church's witness and work upon the earth is completed, the trump of God shall sound. The trumpet sound will be saying to the Christians, the body of Christ, ***"Come up here!"*** And "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,"

2.I believe that the rapture of the Church takes place in verse one of Revelation 4 — after the things of Church history are completed. John heard a voice as a trumpet saying, ***"Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."*** Now John will see the things that shall take place after the Church is gone.

E. ***"Come up here"*** - A fore-view of the Rapture

1.The word "church" does not occur again until 22:16-

a) *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."*

2.The Church isn't seen again until it is seen as the Bride of the Lamb in 19:7

a) *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

3.The familiar phrase *"..what the Spirit says to the churches"* is significantly absent in 13:9 - *"If anyone has an ear, let him hear."*

4. RAPTURE?

- a) The word "rapture" is an old English word built upon the Latin word "rapere, raptum". It means "to transport, to take away, to snatch away".
- b) When we speak of rapture of the church we are speaking of the taking away of the people of God, transporting upward to glory of the great household of faith.
- c) Isa. 26:20 - "Go, my people, enter your [or My] rooms and shut the doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until His wrath has passed by." niv
- d) 1 Thess. 5:9 - For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. niv
- e) Rev. 3:10 - "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

5. [Q see 'RAPTURE' and 'SEVEN REASONS' in appendix]

II. THE THRONE-ROOM - **2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne. 3 And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.**

A. jasper

1.10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. (Revelation 21:10-11)

B. sardius

1. A beautiful, red gem like a ruby

2. SIGNIFICANCE?

- a) The clear Jasper = Purity of God \ The red Sardius = Redemptive work of God
- b) The first and last stones on the Breastplate of the High Priest
 - (1) "17 And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; 18 the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 "the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. 21 And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes." Exodus 28:17-21
- c) Sardius = Reuben ["behold, a son"]
- d) Jasper = Benjamin ["son of my right hand"]
- e) Note: In the description of the foundation of the new Jerusalem the Jasper is first and the carnelian is sixth. Rev. 21:19-20
 - (1) "19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst." Revelation 21:19, 20, NKJV.

C. a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.

1. The Rainbow is a reminder of God's Promise to Noah

a) Gen. 9:12-16

2. The Rainbow is associated with the Glory of God

D. the throne - Revelation is The Throne Book of the Bible

1. "throne" is 45 times in Revelation - only 15 times in the rest of scripture

2. Note: For the Believer, the throne is a THRONE OF GRACE

a) Heb. 4:16 - Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. niv

III. THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS - *4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting,*

1. The Elders are mentioned Twelve times in Revelation
 - a) 4:4, 10; 5:5-6,8, 11, 14; 7:11,13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4
2. They Speak Seven Times

B. clothed in white robes; - Righteous by Faith

C. and they had crowns of gold on their heads. - Victorious Over-comers in Jesus

D. WHO ARE THE ELDERS?

1. Representative of All Saints of All Ages
 - a) Twenty-four is twice twelve representing the Twelve Patriarchs and the Twelve Apostles.
 - b) New Jerusalem
 - (1) Twelve Gates with the names of the Twelve Tribes
 - (2) Twelve Foundations with the names of the Twelve Apostles
2. Representative Only of the Church
 - a) In the N.T. the title "elder" is a specifically church-related term
 - b) They are wearing "crowns" which the N.T. ascribes to believers
 - c) The twenty-four elders and thrones are missing in Daniel's vision of the throne - which would be explained by the hidden mystery aspect of the Church - cf. Eph. 3
3. Angels? Angelic Elders?
 - a) Elders are always separately delineated from angels.
 - b) Angels are never crowned.

IV. THUNDER & LIGHTNING - *5 And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.*

1. cf. Ex. 19:16 - "On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain." niv

B. Associated in Rev with new 'movements' of prophetic scene [Ω see 'THUNDERS' in appendix]

V. BEFORE THE THRONE

A. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

1. Note: "Seven Lamps" vs. "Seven Lampstands"
2. A Revelation of the Seven-fold Spirit of God
 - a) cf. Zechariah 4:10 "10 For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see The plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth." see fuller context
3. The Holy Spirit is Not normally Visible unless embodied in some way.
 - a) The Dove at Christ's baptism - Tongues of Fire on day of Pentecost

B.6 Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.

1. cf. with the brass lavers of the Tabernacle and the Temple - for the cleansing of the priests.
 - a) "17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 18 "You shall also make a laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19 "for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20 "When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21 "So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And it shall be a statute forever to them--to him and his descendants throughout their generations.'" Exodus 30:17-21 (cf. 1 Kings 6:23-26)
2. cf. Rev. 22:1 - "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb."

VI.THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES - *And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.*

1.Should we picture these Cherubim as being literally covered with eyes? I don't think so.

a)"For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth,...." 2 Chronicles 16:9

b)We might say they've got 'simultaneous omni-directional radar'

B.7 *The first living creature was like a lion,*

C.*the second living creature like a calf [ox],*

D.*the third living creature had a face like a man,*

E.*and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.*

F.8 *The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within.*

G.WHAT ARE THEY?

1.They Are Angelic Beings - Cherubim/Seraphim Isa. 6:1-4, Eze.1:1,4-28

H.WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEM? [Ω see 'CHERUBIM' in appendix]

VII.THE FIRST STEPS OF WORSHIP - **8...** *And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"* **9** *Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever,* **10** *the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:*

A.By laying their crowns down before the throne they are testifying that if it had not been for God's Grace, they could not have had the victory represented by the crowns.

1.Isaiah 26:12 - "LORD, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us." niv

2.Ps. 115:1 - "Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to Your Name be the glory, because of Your love and faithfulness." niv

B.11 *"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."*

The Scroll and the Lamb

Revelation 5

I.A CLOSED BOOK - **1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.**

A.A SCROLL - not a book [note: Christians developed first books - codex]

B.IT WAS SEALED

1.Dan. 12:4,8-9 - "4'But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge.' ... 8I heard, but I did not understand. so I asked, 'My Lord, what will the outcome of all this be?' 9He replied, 'Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end.'" niv

a)note: This is a strong picture of the inspiration of Scripture and the separate working of Inspiration and Illumination. Daniel was Inspired to write - but still needed Illumination in order to understand, just as we do today.

b)Isa. 29:11 - "For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, 'Read this, please,' he will answer, 'I can't; it is sealed.'" niv

II.A POWERLESS CREATION - **2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.**

A.**no one** - lit. "not even one"

1.No one is worthy! No human power can succeed! No magic can conjure. No heavenly creation can coax the scroll to reveal its contents.

B.**4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.**

1.note: "**wept much**" is same word and form found only here and in Lk.19:41 of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.

III.CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION - **5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals. 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain..."**

A. **in the midst of the throne**

1.His Rightful Place is AT THE CENTER OF ALL CREATION!

B.**as though it had been slain**, - Bearing the Badge of His Love

1. Jesus will bear the evidence of His humanity and His Sacrificial Love --- Forever!

C.John was told to behold a Lion, but he saw a Lamb.

1.We think of the vestments of physical/ military might as the greatest display of triumphant, conquering victory. But that just betrays the worldliness of our earth-bound minds.

a)1 Cor. 1:25 - "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."

2.Tears are dried at the feet of Jesus!

D. John is told to behold a conqueror - and HE DOES! He beholds the conquering Son of God, Who triumphed by His righteous, sacrificial love.

1. Col. 2:13-15 - "13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." niv

E. In heaven - The Lamb of God is the picture of Ultimate Power and Victory!

1. Those who have spiritual eyes will see Him as the Triumphant Lamb.
2. Those who do not will see Him only as the Rider with the Drawn Sword.

IV. THE LAMB'S DESCRIPTION - 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

A. Seven Horns

1. "horn" in Scripture = strength, honor, might, authority

a) cf. 1 Sam. 2:1-10 - "1 ... 'My heart rejoices in the LORD; in the LORD my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in Your deliverance. ... 10 ... He will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.'" niv

b) Ps. 89:24 - "My faithful love will be with him [David], and through My Name his horn will be exalted." niv

2. 7 horns = Perfect in Power and Authority

B. Seven Eyes

1. Perfect Vision, All-Seeing, Omniscience of the Holy Spirit. Heb. 4:13

V. THE TAKING OF THE SCROLL - 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

A. When the Lamb ends His intercession and takes the scroll from the hand of the Father, this is the signal that God's long day of patience is ended.

1. Jude 14-15 - "14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: 'See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" niv

2. cf. Ps. 2

B. THE SCROLL What is the scroll and seals? What is their significance?

1. THE TITLE DEED TO CREATION [Ω See 'SCROLL OF REDEMPTION' in appendix (read?)]

a) RIGHTS OF POSSESSION

(1) According to Mosaic Law land belonged to the family forever. Lev. 25

(2) If a family was in difficulty, distress, or great need they might be forced to sell their land [or themselves].

b) REDEMPTION

(1) If a person sold their land - only a "Goel" - a Kinsman Redeemer - could redeem it back.

(2) cf. Boaz in Ruth

c) YEAR OF JUBILEE

(1) Every 50th year [7X7+1] was The Year of Jubilee

(2) The Trumpet Sounded and Ancestral Lands & Possessions returned to the Original Family.

2."TITLE" SCROLL

a)cf. Jer. 32

b)[Criswell] According to custom, if a hardship sale occurred, 2 scrolls were written - one sealed and one open. The Sealed Scroll included the reasons for the sale [which might be embarrassing to the family] The Open Scroll included just the terms of redemption in the event that a "Goel" would be found. Later the 2 scrolls were combined into one - with the "sealed" information going on the inside and the "open" on the outside.

VI.A WORSHIPPING CREATION - 8 *Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*

A.note: Response of creation to its Creator is to fall down before Him and His works.

B.HEAVENLY HARPS - MUSIC WAS CREATED TO PRAISE GOD

1.Psalms 150:1-6 - *"1 Praise the LORD! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!"*

C.BOWLS FULL OF INCENSE - THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

- 1.Our prayers are a fragrance around the throne of God
- 2.They exist because of God's Grace

D.9 *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."*

1.Look at that song. Look at the lyrics of that song. Who is singing it? Who can sing this to Jesus Christ? Only the Church can sing that song. It isn't the song of Israel. They're not redeemed from all the nations. The Church is taken out of all the nations. The Church is the one that was redeemed and purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Notice where the Church is. It is in heaven singing this song when Jesus takes the scroll out of the right hand of God. When our prayers are offered as incense we break out in glorious song to Jesus. "Worthy is the Lamb..." This is before the first seal, which initiates the Great Tribulation period upon the earth, is even opened. The Church will not go through the Tribulation. We'll be in heaven singing of the worthiness of Jesus Christ to take the scroll and to loose the seals. I plan to be there and I've already memorized the song. I don't have the tune yet, but I'll pick it up in a hurry. Thank God I can sing the song of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ!

E.11 *Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand [100 Million], and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"*

1.Angels Are Anxiously Awaiting The Revelation

a)1 Pet. 1:10-12 - *"12 It was revealed to them [prophets] that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."* niv

(1)"long to look into" - strong verb - They want to fasten their attention on Scripture to learn these things.

F.13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

1. Here the Father and the Son are given equal glory and equal worship by all creation.

2. EVERY CREATURE? This yet future - but certain.

a) All Saved? No! But every living creature will fulfill its God-ordained purpose of Praising Jesus at least once. Whether by Choice or Force. - Phil. 2:10

- Chuck Smith - "This is the glorious heavenly scene when Jesus takes the scroll, the title deed of the earth, and begins the culmination of the work of redemption—laying claim to that which He has redeemed. This is what all creation is waiting for! Paul the apostle said, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." In Revelation 5 Jesus claims His purchased possession. He takes the scroll and begins to take authority over that which is rightfully His."

G. 14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

Rev. 6:1-8

- Rev. 6 begins the Tribulation Period - The Seventieth Week of Daniel.
 - note: The Bible refers to the entire 7 years as The Great Tribulation [the tribulation the great] We tend to refer to the entire period as The Tribulation and the last 3 1/2 years as The Great Tribulation
 - *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."* Matthew 24:21

INTRO:

A. THE BEGINNING OF THE SEVEN SEALS - ***1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.***

1. "Come" ["proceed"]
2. The whole proceedings follow the removal of the church
3. Seventh Seal contains Seven Trumpets, contains the Seven Bowls...
 - a) Under the Seal Judgements the world is RUINED BY MAN
 - b) Under the Trumpet Judgements the world is RULED BY SATAN
 - c) Under the Bowl Judgements the world is RESCUED BY GOD

I. THE FIRST SEAL: THE WHITE HORSE - SPREAD OF THE ANTI-CHRIST'S KINGDOM - ***2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.***

A. THE HORSE

1. Consider the awe with which the strength and power of a horse was viewed.
 - a) *Job 39:19-24 - "19 Do you give the horse his strength or clothe his neck with a flowing mane? 20 Do you make him leap like a locust, striking terror with his proud snorting? 21 He paws fiercely, rejoicing in his strength, and charges into the fray. 22 He laughs at fear, afraid of nothing; he does not shy away from the sword. 23 The quiver rattles against his side, along with the flashing spear and lance. 24 In frenzied excitement he eats up the ground; he cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds."*

B. THE RIDER - NOT JESUS CHRIST

1. cf. Rev. 19:11-16 where the Rider is clearly the Lord Jesus Christ
 - a) *"11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."* Revelation 19:11-16, NKJV.
2. This Rider in Rev. 6 is given a crown - "stephanos" - the kind won in a contest,
 - a) The Lord is wearing many crowns - "diadems" - the crowns of royalty.
3. This Rider in Rev. 6 has a bow without an arrow - A sign of political conquest
 - a) The Lord has The Sword of The Word of God
4. This Rider in Rev. 6 is ambitious for conquest - "he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest"
 - a) The Lord comes to claim the victory He has already won.
5. This Rider is followed by Violence, War, Famine and Hell
 - a) The Lord ends these and brings in 1000 Years of Peace on Earth!

C. THE 'SHADOW' OF THE FIRST HORSEMAN IS "THE LIE"

1.2 *Thess 2:9-12 - "9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, 10 and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness."*

D. WE MUST FIGHT THE LIE WITH THE TRUTH

1. *Dan. 11:32 - "With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him."*

a) BY RECOGNIZING THE LIE - Gen. 3 Gives Satan's Strategy

(1) Questions God's Word - "Did God really say?"

(2) Contradicts God's Word - "You will not surely die!"

(3) Casts Doubt On God's Character - "God knows.. you'll be like Him."

(4) Calls Us to Set Ourselves in God's Place - "You will be like God"

b) BY KNOWING THE TRUTH!

(1) Do We Know The Truth?

c) BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH!

(1) *Dan. 12:3 - Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*

d) FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

(1) *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." 1 Timothy 6:12*

(2) Remember: Our Weapons are Divinely Powerful - The Word of God which is The Sword of the Spirit and Prayers which are like Guided Missiles.

(3) *"For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds," 2 Corinthians 10:4*

II. THE SECOND SEAL: THE RED HORSE - INCREASE IN MORTAL VIOLENCE AND WAR - "3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." 4 Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword."

A. The sword given to this rider was the "machaira" - the kind which could be concealed or hidden beneath a coat. It was used to cut the throat of an animal or man. Thus, this includes not only wars of nations against nation, but also of Terrorism and the growth of violence in general as a response to men's problems.

1. cf. increase of mass killings, terrorism, violence,

B. THE SHADOW OF THE RED HORSE = VIOLENCE

III. THE THIRD SEAL: THE BLACK HORSE - FAMINE - "5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine."

A. A working man's daily wage will only provide for the basic food

1.1 Quart of Wheat = one meal / 3 Quarts of Barley = 3 meals

2. The luxury of "oil and wine" will be available - but not affordable.

3. The scales may indicate that economic collapse is involved

B. THE SHADOW OF THE BLACK HORSE = FAMINE

1. cf. *Jeremiah in Lam 5:10* - "Our faces were black like an oven because of the terrible famine"

2. Half the children of the world of preschool age are so undernourished that their physical and mental growth is retarded and their mortality rate is sixty times higher than ours.

a) [That's not counting abortion - the most dangerous place for a child today is in its own mother's womb]

3. Average American dog has higher protein diet than most of world.

4. Contributing Factors

a) The Destruction of Trees. There is an annual loss of enough trees to cover half the state of California with forests. Ecologists predict the extinction of 2,000,000 species of plants and animals in the next 2 decades alone.

b) The Spread of Deserts. The UN estimates that it would take up to 40 years and an investment of 20 Billion just to reclaim land lost to deserts in the past 25 years. No wonder famine will spread.

(1) Due to pollution, "according to some projections, the American Midwest and the Soviet Ukraine - current breadbaskets of the world - may be converted into something approaching scrub deserts." [Sagan]

IV. THE FOURTH SEAL: THE PALE HORSE - DEATH & HELL - "7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth."

A. "**Death, and Hades**" = Physical & Spiritual death

1. War & Famine invariably give rise to pestilence

a) 20 million died in the influenza epidemics of WW I

2. Medical men warn that antibiotics, when used routinely may defeat their purpose and lead to more resistant germs. Many are saying that AIDS is only the beginning of things to come

3. cf. CHEMICAL & BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

a) We have chemical & biological agents that can destroy entire populations with ease.

(1) They can be sprayed into the wind, added to the water supply, introduced by small animals and insects, and can stay potent for years.

(2) Just a few drops of the most potent nerve poisons in the US arsenal can kill just by being brushed on the skin.

b) The US also conducts research into "defensive" measures [antidotes] for this kind of warfare - but this requires the storage and controlled use of the weapons themselves

V. THE COMBINED EFFECT OF THE HORSEMEN - "...And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth."

A. "**them**" refers to the effect of all 4 horsemen. This is an awesome judgement

1. 1st Horseman: Anti-Christ - "...And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth,

2. 2nd Horseman: Mortal Violence - *to kill with sword,*

3. 3rd Horseman: Famine - *with hunger,*

4. 4th Horseman: Death & Hell - *with death, and by the beasts of the earth."*

B. THESE JUDGEMENTS MAY BE CONCENTRATED IN DIFFERENT REGIONS.

1. Zechariah 6:1-7 - *1 I looked up again--and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains--mountains of bronze! 2 The first chariot had red horses, the second black, 3 the third white, and the fourth dappled--all of them powerful. 4 I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. 6 The one with the black horses is going towards the north country, the one with the white horses towards the west, and the one with the dappled horses towards the south." 7 When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.*

C. NOTE: THE SCENARIO OF JESUS - Matt. 24, Mk.13, Lk.21

1. False Christs - The White Horse
2. Wars - The Firey Red Horse
3. Famines - The Black Horse
4. Pestilences - The Pale Horse

D. "beasts of the earth"?

1. Since the word translated "beasts" occurs 38xs in Rev. and in all other cases refers to a Satanic leader, some say this could point to those who give themselves totally to the Anti-Christ and his 'spirit'.
2. However, the most destructive creature on earth is not the lion or the bear, but the rat.
 - a) It has killed more than all wars of history and lives wherever man is found.
 - (1) Even if 95% of the rat population in a given area is exterminated, it will replace itself within a year.
 - b) Their fleas carry bubonic plague, which killed 1/3 the population of 14th Century Europe.
 - c) They also carry Typhus which has killed @ 200 million people in 4 centuries.
3. Also Note: The Lalonde brothers point out that the viruses that kill are themselves micro-sized "beasts" unknown in John's time.
 - a) "To sidestep disaster, all poultry in Hong Kong had to be destroyed. If that variant of influenza had gotten loose and begun spreading from person to person, Webster now thinks, it could have wiped out one-third of the Earth's population. ... "Another killer flu virus will come along," says Webster. "It's only a matter of time." By understanding what's happening to the virus in the wild, he says, researchers will have a better idea of new strains that might threaten us--an early warning that can save lives." - from 'Your Health' By Peter Jaret, 'How the Flu Makes Its Way from Wild Ducks, to Livestock, to You' - National Wildlife December/January 2000

E. RECOGNIZE THE APPROACHING HOOFBEATS, THE DARK SHADOW BEING CAST BY THE SOON APPEARANCE OF THESE HORSEMEN. BUT ALSO REMEMBER, IN ORDER FOR A SHADOW TO BE CAST TOWARDS US, THERE MUST BE A LIGHT BEHIND THE HORSEMEN - AND THERE IS. BEHIND THE HORSEMEN SHINES THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE BLESSED HOPE - THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF OUR GREAT GOD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!

VI.CLOSING THOUGHT:

1. A few thousand years ago, God planted a garden and placed man and woman there to take care of it and enjoy it. Satan also came and planted seeds of sin and man and woman chose to water the seeds of sin instead of taking care of the garden.
 2. Ever since then those seeds have been producing death & deception, suffering & sickness in a crescendo leading up to a final, horrible flourish immediately before the return of Jesus Christ.
 3. But... Even as the seeds of sin were taking root, God told of a Promised Seed Who would come destroying sin and its fruit - and sow the seeds of the Garden once again - then return for a great final harvest. Satan's seeds will be uprooted and burned, but the Savior's seeds will be gathered for eternal life.
- B. THERE IS A PART FOR US TO PLAY - SOW THE GOOD SEED!
1. The 5th Seal and multitude of Chpt. 7 remind us that there will be many saved during the Tribulation - though at a great cost.
 2. Just as certain seeds may lie dormant in a desert for years and then spring to life when watered, so we need to scatter the seeds of the Gospel - even if it seems that there is nothing but the dry soil of hardened hearts.
 3. We Have Been Scattered To Sow Seeds
 - a) 1 Pet.1:1 - *"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia."*
 4. The Growth Is Up To God
 - a) cf. Mk.4:26-28 - *"He also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head."*
 - b) 1 Cor.3:6-7 - *He who plants or waters is nothing - only God Who causes growth.*
 5. Sow the seed by faith. It may be the Tribulation which will dig the wells deep enough to bring forth water to Eternal Life.

(1) *"Now He Who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness." - 2 Cor.9:10*

THE FIFTH SEAL - Rev. 6:9-11

INTRODUCTION

A. "9 When he opened the fifth seal,..."

1. "Seal" - remember that the picture here is of a scroll with a series of seals within it being unraveled. Like an illustrated book where the illustrations come to life, with each unwinding of the scroll a new portion of the prophetic scene comes to life and rides across the horizon
 - a) note: This seal is different from the others in that it shows the result of the action [persecution], rather than the action itself.

I. WHO JOHN SAW - "...I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain"

A. THESE ARE THE MARTYRS WHO'VE LOST THEIR LIVES UNDER THE FIRST FOUR SEALS. Their company will be completed when the ripples of the last seal [7th Bowl] are finished.

1. *Rev. 20:4 - I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

B. HITLER IS AN EXAMPLE OF PERSECUTION

1. cf. lampshades made of tattooed human skin, gold ingots from teeth, baled human hair.
2. the pattern - discrimination, segregation, deprivation, extermination

II. WHERE HE SAW THEM - "under the altar"

A. WHICH ALTAR?

1. The tabernacle included the altar of incense and the altar of sacrifice.
2. Revelation rarely refers to the altar of sacrifice - more frequently to the altar of incense representing the prayers of the saints. However, this reference must be to the altar of sacrifice because the word used for "*slain*" is 'sphazo', the word used for the slaughter of a sacrifice.

B. WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE?

1. When a sacrifice was offered, the blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the base of the altar.
2. *Ex. 29:12 - "Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar."*
 - a) *Lev. 4:7 - "The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the Tent of Meeting. The rest of the bull's blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting."*
3. The Bible teaches that life is represented by blood, thus we have a picture of those who have been martyred for Jesus.
 - a) *Lev. 17:11 - "For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life."*

C. THEIR MARTYRDOM WAS A SACRIFICE TO GOD

1. To others they were just killed, but to God they were offered as a sacrifice to Him.
 - a) cf. *2 Tim. 4:6 - "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure."*
 - (1) *Phil. 2:17 - "But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you."*
2. They were despised by the world, but honored by God
 - a) cf. The Hall of Faith - Heb. 11:... 35ff - If it were our museum, the last few verses would be a neglected, dimly-lit alcove that we avoid due to embarrassment. But to the Lord, they are given a place of prominence where they can see His face.

III. WHY THEY WERE THERE - "... for the word of God and for the testimony which they held."

- A. They are "under the altar" because they placed their lives "on the altar"
- B. They did not compromise! Where do we draw the line? No compromise on the Word of God
 - a) cf. John Hus, etc. who died for the Word of God
 - b) Exhortation:
 - (1) Others died to bring you the Word - how do you treat it?
 - (2) If you take it for granted, others will take it from you.
- 2. No compromise on the Testimony of your life
 - a) What you say - How you live. They "maintained" their testimony
 - (1) They had resisted sin cf. Heb. 12:4 - "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood."
- C. PERSECUTION WILL COME TO THOSE WHO STAND FOR JESUS!
 - 1.2 Tim. 3:12-13 - "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution, while evil men and impostors go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived." cf. 1 Pet. 4:12-19

IV. WHAT THEY WERE DOING - **10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"**

- A. HOW LONG? - The cry of all who suffer for Jesus. They looked beyond time and set their hearts on eternity.. and now they cry out for their vindication and the consummation of the age.
- B. "**Until You judge... and avenge**" - There is judgment for one and all, each in its time and place, and all in the hands of God - not us. Vengeance is Mine says the Lord!
- C. "**those who dwell on the earth**" - Revelation uses references to those who live on the earth as representing the mass of mankind who reject Jesus and rebel against God. cf. Phil. 3:17-19

V. THE RESPONSE OF GOD - THREE GIFTS - **11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.**

- A. A Robe of Righteousness - A Gift received by Faith
- B. A Time of Rest - By Trusting in their Lord
- C. A Reason for the Delay - Others will be joining them

VI. CLOSING THOUGHT:

A. WHERE IS YOUR LIFE? ON THE ALTAR OR ON THE THRONE?

- 1. Rom. 12:1 - "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God - this is your spiritual act of worship."
 - a) Col. 1:24 - "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church."
 - b) 2 Cor. 1:5 - "For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows."
- 2. 2 Cor. 4:8-11 - "8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that His life may be revealed in our mortal body."
- 3. Rom. 8:17 - "Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory."
 - a) Gal. 6:17 - "Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."
 - b) Phil. 3:10 - "I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death."
- 4. 1 Pet. 4:13 - "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when His glory is revealed."

THE SIXTH SEAL - Rev. 6:12-17

INTRO:

cf. Mt. 24:29 - "Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

PERSPECTIVE: THREE-FOLD SHAKING OF THE SIXTH SEAL

I. THE SHAKING OF THE EARTH - 12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

A. A GREAT EARTHQUAKE

1. Note: "**earthquake**" - lit. "seismos" - a grk word meaning "quaking, shaking, agitating"

a) The same word used in vs. 13 of figs "shaken" out of a tree.

(1) What if the vast network of unstable earthquake belts around the world suddenly began to slip and fracture on a global basis?

b) *Isa. 24:19 - The earth is broken up, the earth is split asunder, the earth is thoroughly shaken.*

B. A DARK SKY

1. This is naturally accompanied by tremendous volcanic eruptions, spewing vast amounts of dust and gases into the upper atmosphere causing the sun to be darkened and the moon to appear blood-red.

a) *Isa. 13:10 - The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light. The rising sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light.*

b) *cf. The Central Valley on evenings after a forest fire, or a "burn day"*

II. THE SHAKING OF THE HEAVENS - 13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.

1. *cf. Hag 2:6-7 - 6 This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty.*

B. THE STARS FALLING

1. Note: The word "**star**" [Grk. aster] refers to any luminous body in the sky other than sun and moon

2. The most likely identification is that of a great swarm of asteroids or meteorites falling upon the earth [cf. National Geographic video on Asteroids]

3. Or an image of meteor-like rocks and lava falling back to earth after being propelled into the sky from major volcanic eruptions.

C. THE SKY RECEDING

1. An earth-dwellers perspective?

2. Hal Lindsay believes this is the result of a nuclear exchange.

a) "Do you know what happens in a nuclear explosion? The atmosphere rolls back on itself! It's this tremendous rush of air back into the vacuum that causes much of the destruction of a nuclear explosion."

b) However, the 'earth dwellers' recognize it as the Wrath of the Lamb.

3. *cf. Worlds in Collision - Immanuel Velikovsky - introduction of a new planet into the solar system - like Venus may have been*

4. Polar Axis Shift?

a) *Isa. 24:20 - The earth reels like a drunkard, it sways like a hut in the wind; so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion that it falls--never to rise again.*

b) This may have accompanied Noah's Flood

III.THE SHAKING OF MENS' HEARTS - 15 *And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!*

A.THE WORLD WILL RUN & HIDE

1.Wherever possible, people - particularly the leaders - will flee to underground civil defense shelters originally designed as protection against nuclear war - or to the natural caverns such as Mammoth Cave, hoping to escape the devastations...

a)*Isa. 2:10,19 - 10 Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty! ...19 Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.*

B.Interesting Note: There are SEVEN categories of people mentioned in v.15.

- 1.Kings
- 2.Great Men
- 3.Rich
- 4.Commanders
- 5.Mighty Men
- 6.Slave
- 7.Free

C.THE WORLD WILL RECOGNIZE THE SOURCE - THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

- 1.The Lord will have gotten their attention
- 2.cf. My experience with LA Quake
- 3.Note that "wrath" is recognized here - before the Mid-point of the Tribulation.
 - a)Contrary to the 'Mid-Trib' or 'Pre-Wrath' views
 - b)Though consider the Parallel vs. Chronological Views

D.THE WORLD WILL REFUSE TO TURN TO THE LORD

- 1.This will be only a short-lived recognition
 - a)Probably glossed over with "scientific" explanations
 - b)It may be true that there are "no atheists in foxholes" - but there is a lot of apostasy afterwards
 - c)cf. Rev. 9:20-21 - "***20 the rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshiping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood - idols that cannot see or hear or walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts.***"

E.INSTEAD OF PRAYING TO GOD - THEY CRIED OUT TO THE ROCKS

IV.SUMMARY OF THE SIXTH SEAL

A.THERE WILL BE A UNIVERSAL SHAKING OF CREATION

- 1.Note: Creation is held together by the Lord - so it is in His hands to shake it when He so desires
 - a)*Col. 1:15-17 - 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

B.GOD WILL HAVE GOTTEN THEIR ATTENTION - BUT NOT THEIR ALLEGIANCE

V. CLOSING THOUGHT: WHO CAN STAND? - 17 *"For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

A. A FIXED EVENT - THE WRATH OF THE LAMB

1. Heb. 12:25-27 - 25 *See to it that you do not refuse Him Who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused Him Who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from Him Who warns us from heaven? 26 At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, 'Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.'* 27 *the words 'once more' indicate the removing of what can be shaken - that is, created things - so that what cannot be shaken may remain.*

a) There is a spiritual shaking taking place even now

B. A SOBERING QUESTION - WHO IS ABLE TO STAND?

1. Mal. 3:2 - *But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap.*

C. A SURE SALVATION - IN THE LAMB

1. SAY NO TO JESUS AND YOU'LL KNOW HIS WRATH

a) When you say No to the invitation of Jesus, something happens to your heart. You become dangerously hardened.

b) Jn. 3:35-36 - *"The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in His hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."*

2. SAY YES TO JESUS AND YOU'LL KNOW HIS GRACE

a) 1 Thess. 5:9 - *For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

b) Joel 2:30-32 - *30 I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 32 And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved ..."*

D. TRUST IN THE LORD AND YOU'LL STAND SECURE

1. Matt. 24:35 - *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away."*

2. Isa. 54:10 - *"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, Yet My unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor My covenant of peace be removed says the LORD, who has compassion on you."*

3. Heb. 12:28-29 - 28 *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our 'God is a consuming fire'.*

4. Psalm 62:5-8 - *"5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him. 6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken. 7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; He is my mighty rock, my refuge. 8 Trust in Him at all time, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge."*

A STILLNESS, A SELECTION, & A SEALING

Rev. 7:1-8

I.A STILLNESS - 1 *After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."*

A.Rev. 7 is clearly an interlude, a parenthesis, in the unfolding revelation of the End Times

B.The picture is vivid.

- 1.The winds are striving to be turned loose, but are held in check by these angels
- 2.A stillness also descends on human affairs. A lull between the storms
- 3.Men may try to take credit, but the purpose is the sealing of the 144,000

C."Four" is the number of this world and there is a four-fold repetition of it in these verses.

1.*Dan. 7:2-3 - 2 Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. 3 Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.*

II.A SELECTION - 4 *And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed: 5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand were sealed; 6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand were sealed; 7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand were sealed; 8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand were sealed; of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand were sealed.*

A.WHO ARE THE 144,000? MANY THEORIES.

- 1.JWs, Armstrongism, Many isolationist "Overcomer" groups and cults
 - a)[Ω See 'Fanciful Views on the 144,000' in Appendix]
- 2.Many theologians are bound by their theology to say that this is a picture of the church because, to them, Israel = the church.
- 3.Actually, we have no need to belong to this group!

B.THE LORD IS NOT DONE WITH THE JEWS

1.Remember: The prophets, our Lord, and the apostles were all Jews

2.cf. Rom .9-11

a)*Rom. 11:1-2 - 1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew...."*

b)*Rom. 11:11 - Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. cf. Rom. 11:25-27*

3.The Lord has miraculously preserved the Jews through centuries of dispersion, prejudice and persecution.

a)cf. Hitler's mandate for reading in the state churches of Germany

(1)"Will all of the men in this church who are Jewish stand up? Those standing will now turn and leave the church. Now, will all of the women in this church who are Jewish stand up? Those standing, now leave the church. Will all of those in this congregation who had a Jewish grandparent of the maternal side stand up? You will now leave. Now, will all of those who have a Jewish grandparent on the paternal side stand up? You will now leave. Now will all of those who have any Jewish blood anywhere in the family line on the maternal side stand up? Now, you are ordered to leave." [The Lord also stood up and left with them.]

4.What's wrong with taking this passage as is? Nothing!

C.WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE NUMBER 144,000?

1.144,000 is based upon the number 12 - a number for government in general but especially for Israel

a)The 12 Tribes of Israel

b)The Breastplate of the High Priest had twelve gems =12 tribes

c)On the table of showbread, in Tabernacle were 12 holy, consecrated loaves = 12 Tribes.

d)Their names will be inscribed on the gates of the millennial city of Jerusalem, as well as the gates of the New Jerusalem

(1)*Eze. 48:30-35 - 30 "These will be the exits of the city: Beginning on the north side, which is 4,500 cubits long, 31 the gates of the city will be named after the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate of Judah and the gate of Levi. 32"On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph, the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan. 33"On the south side, which measures 4,500 cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon, the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun. 34"On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali. 35 "The distance all around will be 18,000 cubits. "And the name of the city from that time on will be: the LORD is there."*

(2)*Rev. 21:10-13 - 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.*

e)Note: The Relation of the Twelve Apostles to Israel

(1)*Mt.19:28 - Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

(2)*Rev. 21:14 - The wall of the city [new Jerusalem] had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

f)Since Israel is literal here and the tribes are literal, it would seem best to take the numbers literally also.

2.Note: cf. the 144,000 of Rev. 7 with those of Rev. 14

a)"1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:1-5

b)They are most likely the same group (cf. Bachelors 'til the Rapture! - 14:4)

D.WHAT ABOUT THE "TRIBES" OF ISRAEL?

1.Note: Under the Law - genealogical proof of ancestry was vital

a)*Neh. 7:61-65 - 61 The following came up from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer, but they could not show that their families were descended from Israel: 62 the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda 63 And from among the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai (a man who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by that name). 64 These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. 65 The governor, therefore, ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there should be a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.*

2.When the records were destroyed and the nation dispersed, they became known as the "lost tribes" - but they're not lost to God. [also: members of 10 Tribes moved to Judah to worship 2 Chron. 11:13-17]

a)The Tribes will be given portions of land during the Millennium - Eze. 48:1-29

b)Note: Genetic 'marker' found that identifies priests. [Ω see 'GENETIC LINK' in Appendix]

3.Note: Significance of Genealogies

a)12 + 2 sons of Joseph adopted by Jacob [Ephraim & Manasseh]

b)Usually didn't list Joseph or Levi

c)Rev. 7 deletes the Tribes of Dan and Ephraim

(1)note: Deut. - God said that any tribe leading the Israelites into Idolatry would be cut-off. Dan and Ephraim were the two tribes in which golden calves were built as idols in the Northern Kingdom by Jeroboam [1Kings 12:25-29]

d)However, both of these tribes *are* listed in the Millennial apportionment

4.cf. Tribes & Denominations

III.A SEALING

A.THE HOLY SPIRIT IS CALLED THE SEAL OF GOD

1.2 Cor. 1:21-22 - *21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*

2.Eph. 1:13-14 - *13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.*

3.Eph. 4:30 - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*

B.THIS APPARENTLY INCLUDES BEING MARKED WITH HIS NAME

1.Rev. 14:1 - *Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.*

2.Rev. 22:3-4 - *3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*

C.THIS IS A SPECIAL SEALING

1.They will receive an extra measure of the Holy Spirit with powerful Anointing, and Unction g them to fearlessly proclaim the Gospel to all nations

2.This also includes special protection in the Tribulation [Rev. 9:4]

3.cf. with PAUL - 1 Cor. 15:8 - *"And last of all He appeared to me also, as to one **abnormally born**"*

a)cf. Scofield - *"**abnormally born**" - gr. "ektromati" - "before due time [prematurely]". Paul thinks of himself here as an Israelite whose time to be born again had not come, nationally [cf. Mt.23:39], so that his conversion by the appearing of the Lord in glory [Acts 9:3-6] was an illustration of the future national conversion of Israel.*

b)Paul was the prototype - Imagine an Army of "Pauls", "Stephens" & "Peters"

D.SO WHAT FOR US?

1.WE ALSO ARE SEALED - IN JESUS

2.WE ALSO ARE SEALED - FOR A PURPOSE

3.THE GIFTS AND CALLING OF GOD ARE IRREVOCABLE

4.WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

THE GREAT MULTITUDE

Rev. 7:9-17

INTRO : 4 Questions: 1- WHO DID JOHN SEE? 2- WHAT WERE THEY SAYING? 3- WHAT WAS THE EFFECT? 4- WHAT IS THEIR STATUS?

I.WHO DID JOHN SEE? - 9 *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

A.AS TO THEIR NUMBER - they are countless

B.AS TO THEIR NATIONALITY - Not a single tribe or tongue is missing.

C.AS TO THEIR NATURE

1.THEY ARE SAVED

a)The fact that they are wearing white robes indicates that these include the tribulation saints of the first half of the Tribulation [5th Seal - 'souls under the altar']

D.But - WHO ARE THEY?

1.There are some fanciful suggestions - but answer is simple

2.The scene is in heaven - but John does not recognize them - thus they are not the church - which was taken into heaven at Chapter 4

3.THEY ARE "TRIBULATION SAINTS" - those who respond to the preaching of the 144,000 "sealed" Jewish evangelists who will be spreading an "epidemic" of revival

a)They have turned in repentance and faith to the Lord

4.Note: "who have come out" - "hoi erchomenoi" - This is a present middle participle with the idea of continued repetition. i.e. "who are coming out"

a)"The martyrs are still arriving from the scene of the great tribulation" [Charles]

b)The number of those in 5th Seal is still being completed.

c)John is watching as they are Arriving in Heaven

(1)cf. Chapt. 15, 21

II.WHAT WERE THEY SAYING? - 10 *and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

A.PRAISING GOD for His SALVATION - *Salvation belongs to our God*

B.PROCLAIMING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY - *our God, Who sits on the throne*

C.RECOGNIZING THE LAMB OF GOD - *and to the Lamb*

D.REJOICING IN SALVATION

1.A Heavenly Triumphal Entry?

a)"Salvation belongs to our God" - like "Hosanna" [An expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise]

(1)*Jn 12:12-13 - 12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"*

2. A Heavenly "Feast of Tabernacles"? - v.9 ***"with palm branches in their hands."***

- a) note trumpets were blown while the sacrifices were being offered and all the feasts were to be treated as sabbaths - days of rest, on which no work was to be done
- b) ISBE - "The Feast of Tabernacles is at once the general harvest festival and the anniversary of the beginnings of the wanderings in the wilderness [Ex.23:16, Lev. 23:33ff, Dt. 16:13-15]. The eighth day of assembly immediately following the last day of Tabernacles [Lev.23:36, Nu.29:35ff, Jn.7:37] and closing the long cycle of Tishri festivals seems to have been merely a final day of rejoicing before the pilgrims returned to their homes.

III. WHAT WAS THE EFFECT? - ***11 All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, Be to our God forever and ever. Amen."***

A. The praises of the Multitude are a catalyst for the praises of the Heavenly Host.

B. Note: Each of the praises is preceded by the definite article - *"The Praise, The Glory, The Wisdom, etc."*

1. It is a great thing when something we say or do stimulates others to praise the Lord

a) Your Testimony / Your Confession / Your Ministry

2. We should live conscious that we might inspire thunderous worship before the throne

a) cf. When a Sinner repents: "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." Lk. 15:7.

IV. WHAT IS THEIR STATUS? - ***13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" 14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.***

A. THEY ARE RECOGNIZED

1. The Lord wants these tribulation saints to be recognized by believers of all ages

a) The elder asked, just so the answer might be given

b) God recorded their victory in the eternal pages of His Word

B. THEY ARE REWARDED - ***15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.....***

1. They are before the throne where they see His face.

a) Imagine - the worst the beast could do turns out to be the very best that could happen to them!

2. They are there not only to SEE, but also to SERVE

a) What a Joy when our vision of the Lord becomes fuel for service

(1) Note: This promise must be fulfilled during the millennium because there will not be a temple in the New Jerusalem

(a) *Rev. 21:22 - I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.*

(b) Eze 43:1-7

b) Note: Martyrs reward - the "crown of life"

(1) *Rev. 2:10 - Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.*

(2) *James 1:12 - Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*

C.THEY ARE RECEIVED

1.BROUGHT INTO HIS TENT - ...*And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them*

a)cf. NIV - "... will spread His tent over them"

b)This would be a picture of adoption or marriage or charitable care

2.BROUGHT UNDER HIS PROTECTION - **16** *They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;*

a)They had done without for the sake of Jesus - now they will never be in need again

(1)It will be illegal for believers to buy food or drink during the Tribulation [Rev. 13:17]

(2)"and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." rev 13:17

(3)Note: it may be that those who help believers during this time were especially on the Lord's mind when He promised a reward for those who gave Him something to eat and drink - by giving it to His brothers [Matt. 25:34-40]

(a)"34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" Matthew 25:34-40, NKJV.

b)They had suffered much for Him - but never again

(1)Those without the mark are fair game for slaughter during the Tribulation [Rev. 13:15; 20:4]

(2)"He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed." Rev. 13:15

(3)"... Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." Re 20:4

3.BROUGHT INTO HIS FLOCK - **17** *"for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."*

a)Jesus is the Good Shepherd

(1)Ps. 23, John 10

b)Jesus is the Well of Living Water where we drink and never thirst again - Jn.4

(1)"Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."" John 4:10

(2)"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."" John 7:38.

A SOLEMN SILENCE, SEVEN ANGELS, THE INCENSE OF PRAYER, FIRE FROM THE ALTAR

Revelation 8:1-5

INTRO:

- One of the purposes of our study in Revelation is to better understand it so we can claim its promised blessing for all who will *"read the words of this prophecy... hear it... and take to heart what is written in it"*
- The Opening of the 7th Seal is the last barrier to the reclaiming of the Title Deed to Earth by its Righteous Rightful Owner!

I. A SOLEMN SILENCE - *1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

A. THIS IS UNUSUAL FOR HEAVEN

1. The normal activity is a celestial symphony of awesome praise

a) Ecc 3:1,7 - *1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: ... 7.. a time to be silent*

B. WHAT HAPPENED? THERE ARE MANY FANCIFUL THEORIES

1. From this being a full stop of judgement and the rest being a fuller description of what has already come to this silence being proof positive that there are no women in heaven

2. We cannot know what, if anything, happened during this silence

3. We can, however, guess what kind of a silence this was

a) [Ω see 'THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF SILENCE' in Appendix]

4. SILENCE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD

a) Zeph 1:7 - *"Be silent before the Sovereign LORD, for the day of the LORD is near..."*

b) Hab 2:20 - *"20... the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him."*

c) This is most likely the kind of silence found here

(1) Enemies of God - are speechless as their fears are finally and fully confirmed. They had chosen the passing pleasure of the lie instead of the eternal purposes of the truth. And now, the day of reckoning is like a forceful blow, knocking the breath right out of them..

(2) Members of God's Kingdom - are speechless as their faith is finally and fully confirmed - They knew He is Worthy. Now they experience the final truth - HE IS WORTHY! And they enter the silence of a renewed revelation of the glory of the Lamb

C. WHAT WAS THIS SILENCE LIKE? I THINK IT WAS LIKE

II. THE SEVEN ANGELS - *2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets.*

A. THESE ARE BELIEVED TO BE WHAT WE KNOW AS ARCHANGELS

1. Michael - Jude 9 - "archangel", Dan. 10:13 - "one of the chief princes"

2. Gabriel - Lk 1:18-21 - *19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news."*

3. Other names in Jewish tradition - Uriel, Raphael, Sarakiel, Raguel

B. THEY ARE ACTIVE IN GOD'S PLAN FOR EARTH

1. With Daniel, Zechariah, Mary, The Trumpets and Bowls...

C. THEY ARE GIVEN 7 TRUMPETS - Trumpets were used for many purposes

1. To mobilize for war

2. To celebrate an appointed Feast

3. At the crowning of a King

4. To proclaim the awesome presence of God

5. To signal the intervention of God

6. All of these will accompany the 7 Trumpets to some degree

7. Some Verses

- a) The Signal from Mt. Sinai - [Ex.19:16-19 niv] - *"16 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled."*
- b) The Signals for Gathering - [Nu.10:1-10 niv] - *"1 The LORD said to Moses: 2 "Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camps set out."*
- c) The Resurrection Call - 1Cor.15:51-53, 1Thess.4:16
 - (1) *"51 Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality."* 1 Cor 15:51-53 niv
 - (2) *"For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first."* (1 Thess 4:16) niv

III. THE INCENSE OF PRAYER - 3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

A. THE GOLDEN CENSOR AND THE GOLDEN ALTAR

1. cf. Ex. 30:1-10
2. Note: Gold = Divinity - God. Apart from God, we have no censor, no incense, no altar, no access

B. THE INCENSE OF PRAYER

1. cf. The Bowls of the Elders - **Rev. 5:8** - *"... and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."*
2. Note: **"All The Saints"** - This includes the prayers of all the saints throughout history
3. Our prayers are Saved, Savored & Sovereignly Answered

C. DOES PRAYER MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

1. YES! YES! YES!
2. Your prayers are a sweet incense, filling Heaven. Bringing pleasure to all who surround the throne of God.
3. Never Underestimate the the importance or the impact of your prayers
 - a) No matter how roughly they leave our lips - they arrive in Heaven as a glorious fragrance
 - b) No matter how insignificant they may seem to us - they are treasured by our Father and held in golden bowls by 24 Elders sitting on 24 thrones around the throne of God
4. No matter how weak they may seem to us - they are empowered by fire from the altar of heaven.

IV. FIRE FROM THE ALTAR - 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake.

A. THE THUNDER, RUMBLINGS, FLASHING & SHAKING IS ALWAYS A MILESTONE

1. Rev.4:5[an intro to the source - the throne]; 8:5[following the 7th seal]; 11:19[following the 7th trumpet]; 16:18 [following the 7th bowl]

B. THIS FIRE FROM THE ALTAR CAN BE SEEN DESCENDING UPON THE EARTH IN THE 1st TRUMPET

1. Rev.8:7 - *"The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down upon the earth."*

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

THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS

Revelation 8:6-13

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

I.THE FIRST TRUMPET - 7 *The first angel sounded: And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown to the earth. And a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.*

A.THESE ARE WELL ESTABLISHED SIGNS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

- 1.Ex 9:23-24 - "23 When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the Lord sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; 24 hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation."
- 2.Job 38:22-23 - 22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail, 23 which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle?"
- 3.Isa 28:2 - "See, the Lord has one who is powerful and strong. Like a hailstorm and a destructive wind, like a driving rain and a flooding downpour, he will throw it forcefully to the ground."

B.EXPLANATION?

- 1.Discharges from an encroaching comet
- 2.Volcanic explosions - consequence of worldwide violent earthquake
- 3.Hal L - A massive nuclear attack

C.EFFECTS

- 1.With this massive loss of vegetation will come soil erosion, floods, and mudslides. Air pollution will be immense; the smoke of the fire will fill the atmosphere, and the remaining vegetation will be unable to adequately absorb the hydrocarbons from automobiles and industry.

II.THE SECOND TRUMPET - 8 *Then the second angel sounded: And something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. 9 And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.*

A.HUGE, BLAZING MOUNTAIN

1.Note: Symbolic interpretations

a)Jer 51:24-25 - 24 "Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia for all the wrong they have done in Zion," declares the Lord. 25 "I am against you, O destroying mountain, you who destroy the whole earth," declares the Lord. "I will stretch out my hand against you, roll you off the cliffs, and make you a burned-out mountain."

b)Mt 21:20-21 - 20 When the disciples saw this, they were amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" they asked. 21 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done."

2.But the words of Jesus seem to clearly indicate a literal interpretation

a)Lk 21:25-26 - 25 "There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26 Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken."

B.SEA TO BLOOD, FISH KILLED, SHIPS DESTROYED

1.Zeph 1:2-3 - 2 "I will sweep away everything from the face of the earth," declares the LORD. 3 "I will sweep away both men and animals; I will sweep away the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The wicked will have only heaps of rubble when I cut off man from the face of the earth," declares the LORD.

2.Isa 2:12-18 - 12 The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted ... 16 for every trading ship and every stately vessel. 17 The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled;...

C.EXPLANATIONS

- 1.A giant meteorite, or asteroid, or even a satellite orbiting one of the other planets, could be propelled earthward by unknown forces. [note National Geographic video 'Asteroids']
- 2.The explosion on impact will dwarf that of an atomic bomb. The destruction of life in the sea will be tremendous, and the poisoned waters, like a great "red tide", will spread to the waters of other oceans so that a third part of the sea "becomes blood"
- 3.The same giant impact that poisons the waters would also generate giant "tidal waves" which would batter to pieces great numbers of ships anchored on the shores.
- 4.Note also the Power of the Two Witness - Rev. 11:6
 - a) *"These [two witnesses] have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will"*

D.EFFECTS

- 1.When you add the destruction of a third of the marine life to the previous devastation of vegetation, it amounts to a massive reduction of the world's food supply. The destruction of a third of the fleet of merchant ships means that food distribution to suffering nations is drastically reduced and starvation increases horrendously.

III.THE THIRD TRUMPET – 10 *Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood [Bitterness]. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.*

A.A GREAT STAR BLAZING LIKE A TORCH

- 1.Remember "star" can refer to any heavenly body.
- 2.This is like the second trumpet except it was apparently more solid than this object.

B.BITTER RIVERS AND SPRINGS

- 1.A third of the rivers and springs are contaminated
- 2."springs" = the subterranean sources of water
- 3.cf. Ex 15:23-25 - 23 *When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah. [Marah means bitter.]) 24 So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" 25 Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them.*

C.MANY PEOPLE DIED

D.EXPLANATION?

- 1.The Fact that this "Star" is named may indicate it is Symbolic
- 2.It Represents the Deadly Contamination of Vast Water Supplies (see 'Poisoned Waters')

E.EFFECTS

- 1.More Death
- 2.Water Wars

IV.THE FOURTH TRUMPET – 12 *Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine, and likewise the night.*

A. 1/3 LESS LIGHT

B.EXPLANATION

1.AIR POLLUTION

- a)The continuing effects of increasing, worldwide disasters
(1)cf. moving Curt & Peg to Monrovia

2.COSMIC ACTION

- a)"struck" - this may be more than a blockage caused by volcanic or other haze.
- b)"The moon and the planets shine by reflected light, of course, so that their light would be reduced if the sun's light were reduced."
- c)Something may slow down the internal reactions in the heavenly luminaries for a time so as to reduce their light output
- d)There is still much science doesn't understand about the sun
- e)Until recently, solar physicists were confident that the sun's output of radiant energy resulted mainly from thermonuclear fusion processes in it's interior. However, the absence of the expected flux of solar neutrinos from the sun, is causing a rethinking of the issue. Recent evidence that the sun is measurably shrinking in size apparently means that much of it's energy output results from gravitational collapse.

C.EFFECTS

- 1.Note: This judgement is apparently temporary in nature because later (Rev. 16:8-9) the power of the sun will be intensified.
- 2.This continues the devastating judgments upon the earth. In some ways it looks as if we have an "instant replay" of earlier judgments, but it is most likely a picture of the building momentum and intensifying consequences of these judgments.

D.APPLICATION:

1.DO WE REALLY BELIEVE IN GOD?

- a)Do we have a hard time accepting a literal understanding of these judgments?
- b)Perhaps it's because we don't really believe that God is Creator, Sustainer, and active Controller of all existence.

(1)HAVE WE FULLY ACCEPTED THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS?

(a)These judgments come from above. But even believers encounter "trials".

(b)How do we accept difficult things from the Lord?

i)Job 2:9-10 - "9 His wife said to him, 'Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!' 10He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?'"

(c)The answer will be a reflection of whether we are resting in this world which can be shaken or in Jesus, Who remains forever?

i)Heb 12:26-27 - 26At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." [Haggai 2:6] 27 The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken--that is, created things--so that what cannot be shaken may remain. ."

2.DO WE LISTEN TO HIS STILL SMALL VOICE?

- a)If we do not listen to His still, small voice, or His persistent knocking at the door - we will hear the blast of the trumpets of judgement.

(1)note: Personally, as well as prophetically

3.DO WE SEE HIS PATIENT MERCY?

- a)Why should the Lord spare two-thirds? It is His merciful call to them to turn to Him and live. Look to Jesus and live - today!

"And I looked, and I heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" Revelation 8:13

THE FIRST WOE

Rev. 9:1-12

INTRO: The WOES represent the breaking down of the dividing wall between Earth and Hell .

- Occult Book sales dbled from '79-'83 and have skyrocketed since then
 - Doubleday's Occult Book Club zoomed to 100,000 membership in 2 yrs.
 - Just think - Where else can you go after a stressful and possibly depressing week and hear your Pastor say "WOE"!?
- Demons are more active in America today than in any other time in our history - which is true whenever a nation turns from Godly Wisdom to ungodly enlightenment.
 - cf. Ouiji Board Friend, Teenage Girl
- To refuse Heaven is to choose Hell. Thus, the earthdwellers are given a taste of what is to come if they continue to refuse to repent.

I. THE STAR - 9:1 - *Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.*

A. FALLEN STAR?

1. "**Star**" is used in the Bible for: 1. Any luminous object in the sky 2. Angels 3. The Righteous
2. We've seen literal falling stars in first 4 Trumpets, but this is different - **To him was given**

B. WHO IS IT?

1. Angel

a) **Rev. 9: 11 - *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.*** [both mean Destroyer]

b) **Rev 20:1-3 - *1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.***

2. Satan

a) **fallen** is (πεπτωκοτα). Perfect active participle of πτω, 'already down'.

b) **Isa.14:12 *"How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to earth, you who once laid low the nations!" niv***

c) **In the sounding of the fifth trumpet, John sees the fallen star. This "star" is an angel. The fallen star would no doubt be Satan. The fallen star is given the key to the abyss.**

d) **Lk.10:18 *"He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.'" niv***

e) **Satan still has access to Heaven [cf. Job 1-2] but he will be cast out and his fury will be great upon the earth**

(1) **Rev. 12:7-12 - *7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ... 12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."***

II. THE ABYSS - 9:2 - *And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.*

A. WHAT IS THE ABYSS - THE BOTTOMLESS PIT? The word means "very deep, bottomless, unfathomable"

a) Used 9x in NT. 7 of those are in Revelation. [Luke 8:31, Rom. 10:7]

2. IT IS A "HOLDING TANK" FOR DEMONS

a) Lk 8:30-31 - 30 Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. 31 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. niv

b) Jude 6 - "And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home - these He has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day."

c) 2Pet.2:4 "...God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell [Tartarus], putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; "

d) The abyss is the place of incarceration for demons or evil spirits.

e) Its residents include the demonic prince of 9:11 and the beast mentioned in 11:7; 17:8

3. [Ω see 'THE ABYSS' in Appendix]

B. IT WILL RELEASE ITS "INMATES" DURING THE TRIBULATION - *3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.*

1. Imagine if all the prisons were emptied and prisoners were given complete license to do whatever they wanted

a) Rev. 11:7 - *When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.*

b) Rev 17:8 - *"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

C. THE ABYSS IS NOT THE PLACE OF FINAL PUNISHMENT FOR DEMONS - THE LAKE OF FIRE IS

1. The Abyss should be distinguished from "the lake of fire" where the beast and the false prophet are kept during the Millennium, and into which the Devil is to be finally cast.

2. Rev 20:1-3, 10

a) *"1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. ... 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*

3. and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. (v.2) Perhaps a massive volcanic eruption will occur as the Shaft of the Abyss is "blown open".

- cf. The 8th Plague of The Exodus
 - Exodus 10:12-15 - "12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land--all that the hail has left." 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were very severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt."

III. THE LOCUSTS

A. THEIR POWER - Like that of scorpions

1.9:3 ... And to them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

2. LOCUSTS? - The following description indicates these are not literal or normal locusts. But the term suggests the idea of a 'swarm'.

3. SCORPIONS

a) The Scorpion is a small animal [not insect] of the family called 'arachnids', like spiders, mites, and ticks. Most of them are black or yellowish and from 1/2 to 8 inches long. They have six pairs of jointed appendages: 1) tiny pincers 2) large claws for seizing and crushing prey 3-6) legs.

B. THEIR PURPOSE - To harm those who do not have God's seal

1.9:4 -5 - 4 They were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given authority to kill them, but to torment them for five months. Their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man.

2. They are not to touch...

a) The vegetation (unlike normal locusts)

(1) Note: The grass that was destroyed under the First Trumpet has regrown.

b) Those who have been sealed (includes the 144,000)

3. They are to torment - The scorpion's sting is a curved organ in the end of its tail. A scorpion wound is painful for several hours, but does not usually cause death.

a) Note: The word for 'torment' - *basanizo* - implies acute pain either

(1) physical, (Mt. 8:6; Rev. 12:2)

(2) mental (Mt. 8:29, 2 Peter 2:8)

(3) or metaphorical (Mt. 14:24, Mark 6:48)

C. THEIR DURATION - *five months*

D. A TERRIFYING PICTURE - 6 In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

1. Death is almost personified in the Scripture. Paul cried, "O death, where is your sting?" In literature, death is spoken of as grasping hold of people. "He's caught in the grasp of death." In Revelation 20 death and hell will be cast into the lake of fire (v.14). Death and hell will give up their dead to stand before God. Death will release its grasp, hell will release its grip, and men will stand before the judgment throne of God.

2. For five months death takes a holiday. I can't think of anything more horrible than not being able to die when the time to die has come.

E. *death will flee from them* - "Death will not be just hard to find. It will aggressively run away from those pursuing it." [Robert Thomas]

F.THEIR DESCRIPTION - 9:7-10 - 7 *The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.* 8 *They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth.* 9 *And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle.* 10 *They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power was to hurt men five months.*

G.WHAT ARE THESE LOCUST-BEASTS? 3 General Approaches

1.SYMBOLICAL APPROACH

a)Symbolic of evil influences being unleashed on the world

2.DESCRPTIVE APPROACH (Hal L.)

a)A 1st Century description of 20th Century scene - i.e. Helicopters and chemical warfare

3.LITERAL VIEW

a)A literal description of actual demon-beast creatures either

(1)Created by God

(2)Corrupted by Satan

(3)Genetically developed by man

b)A literal description of demons as seen with spiritual eyes.

H.THERE ARE SIMILARITIES IN JOEL'S DESCRIPTION OF A LOCUST JUDGEMENT BEFORE THE DAY OF THE LORD (Joel 1-2)

1."1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel the son of Pethuel. 2 Hear this, you elders, And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land! Has anything like this happened in your days, Or even in the days of your fathers? 3 Tell your children about it, Let your children tell their children, And their children another generation. 4 What the chewing locust left, the swarming locust has eaten; What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten; And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten. ... 6 For a nation has come up against My land, Strong, and without number; His teeth are the teeth of a lion, And he has the fangs of a fierce lion. ... 10 The field is wasted, The land mourns; For the grain is ruined, The new wine is dried up, The oil fails. ... 16 Is not the food cut off before our eyes, Joy and gladness from the house of our God?

2.1 *Blow the trumpet in Zion, And sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; For the day of the LORD is coming, For it is at hand: 2 A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness, Like the morning clouds spread over the mountains. A people come, great and strong, The like of whom has never been; Nor will there ever be any such after them, Even for many successive generations. ... 4 Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; And like swift steeds, so they run. 5 With a noise like chariots Over mountaintops they leap, Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble, Like a strong people set in battle array. ... 9 They run to and fro in the city, They run on the wall; They climb into the houses, They enter at the windows like a thief. 10 The earth quakes before them, The heavens tremble; The sun and moon grow dark, And the stars diminish their brightness. ... 12 "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. ... 25 "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. 26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the LORD your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.*

3.However, this army of locusts destroys the plants - but not the judgement of The 7th Trumpet!

I.THEIR KING - Satan?

1.9:11 *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.* [Abaddon and Apollyon mean Destroyer]

a)Matthew 12:24 - "Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

2.Or Abaddon is one of Satan's 'Generals'

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

Revelation 9:12

IV.CONCLUSION

A.SUMMARY

1.To refuse Heaven is to choose Hell.

2.God allows the earth-dwellers to experience a preview of what is ahead for those who continue to reject Jesus Christ. This is another opportunity for repentance.

B.WARNING!

1.THE DOOR IS ALREADY OPENING TODAY!

a)More people are opening their hearts to demons in disguise. Psychic Hotlines / OBEs / Guides / etc.

b)It appears that within man there is a protective barrier sheltering him to a certain extent from the influence of demons. Once a person begins dabbling in the occult, this protective fence is broken down. The victim becomes the prey of wicked evil forces. Occultly subjected people often confess that it was not too difficult to make contact with the spirits. But once they become aware of the diabolical nature of their spirit and sought to renounce this evil, they found that no power on earth could free them.

(1) cf. experience with 2 ladies and OBE s / article in 'Evolving Times' re managing the spirits.

THE 2nd WOE

Rev 9:13-21

- **INTRO: THE WRATH OF GOD, THE WONDER OF EVIL, THE WORK BEFORE US**
 - Joshua's "potion" - innocent, [3 slugs, green glue, soap, salt water, extra green glue] What's it for? I don't know - it's just a "potion"
 - Halloween costumes - sometimes innocent fun... But where do we draw the line? cf. Ouiji
 - We must wake up - we can't afford to think things are the same - they aren't! It is more than just another generation's "fun & games"

I. THE WRATH OF GOD

A.9:13 - *Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,*

1. This altar is the "altar of incense" from which our prayers ascend before God.

a) Gold = Divinity (also our faith - 1Pet.)

b) Altar = Sacrifice/Worship

c) Before God = Accepted by Him

B.9:14 - *saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."*

1. EUPHRATES RIVER

a) A Biblical boundary between East & West

(1) Limits of the Promised Land

b) One of the Rivers of Eden

c) A Sight of Sin

(1) The sight of the first sin - Eve disobeyed God in Eden

(2) The sight of the first murder - Cain slew Able near Eden

(3) The sight of the first idolatry - Nimrod built the city of Babylon and its tower

C.9:15 - *So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind.*

1. At least 1/4 of the world population had been killed by this time. The death of a third of those remaining means that 1/2 of the world population will have been destroyed by the end of the 2nd Woe.

2. note: In one night an angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers [2Kg 19:35]

3. ***prepared for the hour and day and month and year*** - Is God in Control? Are His Plans Established? YES, YES, YES!

D.9:16 - *Now the number of the army of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.*

1. "**horsemen**" - "cavalry force"

2. note: In 1965, China boasted it could field an army of 200 million [Time Mag. May 1, 1965 Vol. 85, No. 21] on page 35]

E.9:17-19 - 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; and the heads of the horses were like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three plagues a third of mankind was killed--by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For their power is in their mouth and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

F.EXPLANATIONS?

1.Demons? Modern Warfare?

2.A massive oriental invasion - cf. Rev. 16:12-16, Nah. 2:3-4

a)12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16)

b)3 The shields of his mighty men are made red, The valiant men are in scarlet. The chariots come with flaming torches In the day of his preparation, And the spears are brandished. 4 The chariots rage in the streets, They jostle one another in the broad roads; They seem like torches, They run like lightning. (Nahum 2:3-4)

3.Another Unleashing of Demons

a)note: Babylon is the ancient source of pagan religions

b)"**And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**" (Rev. 17:5)

4.THE REASON FOR GOD'S WRATH

a)"3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. 4 Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no-one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. 7 Therefore do not be partners with them." (Ephesians 5:3-7)

b)Wrath is God's "shock treatment" for a patient with no other alternative!

II.THE WONDER OF WICKEDNESS

A.CHOOSSES TO REBEL - 9:20 - But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk.

B.Paul makes it clear that idols aren't anything but those who worship them are actually worshipping demons. (1 Cor. 8:1-8; 10:14-22)

C. REFUSES TO REPENT - 9:21 - *And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.*

1. *murders,*

a) Violent Death

b) Abortion? - The ultimate violence

(1) In this nation today, 1/3 of all pregnancies are ended by abortion.

(2) cf. with angels' assignment to kill 1/3 of mankind.

(3) Killing

(4) Hatred

• "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." 1 John 3:15

2. *sorceries*

a) "pharmakeia" - "medication; drugs; sorcery"

(1) The Devil, Drugs and Death go hand in hand

(a) cf. see article "teenagers' devil worship can be a deadly passion"

(b) cf. Beware! It comes in many packages

i) "better living through chemistry", occult drug experiences, fantasy, pleasure, escape, superhuman strength, the "aspirin cure" complex

(c). The Occult Drug Culture is as Dangerous as the Drugs themselves!

3. *sexual immorality*

a) "porneia" - Whoredom, including adultery, incest; related also to male & female prostitution, and homosexuality

b) We are Saturated By This Plague - cf. Dobson video of 'Gay' Parade

(1) The Playboy Philosophy

(2) The Pleasure Principal

(3) Molestation, etc.

4. *thefts*

a) "stealing; derived from "klepto" - "to filch"

(1) cf. "What Ever Became of Honest Abe?" - Time - April 4, 1988

b) There is an epidemic of work-place theft today.

D. CONTINUES TO REAP

1. Death & Destruction from murder, drugs, immorality and idolatry

2. Damnation from refusing to repent!

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked;
for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.
(Galatians 6:7)*

THE WORK BEFORE US

WE NEED TO REPENT - Personally & Corporately

WE NEED TO RECEIVE

The Discipline & Correction of our Heavenly Father

The Forgiveness & Cleansing He Brings to a Repentant Heart

The Grace-Given Strength and Wisdom He Gives

WE NEED TO REACH OUT - TO JESUS, HIS PEOPLE, THE WORLD HE DIED FOR

Revelation Chapter 10

INTRO: Remember - *there should be delay no longer* comes immediately after the people of the earth refuse to repent.

I.A MIGHTY ANGEL - 1 *I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.*

- WHO IS THIS? JESUS OR AN ANGEL [Gabriel or Michael] By the description I believe this mighty angel is none other than Jesus Christ.

A.clothed with a cloud.

1.A cloud is almost always associated with God

a)*Rev. 1:7 - Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.*

b)*Ps. 104:3 "...He makes the clouds his chariot" niv*

c)*Dan. 7:13-14 niv - 13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

(1)(Acts 1:9-11) (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

d)*Rev. 14:14 - Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.*

(1)cf. The "cloud by day" - Ex. 40:34-38, Dan. 10:5-14

B.And a rainbow was on his head,

1.A rainbow encircles the throne of God - Rev. 4:3

a)*Ps. 89:8 - O Lord God Almighty, who is like you? You are mighty, O Lord, and your faithfulness surrounds you.*

C.his face was like the sun,

1.*Rev. 1:16 - He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

2.*Rev. 21:23 - The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.*

a)*Rev. 22:5 - There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.*

D.and his feet like pillars of fire.

1.*Rev. 1:15 - His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, ...*

a)cf. Fiery pillar of Exodus

2.Brass Symbolizes Judgement

a)¹⁹*So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. ²⁰ And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs." Rev. 14:19-20*

E.2 He had a little book open in his hand.

1. Is this the same scroll as Chpt. 5?

a) βιβλιον vs. βιβλαριδιον different forms of the same word

b) The Greek emphasizes the fact that the scroll is open which would tend to point to Jesus - the Lamb, Who alone was worthy to open the scroll. However, the book is connected with prophesying in vs. 8-11.

F. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars.

1. When Jesus comes again He's going to let out a shout that will be heard 'round the world. It'll sound like a roaring lion. It'll be a shout of triumph and victory.

a) Joel 3:16 - "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion.."

b) Amos 3:8 - "The lion has roared - who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken - who can but prophesy?"

(1) "The LORD will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior he will stir up his zeal; with a shout he will raise the battle cry and will triumph over his enemies." (Isaiah 42:13)

(2) "Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them: "The LORD will roar from on high; he will thunder from his holy dwelling and roar mightily against his land. He will shout like those who tread the grapes, shout against all who live on the earth." (Jeremiah 25:30)

(a) "They will follow the LORD; he will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west". (Hosea 11:10)

G. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

1. Ps. 29:3 - "The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of Glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters."

H.4 Now when the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

1. This is the only place in the Book of Revelation where John is told to seal instead of reveal.

a) cf. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:3-4 - 3 And I know that this man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows-- 4 was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. niv

(1) Note: John was attentive to the Word - ready to write it down.

II. NO MORE DELAY: AN END OF PATIENCE - 5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer,

A. Isn't this out-of-place to have Jesus swear by God? No!

1. cf. Heb. 6:13 - When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, niv

B. delay no longer,

1. Note: The Delay has been the patience of God for the salvation of men. But with refusal to repent comes refusal to delay!

2. Also: The souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9-11) wanted to know "how much longer?"

a) 9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (Revelation 6:9-11)

III.THE MYSTERY OF GOD - 7 but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared [evangelized] to His servants the prophets.

1. There are many "mysteries" to us - grace, mercy, forbearance with sin, the delayed judgement of evil, suffering, etc. But Jesus is the Answer to all!

a) Jn. 14:6 - He Is The Truth!

- [Ω see 'THE MYSTERY OF GOD' in Appendix]

IV.TAKE AND EAT - 8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth." 9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book." And he said to me, "Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth." 10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

A. Ezekiel 2:9-3:4 - 9 Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10 which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. 1 And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. 3 Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. 4 He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. niv

1. Ps. 19:9-10 - 9 The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are sure and altogether righteous. 10 They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. niv

a) Jer 15:16 - When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty. niv

B. The Revelation is sweet to us as believers because it speaks of eternal joy for us - but then we remember what it is for unbelievers - the sour bitterness of eternal anguish

1. cf. 2 Cor. 2:15-16 - 15 For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? niv

V.YOU MUST PROPHECY AGAIN - 11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

A. Because of this statement (and John 21:20-23), some believe that John will be one of the two witnesses spoken of in the next chapter.

1. 20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." 23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" (John 21:20-23)

THE TRIBULATION TEMPLE & THE TWO WITNESSES

Rev. 11:1-14

THE TRIBULATION TEMPLE

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

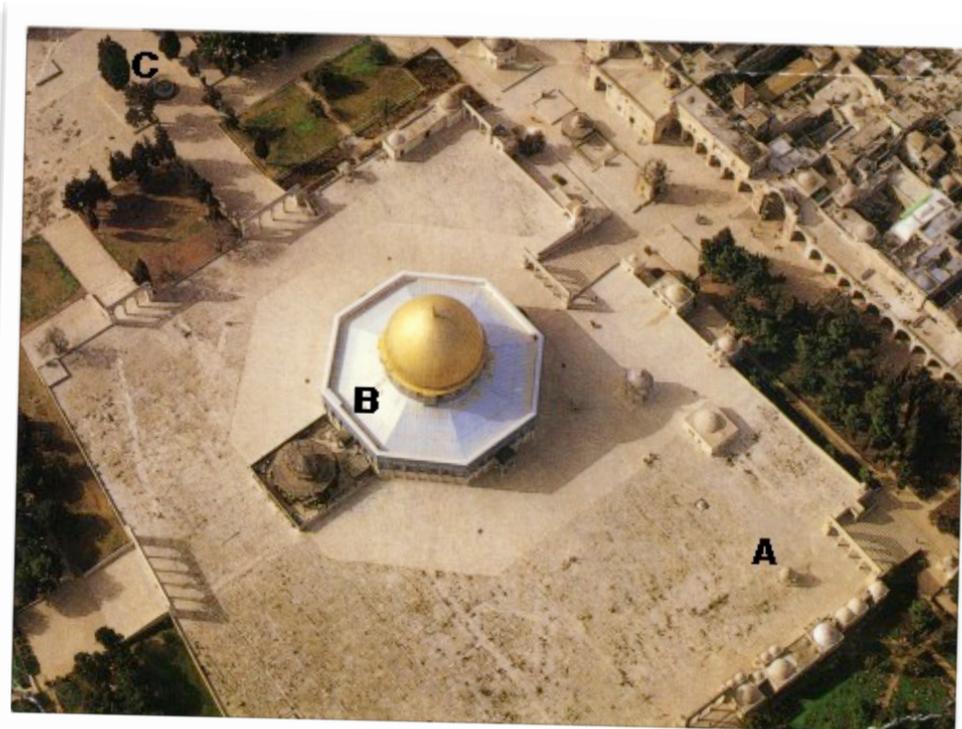
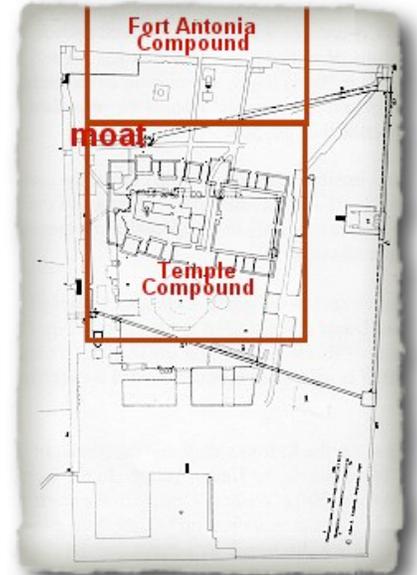
A. The Jews will Rebuild the Temple and Restore Temple Worship.

1. This must be part of the Antichrist's 7 year Covenant Because Breaking it is connect with Ending Temple Sacrifices and Desecrating the Temple.

a) *"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."* Daniel 9:27

B. *they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months* - The Jews will lose control of Jerusalem for 42 months.

C. *leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles* - This would allow for the Temple to be built next to the Dome of the Rock mosque without destroying it.



1. According to Kaufman's assertion as to the location of the Holy of Holies.
a) [See Video Clips]

THE TWO WITNESSES

Imagine Elijah in Salt Lake - or Moses in Washington D.C. ...

I. THE LENGTH AND CHARACTER OF THEIR MINISTRY - *"3 And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

A. THE LENGTH OF THEIR MINISTRY - 3 1/2 yrs.

1. The Two Witnesses will minister during the 1st half of the Tribulation
2. The 1260 days confirms the use of the Babylonian calendar of 360 days per year
 - a) [Ω see 'The 70 7s of Daniel' in Appendix]

B. THE CHARACTER OF THEIR MINISTRY - LIKE SACKCLOTH, IT 'RUBS THE WRONG WAY'

1. Sackcloth indicates OT message of lamentation - like Jeremiah grieving over coming judgement.

II. THE SOURCE OF THEIR MINISTRY - *4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth.*

A. THEIR STRENGTH FLOWS FROM THE OIL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. cf. Zech. 4:2-6 - 2 He asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights. 3 Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left." 4 I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?" 5 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied. 6 So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty. niv

- a) heb. "olive trees" - lit. "trees of oil"
- b) Oil = Holy Spirit

2. Like Zerubbabel, they may also be involved in the rebuilding of the Temple

III. THE STYLE OF THEIR MINISTRY - *5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.*

A. LIKE ELIJAH

1. *fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies ... power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls*

B. LIKE MOSES

1. *power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues*

IV. THEIR IDENTITY - The "nominees" are...

A. [Ω see 'IDENTITY OF THE TWO WITNESSES' in Appendix]

1. NOTE: Two Witnesses were
 - a) At the Tomb - Lk. 24:4-5
 - b) At the Mt. of Ascension - Acts 1:9-11
 - a) Also note: "fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies" probably refers to the ability to pronounce judgement from God and have the results manifested without delay

V.THEIR ENEMY AND END OF MINISTRY - *7 When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 Then those from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.*

A.KILLED BY THE BEAST - Satan's False Messiah - The Anti-Christ

1. [cf. Rev. 13; 17:8] (More on him later)

B.KEPT IN JERUSALEM

C.THEIR DEATHS CELEBRATED BY THE WORLD

1.Perhaps with ungodly gifts /things the Witnesses preached against?

VI.THE VICTORY OF THEIR MINISTRY - *11 Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*

1.cf. "Come up here" - cf Rev. 4:1

VII.A PIVOTAL POINT IN THE TRIBULATION - *13 In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

A.NOTE: "*seven thousand people*" - lit. "seven thousand names "

1.This is unusual - perhaps a reference to the blotting out of names from Book of Life

a)Revelation 3:4-5 - 4 "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5 "He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

2.Remember: Book of Life = Complete census of everyone ever born / Lamb's Book of Life = A roll of all who are saved in Jesus

VIII.THIS IS MID-POINT OF THE TRIBULATION - THE FIRST HALF INCLUDES ...

1.The Anti-Christ rises in power through an apparently effective peace program

2.He makes a 7 year covenant with Israel

3.The Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem

4.The Two Witnesses are active in ministry which irritates the Anti-Christ and his followers.

5.The Two Witnesses are martyred

6.The Anti-Christ breaks his Covenant with Israel and commits the Abomination that causes Desolation

7.Resurrection of 2 Witnesses with earthquake, etc.

8.Jews flee to safety - Rev. 12:6

9.Jerusalem Trampled upon by the Gentiles for 42 months

a)[Ω see Willmington's CHRONOLOGY in Appendix]

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

THE HERALDING OF THE LAST TRUMPET

Rev. 11:15-19

I. THE FINAL WOE - THE 7th TRUMPET - 15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*

A. ANNOUNCING THE LORD'S VICTORY - Like a herald before a King

1. Like a commander who has gained a beachhead

B. INSIGHT: The presence of a victory announcement reminds us that there has been conflict.

1. THE KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD - THE DOMINION OF THE DEVIL

a) Started by the rebellion of Satan

(1) Isa. 14:12-17 - *"I will make myself like the Most High."* niv

(2) Eze. 28:11-19 - (vs. 2) - *"In the pride of your heart you say, 'I am a god!'"* niv

b) Spread through temptation and the sin in the Garden

(1) Gen. 3:15 - *"...And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and hers."* niv

(2) Rom. 5:12-14

c) Solidified by Satan's rule as the "God and Prince of this world"

(1) Mt. 4:8-9 - Satan showed the Lord Jesus all the kingdoms of the world - *"All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me."* niv

(a) He offered A Cross-less Conquest = no victory over sin

(b) cf. Col. 2:15 - *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* niv

(2) Jn. 14:30; 16:11 - Jesus called him *"the prince of this world"*

(3) 2Cor. 4:4 - *"the god of this age"*

(4) Eph. 2:2 - *"...the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."* niv

(a) 1Pet. 5:8 [roaring lion]

(b) Seen in wicked foundations of our present world system - [age]

i) Built upon force, greed, selfishness, ambition, and sensuousness - 2Tim. 3:1-5

2. THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST

a) The Sovereign Rule of our God and Savior

(1) Ps. 99:1 - *"The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake."* niv

(a) Rev. 19:6

(2) Col. 1:15-18, Eph. 1:18-23

b) On the Cross He Conquered Sin & Satan

(1) cf. Col. 2:15 - *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* niv

(a) Col. 1:13 - *"For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves."* niv

c) At His Coming He Will Reclaim and Rule His Rightful Possession

3. God has always had the power and the authority. He could have established the kingdom of God at any time after Jesus paid the price of redemption; but God has now waited almost 2000 years. ... for the husbandman is waiting for the complete fruit of harvest.

II. THE PRAISE OF THE TWENTY-FOUR ELDERS - 16 *And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned. 18 The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth."*

A. THE CULMINATION IS SOON-HE IS COMING!

B. THE CELEBRATION HAS BEGUN-IN HEAVENLY PRAISE!

C. THE TIME HAS COME FOR ...

1. THE WRATH OF GOD - *The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come*

a) The 7th Trumpet Contains the 7 Bowls of the Wrath of God

2. THE JUDGEMENT OF THE DEAD - *And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,*

3. REWARDING THE FAITHFUL - *And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great,*

a) cf. The Judgement (Bema) Seat of Christ

4. DESTROYING THE DESTROYERS - *And should destroy those who destroy the earth."*

D. WHAT THE WORLD IS COMING TO:

1. Living in these days, I get impatient. I say, "O Lord, why have you waited so long? Come quickly!" Yet, when I think of my same prayer five years ago, I'm glad that He waited. During that time so many people have been added to the kingdom.

2. God is giving opportunity for men to repent. Thus, the delay is salvation to those who will believe.

3. But God said to Noah, "My spirit shall not always strive with man," and we realize that the Age of Grace is closing out and rapidly coming to an end. God is going to move on with the things of His eternal kingdom.

III. THE OPENING OF THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE

A. 19 *Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.*

1. Is this the Ark that was in the Tabernacle and in Solomon's Temple? Probably Not.

a) The Tabernacle was built according to the pattern God gave Moses.

(1) "4 For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.'" Hebrews 8:4-5

b) It was actually a 'model' of the Heavenly Temple - which was the Original.

c) Just as we've seen reference to a Heavenly Altar of Incense, this is probably a Heavenly Ark of the Covenant.

2. Consider what that says about the fixed purposes of the Covenant!

- [Ω see 'The Rebuilt Temple' in Appendix]

REV CHAPTER 12

I. THE WOMAN - 1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

A. Women often represent religious systems in Revelation:

1. The 'Jezebel' (2:20) of false teaching;

2. The 'Woman' (12:1) of Israel

a) Israel (or Zion or Jerusalem) is often represented as a woman (Isaiah 54:1-6; Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:8-14; Hosea 2:19-20)

3. The 'Great Harlot' (17:2) of false religion;

4. The 'Bride' (19:7-8) of the church;

B. Roman Catholicism claims this woman is Mary (as the "Queen of Heaven")

1. It is common in Catholic art to represent Mary as standing on a crescent moon with twelve stars around her head

C. Mary Baker Eddy said she was this woman

D. Scripturally, she can be identified with Israel, according to Joseph's dream

1. *Gen. 37:9-11 - 9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind. niv*

II. THE RED DRAGON - 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems [royal crowns] on his heads. 4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth....

A. The Dragon is Satan - vs. 9 - *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;...*

B. The Heads, Horns, and Diadems represent Gentile World Powers - Dan. 7-9, Rev. 13; 17

1. 'diadema' = 1] a blue band marked with white which Persian kings used to bind on the turban or tiara, - or - 2] the kingly ornament for the head, the crown

2. His description "symbolically suggests his fierce power and murderous nature . . . a picture of the fullness of evil in all its hideous strength." (Johnson)

C. *"a third of the stars"* - Many believe this describes one-third of the angelic host in league with Satan (his angels of verse 9).

III.THE DRAGON'S MURDEROUS INTENT - 4 ... *And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*

A.The attempt to devour her Child was initially fulfilled by Herod's attempts to kill Jesus as a child (The Slaughtering of the Innocents - Matthew 2:16-18)

1.Mat 2:16 - When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. niv

IV.THE MALE CHILD - 5 *She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.*

A.JESUS

1.Ps 2:7-9 - 7 *I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."* niv

2.It is significant that, when addressing the church of Thyatira, Jesus promised "26 *And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations-- 27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels' --as I also have received from My Father;* (Revelation 2:26-27) Therefore, sitting upon the throne and ruling over the nations with a rod of iron is not an exclusive ministry of Jesus Christ, but also belongs to the overcomers.

3.... ***And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.***

a)Acts 1:9 - After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. niv

B.Some identify the woman as the church and the man child as elect overcoming saints who will be raptured.

1.There are real problems with this view. First of all, the Scripture said, "She being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." The Church is to be the virgin bride of Christ. If she's pregnant, she's in trouble. Secondly, I reject the man child as being an elite kind of saint, who only will be raptured. This teaching does despite to the Spirit of grace.

C.There is a third view that the man child is the 144,000 who, in the midst of the Tribulation, will be caught up to their thrones and take their places in the heavenly scene.

V.THE PLACE PREPARED BY GOD - 6 *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

A.NOTE: A QUANTUM-LEAP IN TIME - Between the ascension of Jesus and the 1,260 day period described in verse six lie hundreds of years (our current period)

1.This obvious time lapse is typical of prophecy; [cf. Isa 49:8-9; 61:1-2 w / Lk.4:18-19]

a)Daniel's prophecy has such a break between the 69th and 70th weeks (Daniel 9:24-27)

b)"God has His hand on the pendulum of time and is about to let go." McGee

c)So does Joel's prophecy - cf. Act 2:16-21/ Joel - 16... *this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17'' In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. [break] 19 I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'* niv

B.THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

- 1.Persecuted by the dragon, the woman is protected by God in a prepared place for the final 3 1/2 years of the Tribulation.

C.THE PREPARED PLACE

- 1.This place in the wilderness is likely the ancient rock city of Petra where the Jews will flee during this last 3 1/2 year period. Petra is an impregnable fortress that lies back in the Ha'arva valley in Jordan, south of the Dead Sea.
 - a)Christians have stocked the place with food and evangelistic tracts written in Hebrew
- [Ω see 'EXILE IN EDOM' in appendix]

VI.WAR IN HEAVEN - 7 *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

A.WAR BETWEEN MICHAEL AND SATAN

- 1.When does this happen? Some say at the cross or ascension; others, at the beginning of the seven year period; the majority think this battle occurs at the mid-point of the seven year period
- 2.We should notice that this is truly a battle between equals; Satan is not the counterpart of God - God has no counterpart. If anything, Satan is the counterpart of Michael.

B.MICHAEL

- 1.He is an archangel [Jude 9]
- 2.He is called "a great prince" [Dan.10:13; 12:1] the "Prince of Israel" ["your prince" - Dan. 10:21] Dan. 21:1 - "*At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. . .*" niv
- 3.His counter-part is Gabriel
 - a)Who brought interpretation to Daniel [Dan. 8:16-26; 9:20-27]
 - b)And announced births of John the Baptist - Lk. 1:11-20 and Jesus - Lk. 1:26-38

C.SATAN AND HIS ANGELS ARE CAST OUT OF HEAVEN - 9 *...he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

- 1.Note: The four falls of Satan
 - a)From Glorified to Profane (Ezekiel 28:14-16)
 - b)From Heavenly Access (Job 1:12; 1 Kings 22:21; Zechariah 3:1) to Earthly Restriction (Revelation 12)
 - c)From the Earth to the Bottomless Pit for 1,000 years (Revelation 20)
 - d)From the Pit to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20)
- 2.Luke 10:18 either refers to the first fall, or it is a prophetic look ahead to the second fall
 - a)And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. (Luke 10:18)
- 3.There are many evil spirits, demons, fallen angels, principalities, and powers of darkness and evil who align themselves with Satan's rebellion against God's authority. cf. Isa.14, Eze. 28
 - a)Jude 1:6 - *And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home--these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. niv*

VII. VICTORY OVER THE ACCUSER

A. SATAN IS THE ACCUSER - ***“10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.”***

1. cf Job

a) 1:9 - *“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. 10 “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. niv*

b) 2:4 - *“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.” niv*

2. C.S. - *“Not only does Satan accuse us before God, but he accuses us to ourselves. He’s quick to jump on our weaknesses and our faults, trying to drive us away from God’s grace and mercy. He tries to make us afraid to come to God. He points to our own weaknesses and tells us how unworthy and how undeserving we are. Yet, God is gracious and merciful, and He bestows His love and His grace upon us even though we are unworthy.”*

a) Remember - *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)*

- [Ω see ‘CONQUERING CONDEMNATION’ in appendix]

B. THE LORD IS OUR VICTORY - ***“11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.”***

- WE OVERCOME ...

1. BY THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB

a) 1 Jn. 2:1-2 - *1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

2. BY THE WORD OF OUR TESTIMONY

a) Taking a Stand - Rom. 10:9-10

b) Telling our Story - cf. 1 Tim 1:12-17, Mark 5:18-20

3. BY CONSIDERING OURSELVES CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

a) Rom. 6:3-11 - *“3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ... 6 ... our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. ... 8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, ... 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

b) *“I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.” 1 Corinthians 15:31*

c) *“20 according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:20-21*

VIII.THE DRAGON'S FURY - 12 *"Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."*

A.HEAVEN REJOICES AT THE EVICTION OF SATAN; but heaven's gain is the earth's loss: Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and sea!

1.Satan's fury is terrifying, not because he is triumphant, but because he knows he has a short time left

a)Like a wounded, cornered animal, fighting with great ferociousness

- cf. 1 Pet. 5:8 - *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."*

B.THE FIRST OBJECT OF SATAN'S FINAL FURY WILL BE ISRAEL - 13 *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.*

1.The Holocaust was a picture of this.

2.This fury will be poured out against Israel after the abomination of desolation

a)15 *"So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand-- 16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let no-one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. 18 Let no-one in the field go back to get his cloak. 19 How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 20 Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now--and never to be equalled again. 22 If those days had not been cut short, no-one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:15-22 niv)*

b) Note Distinctively Jewish Terms:

(1)housetop . . .

(2)pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath)

3.Revelation is describing here the fury Jesus told them to flee

IX.THE CHASE - 14 *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

A.Eagle's Wings are from the Exodus deliverance - Ex 19:4 - 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. niv

1.Some think the reference to two wings of a great eagle refer to a great military transport plane used to evacuate people in an emergency situation

2.Thus it could be a reference to America's protection of Israel

B.15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

- 1.This could be literal or a picture of the wave of anti-semitism flowing from the Beast.
- 2.It could also symbolize the general attitude of the world systems as against Israel.

X.THE DRAGON'S OTHER TARGET: THE CHURCH - 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

A.The Second object of Satan's final fury will be the Church

B.The Divine Protection of the Jews will Enrage Him and he'll take it out on Believers

C.This is probably connected to the persecution of those who will not submit to and worship the Beast.

- 1.“He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.” Revelation 13:15
- 2.The martyrs of this period continue those described in Revelation 6:9-11 and 7:9-17

XI.CLOSING:

A.IT HELPS TO KNOW WHO THE REAL "PLAYERS" ARE: ISRAEL, SATAN, JESUS,
MICHAEL AND THE HEAVENLY COMPANY, BELIEVERS

B.IT GIVES US A CLEARER PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN EVENTS

REVELATION CHAPTER 13

I. THE BEAST ARISING FROM THE SEA - THE ANTI-CHRIST

A. JOHN'S INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF THIS BEAST - *"1 Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.*

1. "Beast" is not in vague sense of living creature; but a wild, dangerous animal
2. The beast comes from the sea, which is a figure for evil and chaos in the Bible (Psalm 74:13; 89:9; Isaiah 57:20; Matthew 8:26)
 - a) "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Isaiah 57:20
 - b) The ancient Jews were not a sea-going people; they regarded the ocean as a place of terror and danger
3. This beast is like the dragon of Revelation 12:3 (clearly identified as Satan in 12:9); it also has seven heads and ten horns
 - a) Horns (as always in the Bible) represent power and might
 - (1) cf. Scarlet Beast **Rev 17:9-13** - *9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10 "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. 11 "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. 12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast."*
4. The heads of the beast all advertise blasphemy against God

B. WHAT THE BEAST IS LIKE: A CONNECTION TO THE IMAGES OF DANIEL 7 - *2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.*

1. Daniel 7 uses four animals (beasts) to describe the course of human government from Daniel's time until the ultimate reign of Jesus on this earth
 - a) The first three animals are a lion (a picture of Babylon), a bear (a picture of Medo-Persia), and a leopard (a picture of Greece)
 - b) The fourth animal is an indescribable beast - which shares the most terrifying characteristics of the previous beasts, yet represents the final world empire under the leadership of a Satanic dictator (Daniel 7:7-8)
2. John presents this beast as the extension of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, wanting us to see that his empire will have the characteristics of the great empires of the past
3. Also, this beast is the embodiment of Satan's power, throne and authority; this is Satan's attempt to incarnate himself in a human form or power

C. IS THIS BEAST A PERSON OR A GOVERNMENT OR CULTURAL SYSTEM?

1. Some believe the beast is a broad picture of totalitarian governments
 - a) Example: "The beast has always been, and will always be, in a final intensified manifestation, the deification of secular authority" (Mounce)
2. Others see the beast as a person; specifically the Antichrist - the final Satanic dictator who leads the world in rebellion against God (The Last 'Nimrod')
 - a) The Antichrist is a prominent figure in the Bible; he gets this familiar title because he is the ultimate personification of the spirit of the Antichrist spoken of in 1 John 4:2-3
 - (1) The person commonly known as the Antichrist goes by many names in the Bible: little horn (Daniel 7:8); king of fierce countenance (Daniel 8:23); the Prince that shall come (Daniel 9:26); the willful king (Daniel 11:36-45); the one who comes in his own name (John 5:43); the son of perdition, the man of sin, the lawless one (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

3. Some (like Hocking) combine the approaches; they say that the beast is a modern, world totalitarian government, but the one head which has ten horns is specifically the Antichrist - the leader of this beast of a final satanic dictatorship
4. Remember that to a large extent, a man does represent and personify an entire government or system; when we think of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, the figures of Hitler as an individual and Nazi Germany as a state are virtually the same

D. THE BEAST'S MIRACULOUS HEALING - 3 *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast.*

1. ***As if it had been mortally wounded:*** this wound is not superficial; the recovery gives glory to the beast (13:12,14)
2. Here is a genuine "Antichrist," a Satanic counterpart or imitation of Jesus Christ, who "rises again" from a "death wound"
3. As a system, this could be the revival of the Roman Empire, fulfilling Daniel 7
 - a) Scofield: "Fragments of the ancient Roman empire have never ceased to exist as separate kingdoms. It was the imperial form of government which ceased; the one head wounded to death. What we have prophetically in Re 13:3 is the restoration of the imperial form as such, though over a federated empire of ten kingdoms; the "head" is "healed," i.e. there is an emperor again--the Beast."

E. THE AUTHORITY AND POPULARITY OF THE BEAST - 4 *So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

1. They worship the beast, and the dragon behind the beast, because of the beast's might; "Worship of the devil and the devil's agent is justified purely on the ground of brute force" (Robertson)
2. As people worship this beast, it may be that they do not know they are bowing down to Satan himself; but it is worship of Satan none the less
 - a) However, don't expect outward ugliness and horror:

(1) *14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.* (2 Cor. 11:14-15)
 - b) The beast will look like a "winner;" Jesus and His people will appear as 'losers'.

II. THREE THINGS GIVEN TO THE ANTI-CHRIST

A. TIME TO BLASPHEME - 13:5-6- *"5 And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven."*

1. Dan 7:8, 11 - "8 *"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words. ... 11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame."*
2. The beast continues without restraint by God for a period of forty-two months; the presence of the time period shows that he is on a leash, regulated by God
 - a) cf. New Age slander of God, His Name, dwelling place and heaven dwellers
 - b) cf. Messina, Italy - The city was godless & wicked and had even published in its Christmas-morning 1908 paper an abominable parody which dared the Almighty to make Himself known by sending an earthquake! 3 days later - Dec. 28th, 1908 - Messina was totally destroyed by an earthquake which killed 75,000 people.

B.POWER OVER THE SAINTS - 13:7a - “ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them....”

1.Rev 12:17 - *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*

2.Dan 7:21, 25 - *21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, ... 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time. niv*

a)Who are these saints who are overcome by the beast? Various views of the timing of the rapture will determine who these persecuted ones are. Those who believe in a pre-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God's people who come to Christ after the church as been raptured; those who believe in a post-tribulation rapture believe that these saints are God's people who are on the earth before the final rapture, including what we think of today as the "church"

3.Overcome does not mean that the beast can overcome the faith of these Tribulation saints, but that he can destroy their physical lives, and truly, by all outward appearances, defeat the cause of God's people on earth

a)Jesus said of the church, that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18); if this group of saints (a term not exclusively applied to New Testament church) is overcome by Satan, perhaps they are not the church Jesus spoke of

4.Chapter 12 described the broad phenomenon of Satanic persecution during the tribulation period; here, its main instrument is revealed - the government of the beast will persecute and kill all those who do not bow in worship to the beast

C.AUTHORITY OVER THE "EARTH-DWELLERS" - 13:7b-8 - "... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

1.His authority will encompass the world

2.**slain from the foundation of the world** - 1Pet. 1:20 - *"He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake."* niv

III.AN EXHORTATION - 13:9 - "If anyone has an ear, let him hear." [note: there's no "what the Spirit says to the churches"]

A.THE REALITY - 13:10a - "He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword...."

1.The purposes of God are set!

a)Phil 1:29-30 - *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. niv*

b)The witness of many shines brightest in suffering

2.[Ω see 'The Beast' in appendix]

B.THE REMEDY - PATIENT ENDURANCE AND FAITHFULNESS - 13:10b - "... Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

1.1Pet 4:12-19 - *19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. niv*

2.A SECRET KNOWN ONLY TO BELIEVERS: WHENEVER YOU SUFFER FOR JESUS - YOU ALSO SUFFER WITH HIM

C.THE REWARD

1. *Mat 5:10-12 - 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

2. *Rev 2:10-11 - "10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death."*

D.CLOSING

1. The Roman emperor had a special unit of soldiers called "The Emperor's Wrestlers" - they were the elite. They had a chant which they would shout at special times - "We, the wrestlers, wrestling for thee, O Emperor, to win for thee the victory and from thee, the victor's crown." ... They were headed by the centurion Vespasian who was given orders to look for any christians and have them executed. When He asked - 40 wrestlers stepped forward. He gave them time to think it over - but still, 40. So he ordered them to walk out to the middle of a frozen lake because he couldn't bear the thought of having anyone in the unit shed their blood. ... The wrestlers' were stripped and then marched together out on the ice where they shouted - "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ, to win for Thee the victory and from Thee, the victor's crown." ... A while later one of the wrestlers came crawling back in shame and the chant changed to 39 wrestlers. When Vespasian heard this, he could take no more and tore his own clothes off as he ran to join the others shouting "Forty wrestlers, wrestling for Thee, O Christ..."

I. THE BEAST ARISING FROM THE LAND: FALSE PROPHET- 13:11-18

A. JOHN'S INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF THIS SECOND BEAST - **11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon.**

1. The two beasts are the same in type (the same word meaning essentially "wild beast" is used of both),

2. But There Are Differences

a) They are diverse in origin (one comes out of the sea, the other out of the earth);

b) The second is subordinate to the first (causes the earth . . . to worship the first beast);

c) They are different in appearance (the second has a mild, "lamb-like" appearance)

3. like a lamb and . . . like a dragon - *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.* (Matt 7:15)

B. THE SECOND BEAST'S "MISSION" - **12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.**

1. He is a False Prophet, who leads the world to worship the beast and the dragon

2. Again we see that the Anti-christ's 'miraculous' recovery is seen as an emblem of his divine mission

3. He has the "signs and wonders" to back up his false teaching

a) *"For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible."* (Mark 13:22 niv)

b) *"The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,"* (2 Thess 2:9 niv)

C.14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

1. The False Prophet is a Deceiver!

2. He uses a deceptive image as the focal point for worship of the beast

a) It may seem strange to us to have the whole world give this kind of worship to the image of a man, but the personality cults of totalitarian governments in the twentieth century are a good example of this kind of thing (omnipresent pictures of Stalin or Mao)

(1)cf. North Korea / Iran today

D.15 He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

1. The image of the beast is animated in some way; it has breath and can speak

2. Whether supernaturally or technologically, the result will be impressive

3. This is what Jesus, Daniel, and Paul spoke of as the Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4).

a) *"He will confirm a covenant with many for one `seven'. In the middle of the `seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."* (Dan 9:27 niv)

b) *"So when you see standing in the holy place `the abomination that causes desolation', spoken of through the prophet Daniel--let the reader understand--"* (Matt 24:15)

c) *"3 Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4 He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."* (2 Thess 2:3-4 niv)

4. This is not a recent understanding of this passage; the first commentary we have on the book of Revelation, written by Victorinus in the early church, says of this verse:

a) "He shall cause also that a golden image of Antichrist shall be placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and that the apostate angel should enter, and thence utter voices and oracles.

E. THE ECONOMIC STRATEGY - 16 *He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

1. This is a Satanic parody of God's mark upon his people (Rev 7:3-4)

2. This is a mark given to every person on earth; one must have this mark to participate economically

a) Since the specific Greek word for mark (χρηράγμα) is never applied to people, some have taken this as a symbolic mark. But a literal mark is certainly conceivable.

b) Modern technology has made it possible to tattoo a scannable mark on someone, or even to implant a scannable chip on someone - something that might have all a person's personal information, given in a theft-proof manner.

c) see article on the chip at: <http://www.av1611.org/666/biochip.html>

d) The Web Is Worldwide

3. ***the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.***

a) Henry Morris: "Evidently the brand may take any one of three forms, perhaps based on certain further categories into which the emperor wishes to divide his followers - say perhaps, military, governmental, and civilian, with different types of privileges and duties applied to each. One group receives the mark, some peculiar design (or logo) which is appropriate for the beast, and this is probably applied to the bulk of the population. another group is imprinted with the beast's own name, probably the group associated most closely with his purposes and actions. The third group is marked with a number, that number which is peculiarly fitting both for his character and for his own name. Unless a person can display one of these three brands, thus marking him permanently as committed to Satan, he is marked for privation and death." [Revelation pg. 253]

4. Note: The concept of the number of his name was common, because in Greek (and Hebrew as well), letters were assigned a numerical value (such as A=1, B=2, and so forth)

a) For example, a graffiti in Pompeii reads "I love her whose number is 545"

F. THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST - 18 *Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is six hundred and sixty-six.*

1. Does this tell us who the beast is, by figuring out the numerical value of a name and seeing if it adds up to 666? Using this method, many candidates for Antichrist have been suggested through the ages, such as the Pope or the Papacy, John Knox, Martin Luther, Napoleon, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and so forth

a) Many have thought the number adds up to be "Nero Caesar," a Christian-persecuting Roman Emperor in the early church (the "Nero revived" myth); but to make the name "Nero" fit, one must take a variant spelling of the Greek form of a Latin name, transliterated into Hebrew characters

2. The letters of "Jesus" in Greek (Ι+ε+σ+ο+υ+σ) add up to 888; 666 may be a Satanic counterpart to the name of Jesus, or an emphasis upon the glorification of Man [6 is the number of man].

a) As compared to the number 888, the number 666 may signify an unholy trinity; a human/demonic imitation of God, inherently falling short of the perfect and true (7 is the number of completion and totality)

G.THE TWO BEASTS ARE A SATANIC IMITATION; we are presented with a false "Christ" and a false "John the Baptist" to promote the false Christ; Satan can't create, but he can effectively deceive with imitation

1.Many call this 'The Unholy Trinity' - Satan, Anti-Christ and False Prophet

2.Imitations work precisely because they are similar; if they were so obviously different, it would be easy to tell the difference. We must beware and be familiar with the genuine

a)"Imitations have ever formed the gravest perils in the history of the Church and the world, and the devil's final attempt to gain the government of the race will thus be an appalling attempt to imitate." (Morgan)

3.Instead of obsessing about the imitation - the Antichrist - how much more appropriate is it for Christians to be interested in the genuine: Jesus Christ

REVELATION 14

IMAGES OF GOD'S VICTORY AND THE BEAST'S DEFEAT

- CHAPTER 14 ANSWERS TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS RAISED BY CHAPTER 13
 - The beast of chapter 13 was terrifying and awesome; he even can make war against the saints and overcome them (13:7). Is he completely victorious over all God's people?
 - The second question has to do with this Satanic dictator himself: what happens to the beast and his followers?

I. THE FATE OF THE 144,000

A. THE LAMB AND THE 144,000 ON MOUNT ZION - *1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.*

1. The followers of Satan and the beast may have a mark on their hand or forehead, but this is just a copy of the idea behind the identifying mark on the foreheads of each one of the 144,000 - they belong to the Father

a) The 144,000 certainly haven't been defeated by the beast; here they are triumphant, worshipping, and standing firm with Jesus

(1) Why are they gathered on Mount Zion?

(2) Zion is the place where the Messiah gathers His redeemed and reigns over the earth (Psalm 48; Isaiah 24:23; Joel 2:32; Obadiah 17, 21; Micah 4:1, 7)

2. The voice like the voice of many waters and like the voice of loud thunder is the voice of God (Revelation 1:15; 4:5);

a) Perhaps this is God proclaiming His approval of these 144,000 faithful servants in the spirit of Matthew 25:21 - *"Well done, good and faithful servant"*

3. The elders of Revelation 5:8 have harps; perhaps they are accompanying the 144,000 as they sing this new song, unique to them

B. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE 144,000 - *4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

1. Some take the virginity of the 144,000 as being symbolic of general purity (as in 2 Corinthians 11:2);

a) But Paul recommended celibacy in distressing times (1 Corinthians 7:25-35),

b) And Jesus spoke of woes upon those with children and families in that day (Matt 24:19-21)

(1) It isn't hard to see that God would specially call 144,000 to a literal celibacy for the kingdom's sake during this period

(2) cf. 'Bachelors Til The Rapture'

2. The 144,000 are the beginnings of a greater harvest; they are the "godly nucleus of Israel which is the token of redemption of the nation" (Walvoord)

a) Clearly, they are believers in Jesus; otherwise they would not stand with the Lamb, follow the Lamb wherever He goes, and could not be without fault before the Throne

3. Because they are described as a first-fruits, it is thought that they will be instrumental in bringing in a great harvest during the tribulation.

a) Revelation 7:9 describes an innumerable company saved out of the Tribulation, and these 144,000 may have been used to preach the gospel to those who were saved in this period

b)Note: Each of this vast multitude saved during the Tribulation will be saved in exactly the same manner as anyone today: by grace, through a personal faith in Jesus Christ unto salvation. Even though the rapture of the church ends God's dealings with the church as such on the earth, it certainly does not change the way of salvation.

II. PROCLAMATIONS FROM HEAVEN

A. An Angel Preaches The Gospel - 6 Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth--to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people-- 7 saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

1. The angel calls upon the people of the earth to Fear God and give glory to Him;
 - a) They can give glory to God willingly now, or be compelled to give it later
2. This is the only place in the New Testament where we see angels preaching the gospel;
 - a) In God's wisdom, He has chosen to give that responsibility to us.
3. Verse 6 can be a valid fulfillment of Jesus' promise in Matthew 24:14 that the gospel would be preached to all the world before His second coming;
 - a) But this can never be a valid excuse for neglecting the urgency of missions
4. Note: Some wonder whether this may be a picture of the Satellite(s) broadcasting the Gospel.

B. An Angel Announces Babylon's Fall - 8 And another angel followed, saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

1. More on Babylon will come in chapter 17.
2. When told that Babylon has led all nations into fornication, the main idea is primarily spiritual, though we are never surprised to see it accompanied with literal immorality.

C. An Angel Warns Of Coming Judgment- 9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 "he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

1. Verse 9 reminds us that there is a connection between worshipping the beast and receiving his mark;
 - a) No one will "casually" or "accidentally" take the mark.
 - b) The taking of the mark may, to secular eyes, seem innocent enough; it may be a mere pledge of allegiance and devotion to the Antichrist and his government, even as the burning of a pinch of incense to an image of Caesar, and the pledge "Caesar is Lord" seemed an innocent act of civic duty to the ancient pagans
 - (1)cf. Nazi's pledge of personal loyalty to Hitler.
2. Those who worship the Antichrist drink the wine of the wrath of God.
 - a) The idea of God holding a cup of wrath, is expressed more than thirteen times in the Bible (Psalm 75:8 and Jeremiah 25:15 are examples);
 - b) This is the idea behind the cup that Jesus desired, if possible, to avoid (Matthew 26:39).
 - c) Jesus willingly took the cup so we would be spared from taking it.

3. The wine in the cup is associated with *wrath* (thymos), which is a passionate anger; the cup itself is associated with *indignation* (orge) which is anger from a settled disposition
 - a) Orge is the common word for God's anger in the New Testament; thymos is used only 10 times, and 8 of the 10 are in Revelation
4. Those who receive the mark will endure wrath and indignation for eternity in hell; "The modern vogue for dispensing with hell has no counterpart in Revelation" (Morris)
 - a) Eternal torment is plainly stated; *forever and ever* means "forever and ever";

III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SAINTS, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION - 12
Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. 13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."

A. REST FROM THEIR LABORS

1. *labors [kopos]* = 'wearisome toils, griefs, troubles, sorrows'

2. *'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord'*

a) "Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints." Psalms 116:15

b) "53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:53-57

c) For Believers, Death is the Doorway to Life and the End of the Struggle Against The World, The Flesh and The Devil.

d) Note: This is the 2nd of the 7 Blessings in Revelation

B. REMEMBRANCE FOR THEIR WORKS

1. *Their works follow them* : the patient endurance and work of these saints is remembered in heaven; our work for the Lord goes with us into heaven.

a) *works [ergon]* = activities

2. God is encouraging His people to be steadfast in times of trial, focused on the rest and reward awaiting them in eternity.

a) "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Cor 15:58)

- We can easily contrast the saint's *rest* with the continual *torment* of the wicked (11); the rest comes through patient endurance and faithfulness to Jesus.

IV. THE EARTH'S HARVEST

A. TIME FOR JESUS TO BRING IN THE HARVEST - 14 *Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown [stephanos], and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.*

1. Many have difficulty identifying Jesus as the one doing the harvesting here; they have a hard time with Jesus responding to another angel who came out of the temple;

a) It is unlikely that One called the Son of Man, and wearing a golden crown is anyone but Jesus

2. *ripe* has a bad connotation, "to become dry or withered;" i.e. something that is over-ripe

B. THE WINEPRESS OF GOD - 17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

1. This (and Rev. 19) was the inspiration for The Battle Hymn of the Republic: "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, He is trampling out the vineyard where the grapes of wrath are stored He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword His truth is marching on!"

Note: Sickle is used 7 Times in Revelation. All 7 times are found here in Chapter 14!

a) "Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Revelation 19:15

- The image of the second coming of Jesus as a harvest is also in Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43, the parable of the wheat and the tares;
 - "24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."'
 - "36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

C. 20 And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.

1. Verse 20 probably describes blood spattering to the horse's bridles (a picture of tremendous carnage in the battle of Armageddon described in Revelation 16:16 and 19:11-19).

a) "16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon."

b) "11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." 19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army." Revelation 16:16; 19:11-19

2. **one thousand six hundred furlongs** = approximately 180 miles

REVELATION 15

PRELUDE TO THE BOWL JUDGMENTS

The fifteenth chapter of Revelation is, as it were, an introduction to Revelation 16. It sets the background scene from which the judgments in Revelation 16 will emerge, and brings us to the final judgment of God upon the earth prior to the return of Jesus Christ.

There is one aspect of the book of Revelation that sometimes makes it difficult to understand or follow – the related events do not always follow a chronological order. Many times John will describe the overall scene and then return to fill in the details and amplify some of the earlier descriptions. Such is the case with Revelation 15 and 16. These are fill-in chapters which add further details to events already described.

In Revelation 10 we came to the second coming of Jesus Christ. We also read of it in Revelation 14. However, the events in Revelation 15 and 16 will be taking place before the Lord's second coming. These are the details of God's judgments to be poured upon this earth very soon because of the rejection of His love and grace. God is going to purge the world before Jesus comes to reign again.

Chapter 15 shows us what is happening in heaven while Revelation 16 describes the corresponding events taking place upon the earth during the Great Tribulation period. The Church shall be in heaven with Christ at this time.

I. SEVEN ANGELS WITH SEVEN PLAGUES

A. A GREAT AND MARVELOUS SIGN - 1 *Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete.*

1. Chapter 14 described the consummation; Now John goes back and describes God's judgment in more detail. This idea of stating and re-stating in more detail is common with prophecy, and with Hebrew literature in general (cf. Gen 1:1-2:7 and 2:8-25)

a) "As is the plan of the prophet, he reviews, he recapitulates, he enlarges upon the scene he has already sketched" (Erdman)

2. **wrath** is thymos here; God's anger burning hot against a Jesus-rejecting world

3. **Complete** (etelesthe) means "to reach an end or an aim"; God's isn't just 'venting', His wrath will fulfill an eternal purpose.

4. Note: The idea of the seven last plagues bringing the judgment of God is also in Leviticus 26:21: "*Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins*" niv

II. THOSE WHO HAVE THE VICTORY OVER THE BEAST

A. MULTITUDE ON SEA OF GLASS - 2 *And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.*

1. **a sea of glass** - The glass ("like crystal") corresponds to the river of the water of life in the New Jerusalem

a) "*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*" Revelation 22:1

b) The Water of Life points to 3 Blessings for Believers

(1) **The Word of God**

(a) "²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*" Ephesians 5:25-26

(2)The Washing of Regeneration

(a) "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit," Titus 3:5

(3)The Fulness of The Holy Spirit

(a) "³⁷ On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. ³⁸ He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." ³⁹ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39

2. mingled with fire - This may be a reminder of the "fires" of judgment, or of the completion of their 'refinement'.

a) However, it also presents a vivid picture of 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

(1) "¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." 1 Corinthians 3:11-15

B. WHO ARE THEY? - those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name,

1. They are the tribulation martyrs, described in Rev 7:9-17

a) Though killed by the beast, they have victory - they are not losers.

b) The early church consistently described the day of martyrdom as "a day of victory"

2. They have **harps of God;**

a) The only people seen with harps before were the twenty-four elders (Revelation 5:8)

(1) These martyrs are given the blessing of helping lead worship in heaven.

3. Their 4-Fold Victory

a) **Over The Beast** - They Did Not Worship Him

b) **Over His Image** - They Did Not Bow To It

c) **Over His Mark** - They Did Not Receive It

d) **Over The Number of His Name** - They Did Not Take or Acknowledge It

III. THEIR SONG OF PRAISE - 3 They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! 4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

A. This song gives praise for...

1. God's WORKS (3b); - **Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty!**

2. God's WAYS (3c); - **Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints!**

3. God's WORTHINESS (4a); - **Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy.**

4. God's WORSHIP (4b) - **For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.**

B. Only one song is sung, but reference is made to two titles (the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb).

1. A reminder that there is no separation in the Songs of Praise.

2. There are Other Possible 'Lyrics' for this song - Ex. 15 / Dt. 32 / Ps. 91 / Rev. 5

• [Ω See 'The Song of Moses, the servant of the Lord, and The Song of The Lamb' in Appendix]

C.all nations shall come and worship before You

1.see Isaiah 19:21-25 - *"²¹ Then the LORD will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the LORD in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform it. ²² And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and heal it; they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them. ²³ In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. ²⁴ In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria--a blessing in the midst of the land, ²⁵ whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."*"

IV.SEVEN ANGELS ARE GIVEN SEVEN BOWLS OF JUDGMENT

A.SEVEN ANGELS, DISTINCTIVELY CLOTHED - 5 *After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.*

- 1.These angels will bring forth the judgment of God
 - a)Therefore, they come directly from His throne (which is in the heavenly temple)
- 2.Their Clothing shows that they go forth to Complete God's Wrath (v.1) In ...
 - a)Perfect Righteousness - ***clothed in pure bright linen***
 - b)Divine Authority - ***having their chests girded with golden bands***

B.THE BOWLS ARE GIVEN - 7 *Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.*

- 1.The bowls described here are a broad, flat bowl or saucer used ritually for drinking or for pouring libations; the contents were quickly, easily, and completely poured out
- 2.Jesus Drank the Cup of God's Wrath so that it might Pass-Over All who Trust in Him
- 3.The Wrath of God here Is Poured Out on All who have Rejected Jesus and What He Did

C.THE SHEKINAH GLORY FILLS THE TEMPLE - 8 *The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.*

- 1.When the cloud of glory fills the temple in heaven, no one can enter; even as Moses could not enter the Tabernacle when the smoke of the Shekinah glory filled the tent.
 - a)*34 Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. (Exodus 40:34-35)*
- 2.This is a declaration that judgment is now irreversible!
- 3.And a Reminder that Heaven Takes No Pleasure in Judgement
 - a)*"Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'" Ezekiel 33:11*
 - b)*"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."* 2 Peter 3:9

Revelation 16 - The Bowl Judgments

I. BOWLS DIRECTED AGAINST NATURAL PHENOMENON

A. A VOICE FROM THE TEMPLE - *1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."*

1. These bowls of judgment are the third woe [contained in the 7th Trumpet] described in 11:14-15; There is a note of finality.

a) ¹⁴ *The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.* ¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* Revelation 11:14-15

2. Note: Exodus imagery in these plagues; boils (Exodus 9:8-12), waters turning to blood (Exodus 7:14-25), and darkness (Exodus 10:21-29)

3. Are these plagues symbolic?

a) We may not be able to envision all that these words mean;

b) however, God's judgment of this world will not be merely symbolic.

c) Remember: The reality behind a symbol is always more real than the symbol itself.

B. THE FIRST BOWL: UGLY AND PAINFUL SORES - *2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.*

1. Those who worshipped the beast and received his mark are now "marked" by God with loathsome sores

2. Interestingly, there have been sores and tumors associated with the use of internal RFIDs in pets.

C. THE SECOND BOWL: THE SEA TURNED TO BLOOD - *3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died.*

1. Revelation 8:8-9 described a partial contamination of the sea; here the contamination is made complete

D. THE THIRD BOWL: FRESH WATERS POLLUTED - *4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood.*

1. Again, complete contamination in contrast to partial (one-third) shown in 8:10-11

2. When these judgments come, the time must be very short because, with ecological disasters such as this, mankind cannot survive long

E. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS - *5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments."*

1. Those who delighted in shedding the blood of the saints are now forced to drink "blood".

2. Even in the midst of judgment, it is right that the angel declares You are righteous, O Lord; not only is God's justice fair; it is pure, and appropriate.

F. THE FOURTH BOWL: THE SUN SCORCHES MEN - **8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.**

1. What is normally taken for granted as a blessing - the warmth of the sun - is now a curse
2. "The wishful thinking of some that men would repent if they only knew the power and righteous judgment of God is shattered by frequent mention in this chapter of the hardness of the human heart in the face of the most stringent and evident divine discipline." (Walvoord)

II. BOWLS DIRECTED AGAINST THE BEAST AND HIS GOVERNMENT

A. FIFTH BOWL: A PLAGUE OF DARKNESS - **10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.**

1. Some see this as symbolic darkness; But the ninth plague on Egypt was a literal darkness, with spiritual overtones (it could be felt)
 - a) ²¹ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt." ²² So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. ²³ They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Exodus 10:21-23
2. This fifth bowl is like a preview of Hell, which is described by Jesus as the outer darkness "And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:30
 - a) As a Last Resort, God gives sinners a Taste of Hell in order to Drive them to Repent.
 - b) He literally 'Scares the Hell Out of Them'!
3. They "did not repent" (Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11) The mystery of iniquity!

B. THE SIXTH BOWL: ARMIES ARE GATHERED - **12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.**

C. The Romans considered the Euphrates River a secure barrier against invasion from the empires of the east (it was 1800 miles long and 300-1200 yards wide)

1. If the Euphrates were dried up, massive armies from the east such as China, India, and Japan could move westward with ease

D. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

E. These demons are like the "lying spirit" who led Ahab into battle (1 Kings 22:19-23 niv)

1. 19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing round him on his right and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?' "One suggested this, and another that. 21 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' 22 "By what means?' the LORD asked. "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said. "You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' 23 "So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you."
2. The spirits are like frogs in form; the Jews regarded frogs as unclean and repulsive, but the Egyptians worshipped a frog-goddess
 - a) "Christ expelled unclean spirits, but His enemies send them forth" (Swete)
3. Again, signs and wonders are used by demons as tools of deception;
 - a) The false prophet here is the second beast of Rev. 13

4. Why do they come? Is it to wipe out Israel? Or to rebel against the Antichrist?

a) Ultimately, this battle is not nation against nation, but the nations against God - "2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.'" Ps 2:2-3

5. The winner of this battle is apparent: it is the great day of God, not the great day of man, nor of the Antichrist or the dragon

F.15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

1. This is the Third Blessing of the Seven Blessings in Revelation

2. In the midst of the description of the coming battle, there is a warning to be prepared in light of Jesus' assured victory.

a) Garments are pictures of spiritual and practical righteousness; we are given the righteousness of Jesus as a garment (Galatians 3:27)

b) However, we are also called to "put on" the nature of Jesus in terms of practical holiness (Ephesians 4:20-24).

c) Above all, we must not be "naked" - that is, without a covering, or trying to provide our own covering like Adam and Eve, which is like filthy rags in the sight of God (Genesis 3:7, cf. also Mt. 22:1-14) (Isaiah 64:6)

G.16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

1. Armageddon (Har-Megiddo) is the place of this battle

a) Megiddo is in a region frequently associated with decisive battles:

(1) Deborah over Sisera (Judges 5:19);

(2) Gideon over the Midianites (Judges 7);

(3) Pharaoh over Josiah (2 Kings 23:29; 2 Chronicles 35:22);

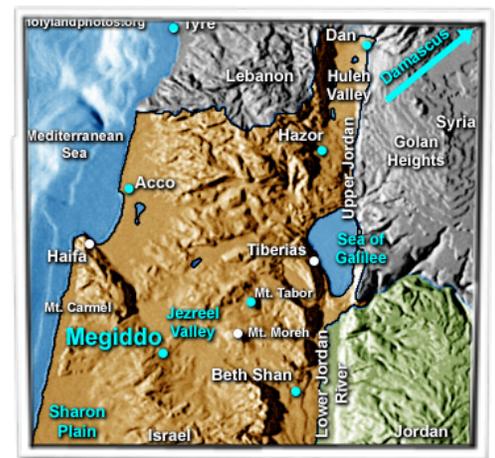
b) Over 200 battles have been fought in the region, from 1468 BC (Tuthmosis III) to 1917 (Lord Allenby of the British)

2. This is one of three major battles mentioned in prophecy

a) Gog, Magog and allies against Israel (Ezekiel 38 and 39)

b) The battle of Armageddon, when the Antichrist leads the world system against a returning Jesus (Revelation 17:12-16; 17:14; 19:19)

c) The final battle, when Satan and his allies, after the millennium, make war against God (Revelation 20:7-10)



III. THE SEVENTH BOWL: THE FINAL JUDGMENTS

A.17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

1. "It is done" - coming from the throne itself tells us that there will be no more delay; in mercy, God has extended this scene - the seals were followed by trumpets; the trumpets were followed by bowls; but there will be no more judgments upon the earth after this - it is done

a) The fact that the bowl is poured into the air may indicate judgment against the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2)

B.18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.

1. In these final judgments, God shakes the earth with a tremendous earthquake, as in Hebrews 12:26: "...but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

C.19 Now the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

1. The fall of Babylon is more explicitly described in chapters 17 and 18

2. The Planet Earth is being Reshaped for the Coming of The King of Kings! With Jerusalem literally exalted above all cities.

a) "1 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God. 2 "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins." 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; 5 The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.""
Isaiah 40:1-5

b) "1 Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, And your spoil will be divided in your midst. 2 For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; The city shall be taken, The houses rifled, And the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the LORD will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. 4 And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, From east to west, Making a very large valley; Half of the mountain shall move toward the north And half of it toward the south. 5 Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee As you fled from the earthquake In the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You. 6 It shall come to pass in that day That there will be no light; The lights will diminish. 7 It shall be one day Which is known to the LORD-- Neither day nor night. But at evening time it shall happen That it will be light. 8 And in that day it shall be That living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, Half of them toward the eastern sea And half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. 9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be-- "The LORD is one," And His name one. 10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananeel to the king's winepresses. 11 The people shall dwell in it; And no longer shall there be utter destruction, But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited." Zechariah 14:1-11

c) "1 Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. 3 And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen this?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. 7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, were very many trees on one side and the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters the sea. When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed. 9 "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10

"It shall be that fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be places for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 "But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 "Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." Ezekiel 47:1-12

D.21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

1. Giant hailstones fall, weighing up to 100 pounds

a) Hail is frequently a tool of judgment against God's enemies, as seen against Egypt (Exodus 9:24); the Canaanites (Joshua 10:11); apostate Israel (Isaiah 28:2); and Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38:22)

b) In each of these circumstances, the hail was used as a tool of judgment, not chastisement

c) This is unimaginable devastation.

(1) cf. freak hailstorm in S. Cal. that left dents all over our car.

E. YOU COULD SAY REVELATION 16 IS A "great" CHAPTER

1. Describing great evil: a great city, "**great**" Babylon (verse 19)

2. Describing great tools of judgment: "**great**" heat (verse 9), a "**great**" river dried up (verse 12), a "**great**" earthquake (verse 18), "**great**" hail and "**great**" plagues (verse 21)

3. Describing a great God: His great voice (loud is the same Greek word for "**great**"; verses 1; 17), and His "**great**" day of victory (verse 14)

4. "1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth." 2 So the first went and poured out his bowl upon the earth, and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. 3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became blood as of a dead man; and every living creature in the sea died. 4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying: "You are righteous, O Lord, The One who is and who was and who is to be, Because You have judged these things. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, And You have given them blood to drink. For it is their just due." 7 And I heard another from the altar saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." 8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with **great** heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory. 10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds. 12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that **great** day of God Almighty. 15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." 16 And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. 17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a **great** earthquake, such a mighty and **great** earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth. 19 Now the **great** city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And **great** Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20 Then every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And **great** hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly **great**." Revelation 16:1-21, NKJV.

Revelation 17 - The Fall of Religious Babylon

THE CONCEPT OF BABYLON

- Revelation 16:19 and 14:8 have declared Babylon's fall;
 - Chapters 17 and 18, detail that fall
- Babylon was a literal city on the Euphrates river;
- Babylon is mentioned 287 times in the Scriptures;
 - More than any other city except Jerusalem
- After The Flood, Babylon "was the seat of the civilization that expressed organized hostility to God." (Tenney) [Genesis 11:1-10]
- It was capitol of the Babylonian empire which cruelly conquered Judah:
 - "Babylon, to them (the Jews), was the essence of all evil, the embodiment of cruelty, the foe of God's people, and the lasting type of sin, carnality, lust and greed." (Tenney)
- From it's inception Babylon has been associated with organized idolatry and blasphemy
 - If we had to pick a city that most exemplifies the world system today - which one would it be?
 - [Ω see 'Beginning of Babylon in Appendix].

I.THE GREAT HARLOT (RELIGIOUS BABYLON) IS DESCRIBED

A.DESCRIBED BY THE ANGEL - *1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, 2 "with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

1.Her judgment is Assured - There is No Doubt

2.*the great harlot ...*

a)Giving wicked pleasure for personal gain.

b)Compromise and Corruption for Power or Wealth.

c)Like the Serpent of old, Enticing Souls to Turn from God and Listen to Satan

3.*who sits on many waters*

a)Meaning Her Influence Extends Over Many Nations (v15)

(1)¹⁵ *Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues."*

4.Religious Babylon has a universal, international character

a)Possibly a *unification* of all false, idolatrous religion; with representatives from apostate Catholicism, Protestantism, as well as a smorgasbord of other religions of the world

(1)"The woman pictures false religion that will dominate the world in the tribulation period" (Hocking)

• [Ω 'Parliament of the World's Religions' Wikipedia article in Appendix]

5.*with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication*

a)Selling Their Souls and Nations to the Devil

6."*The inhabitants of the earth were made drunk*": religious Babylon is intoxicating.

a)Karl Marx was partly right when he said that "religion is the opiate of the masses"; because empty religion is the opium of the masses

B. WHAT JOHN SAW - 3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.

1. The harlot rides the same beast seen in 13:1 - the Antichrist and his dictatorship
2. She is clothed with emblems of luxury and government (scarlet, purple, gold, gems, pearls)
3. Purple and scarlet were the colors of rulers, whether economic or political; the dyes to make them were rare and costly
 - a) "We find in the course of church history that one of the deadliest marks of ecclesiastical corruption is the lust for temporal power" (Barnhouse);

C.5 And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

1. The name on her forehead identifies her in more ways than one; Roman prostitutes frequently wore a head-band with their name engraved upon it
 - a) "In spite of all her glamour she is nothing but a prostitute" (Johnson)
 - b) Our world, with its "it doesn't matter what you believe as long as you believe something" philosophy is ripe for the harlot's seductions
2. There is a stark contrast between the woman of chapter 12 (representing Israel), and this woman.
 - a) She not only persecutes; she revels in her persecution of the godly as a drunk revels in wine
3. This is likely not literal Babylon; but its spiritual (mystery) representation, which is the source (mother) of all idolatry (abominations) and spiritual adultery (harlots)
4. Why is John amazed? Perhaps because this isn't pagan persecution (such as he knew in his day); this is a pseudo-church after the blood of the saints
 - a) We should never forget that some of the most vicious persecutions conducted against true Christians have been done in the name of the church;
 - (1) In the days when the Roman Catholic Queen Mary ruled England (known as "Bloody Mary" for good reason), some 288 Christians were burnt at the stake for their stand for Christian truth between 1555 and 1558.
 - (2) The first of these martyrs was a man named John Rogers, who, as he stood chained to a stake, and the fire rose around him, up to his legs and shoulders, he rubbed his hands in the flames as if he were washing his hands in cold water; then he lifted his hands to the heavens and held them high until he was completely consumed by fire. This barbarity was committed in the name of religion, in the name of the church. But Rogers went to the stake with such calm and dignity that the French Ambassador wrote that he went to his death "as if he was walking to his wedding."

II. THE GREAT HARLOT IS INTERPRETED - 7 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

A. THE BEAST IS THE BEAST OF CHAPTER 13 - 8 "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

1. The harlot presides over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues; this tells us that the harlot's influence is world-wide. This will be a one-world religion

B. SEVEN MOUNTAINS - 9 "Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.

1. Many associate the seven mountains with Rome and the Papacy, because Rome is well known as 'the city on seven hills'.

2. However, mountains are sometimes a figure of governments (such as in Daniel 2:35).

a) "35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." Daniel 2:35, NKJV.

3. The connection between religious Babylon and Roman Catholicism is irresistible; yet it is possible that religious Babylon will be broader than Roman Catholicism alone.

4. Indications of Roman Catholicism's ultimate partnership with a one-world religion are evident in Pope John Paul II's bizarre involvement with and approval of other anti-Christian religions

a) In addressing a prayer gathering of Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and others, Pope John Paul II told participants that their efforts were "unleashing profound spiritual energies in the world and bringing about a new climate of peace"; the Pope pledged that "the Catholic Church intends to 'share in and promote' such ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation."

b) The Catholic Review commented on this and said, "The unity of religion promoted by the Holy Father Pope John Paul II and approved by His Holiness the Dalai Lama is not a goal to be achieved immediately, but a day may come when the love and compassion which both Buddha and Christ preached so eloquently will unite the world in a common effort to save humanity from senseless destruction, leading toward the light in which we all believe."

C. SEVEN KINGS/KINGDOMS - 10 "There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time.

D. At the time that John wrote the Revelation, Domitian was the emperor of Rome. He was the sixth in order. After him, there was one further emperor. There is one more that is coming. He is the eighth, but he is of the seven.

E. THE BEAST IS CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS THE EIGHTH KING - 11 "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition.

1. He is of the seven in the sense that he shares characteristics of previous emperors.

F. TEN KINGS TO COME, ALLIES OF THE ANTICHRIST - 12 "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 "These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast.

1. This alludes to a ten-nation confederation (as the toes of the Dan 2:24-45 image).

a) "They are ten kingdoms which shall arise out of the fourth great kingdom there: ten European powers, which in the last time, in concert with and subjugation to the antichristian power, shall make war against Christ. In the precise number and form here indicated, they have not yet arisen. . . . What changes in Europe may bring them into the required tale and form, it is not for us to say." (Alford, 1866)

2. The European Economic Community is the potential fulfillment of this; however there are now more than ten nations in this revived European power.

3. There is little doubt of the credentials of the EEC to claim itself a successor to the ancient Roman Empire; the EEC started in 1957, when six European nations met to talk about combining their nuclear, coal, and economic resources. They met together in Rome, and signed the treaty of Rome - the beginnings of the present EEC. In many places in Europe, the EEC flag is as prominent as any national flag.

G.14 "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful."

H.15 Then he said to me, "The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.

1.Note: The interpretation of the harlot focuses on her relation to the beast: she is connected to the beast and his government

III.THE GREAT HARLOT IS JUDGED

A.ANTICHRIST'S ALLIES TURN ON THE GREAT HARLOT - 16 "And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

1.Once his power has been consolidated, the Antichrist no longer needs the help of religious Babylon - and works to dismantle and destroy her.

2.Ultimately, the Antichrist will not tolerate any worship except of himself: *"He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."* (2 Thess 2:4 niv)

3.Here, apostate religion discovers the true nature of the beast

B. JOHN IS REMINDED THAT GOD'S HAND IS ULTIMATELY DIRECTING ALL THIS - 17 "For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.

1.God has put it into their hearts: God has directed the judgment against religious Babylon.

2.God has ordained the political support of these ten kings for the Antichrist; in doing so, God is giving the world exactly what it wants: godless religion and rulers

C.THE GREAT HARLOT IS IDENTIFIED WITH ROME - 18 "And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth."

1.Rome was the political, economic, and religious center of the world in John's day

2.Rome was the ready personification of Babylon (the world in rebellion against God) in John's day. Today, idolatry is just as strong, but more dispersed

Revelation 18 - The Fall of Babylon: Commercial

I. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BABYLON'S FALL

A. INTRODUCTION: Is this the same Babylon as is described in chapter 17?

1. There are definite similarities: both are under the rule of Antichrist, ruling queens; both are filled with blasphemy; both hate the saints, and shed their blood; both are associated with the kings and people of the earth in fornication; both are under judgment and destroyed
2. Good scholars see the issue differently. Some point to two manifestations of Babylon (one religious and one commercial); others see the two as one, both being judged at the same time
3. However, there are also significant differences:
 - a) 17: Religious Babylon 18: Commercial Babylon
 - b) 1. Mystery Babylon 1. Great Babylon; Babylon the Great
 - c) 2. Symbol: a harlot woman 2. Symbol: a great city
 - d) 3. Identified with Rome (inland) 3. Identified with a port city
 - e) 4. Woman, whore, and mother 4. Habitation, great city, market place
 - f) 5. Guilt: religious abominations 5. Guilt: greed, self-indulgence
 - g) 6. Destroyed by a political power 6. Destroyed by a sudden act of God
4. These are best understood as two faces, or characteristics, of one Kingdom (Col. 1:13).
5. This passage is the last of the Prophetic 'Doom Songs' (Babylon: Isaiah 13; 14; 21 and Jeremiah 50; 51; Tyre: Ezekiel 26-28)
 - a) "John has caught the spirit of the prophetic doom songs" (Morris)

B. IS THIS BABYLON A LITERAL OR SYMBOLIC CITY?

1. It may be a future rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates river in the Middle East (now in Iraq)
 - [Ω see articles on Rebuilding Babylon in Appendix]
2. Or Commercial Babylon may be like religious Babylon, symbolic: "When the Lord was here on earth He spoke of the great hatred that 'the world' had for Him and His own (John 15:18,19). What is this world but a combination of religion, government and commerce? In other words, Babylon in all its parts stands for that which Christ called 'the world.'" (Barnhouse)

C. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GLORIOUS ANGEL - *1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!"*

1. *Illuminated with his glory*: "So recently has he come from the Presence (of God) that in passing he flings a broad belt of light across the dark earth." (Swete)
 - a) He announces that Babylon is fallen, fallen; the phrase is "repeated like a solemn dirge of the damned" (Robertson)

2. a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! -

- a) What a Dreadful Picture! If we had eyes to see Babylon from Heaven's perspective we would shudder.
- b) This is also a Reminder that one of the Unique Characteristics of Revelation is that it's written in Greek but with a Hebrew writing style.
- c) The Angel's Proclamation is Hebrew Poetry: demons = foul spirits = unclean and hated birds!
- d) cf. with Mt. 13:31-32 - "31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32)

D.3 "For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."

1. **all the nations have drunk** - Commercial Babylon's influence will be worldwide
2. **the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury** -
 - a) Babylon's sin is not only idolatry, but also excessive wealth
 - b) The luxuries of wealth entices them into 'illicit' relations (deals) with Commercial Babylon.
 - (1) Consider the power and wealth of today's multi-national corporations.
 - (2) Consider how common it is in the workplace to be asked to lie, deceive or act illegally in order to get or keep business - or to 'stay competitive'.
 - [Ω see 'Workplace Theft' previously in Appendix]

E.A CALL TO GOD'S PEOPLE TO SEPARATE FROM BABYLON - 4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 "For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.

1. Commercial Babylon, with its materialistic lure, is a constant threat - even for believers.
2. The warning is focused towards saints who are in the position Lot was in while living in Sodom (Genesis 19); these are God's people in a place they shouldn't be, a place ripe for destruction
 - a) Guard against Lot's 'Regression' - Near / In / Sitting in the Gate
 - [Ω see 'Lessons From Lot' in Appendix]
3. The call to depart from Babylon and its worldliness is repeated frequently in Scriptures
 - a) Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. (Isa 52:11 niv)
 - b) Flee from the midst of Babylon, and everyone save his life! (Jer 50:8 niv)
 - c) My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the Lord (Jer 51:45 niv)
 - d) Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? (2 Cor 6:14 niv)
 - e) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. (Eph 5:11 niv)
4. **her sins have reached to heaven;** they have piled up like the tower of Babel
5. **God has remembered her iniquities** - God will remember her iniquities; but for believers, He says "I will remember their sins no more" (Hebrews 8:12 niv)

F.A CALL TO THOSE WHO WILL CARRY OUT BABYLON'S JUDGMENT - 6 "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her. 7 "In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.'

1. **"render"** (apodidomi) is literally "to pay a debt" or "to give back that which is due"; God will give to commercial Babylon exactly what she deserves
2. **repay her double** - Double restitution was a requirement of Levitical law in cases of theft (Exodus 22:4,7,9); perhaps an insight into how Babylon has made her wealths
 - a) 4 "If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. ... 7 "If a man delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, if the thief is found, he shall pay double. ... "For any kind of trespass, whether it concerns an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, or for any kind of lost thing which another claims to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor."
3. **I will not see sorrow** - Wealth is a strong deceiver - cf. Bigger Barn Folly
 - a) 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses." 16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 "And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 "So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 "And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" 20 "But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' 21 "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:15-21)

G.8 "Therefore her plagues will come in one day--death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her.

1. *in one day* - the destruction of commercial Babylon will come suddenly and completely
 - a) vs. 17, 19 - *in one hour*

II. LAMENT FOR COMMERCIAL BABYLON

A. LAMENT OF THE KINGS - 9 "The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 "standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'

1. The heat and smoke of her burning is So Great that these kings stand at a distance
2. Perhaps an indication that nuclear weapons are involved in this judgment?
 - a) "With a touch of grim humor he paints them as standing at a safe distance from the conflagration, and contenting themselves with idle lamentations" (Swete)
 - b) They Mourn, but Do Not Come To Her Aid

B. LAMENT OF THE MERCHANTS - "11 And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:"

1. The Merchants Join the Kings in Mourning
2. The mourning is rooted in selfish greed - They've lost their Business, Profits and Luxuries

C. THEIR MERCHANDISE - "12 merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men. 14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

1. This long list needs little explanation, except to note these are mostly luxuries, not necessities;
 - a) "The combined picture is one of complete abandonment to the wealth of this world and complete disregard of the God who gave it." (Walvoord)
2. **bodies and souls of men** The profits of commercial Babylon have come through Exploitation, Cruelty and Slavery.
 - a) cf. pornography & drugs
 - b) cf. sex-slave industry
 - [Ω see 'Human Trafficking' in Appendix]

D.15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' ...

1. Like the Kings, the Merchants also Keep a Safe Distance

E. LAMENT OF THE SEA-CAPTAINS - 17 ... *Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 "and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?' 19 "They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.'*

1. Again, notice that their sorrow is selfish

- WHAT EARTH MOURNS - HEAVEN CELEBRATES! - 20 *"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"*
 - Rejoice! Some day, this world system - Satan's Kingdom - will pass away.

III. FINALE: COMMERCIAL BABYLON'S DEATH KNELL

A. AN ANGEL GRAPHICALLY SHOWS BABYLON'S FALL - 21 *Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore."*

1. This is reminiscent of Jeremiah's instructions to Seraiah to bind a stone to a text of Jeremiah and cast it into the Euphrates (Jeremiah 51:61-64)

a) 63 *"Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. 64 "Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah."*

B. BABYLON IS LEFT DESOLATE AND POWERLESS - 22 *"The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 "The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived."*

1. The industry and commerce of Babylon has come to an end

2. *"sorcery"* is the Greek word *pharmakia*, which means the use or the administering of drugs; poisoning; sorcery, magical arts, often found in connection with idolatry and fostered by it; metaph. the deceptions and seductions of idolatry [Strongs]

a) The lure of commercial Babylon is like a drug addiction.

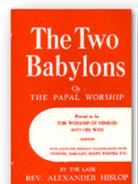
C. THE ULTIMATE REASON FOR COMMERCIAL BABYLON'S JUDGMENT: SHE HAS KILLED PROPHETS AND SAINTS - 24 *"And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."*

1. Hating and Hurting God's People Follows Selling Your Soul to 'Babylon'

a) Remember: God takes the persecution of His people personally - Acts 9:3-5 - *"3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 5 And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."*

2. The city is symbolic of the world system as a whole - no one city is literally responsible for *all who were slain on the earth*

- Misc. Note: The text of the book 'The Two Babylons' by Alexander Hislop, is available online at: www.biblebelievers.com/babylon



Revelation 19 - Christ Returns As Conquering Lord

I. PRAISE IN HEAVEN

A. PRAISE FOR THE JUDGMENT OF BABYLON - *"¹ After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, 'Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! ² For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."*

1. This section continues chapter 18 where Babylon's friends mourned and God's people celebrate

2. *"for true and righteous are His judgments"* - Today, we hear so many people questioning the judgments of God. "Is God fair when He judges?" However, when we see the final judgment of God upon the earth, there will be that acknowledgment of the fairness and the righteousness of God in His judgments. The justice of man's system is quite corrupt. We can't say, "True and righteous are the judgments of the courts of the United States." They're not always so true and not always so righteous. The problem is, how can we really know all the facts? We get conflicting testimonies. But when God judges, He knows all the details and all the motives. He will be true and righteous.

B. *"³ Again they said, 'Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!' ⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, 'Amen! Alleluia!'" ⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying, 'Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!'"*

1. *"Alleluia"* occurs only four times in N.T. All here in Revelation Chapter 19

a) ¹ *"Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!"*

b) ³ *"Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!"*

c) ⁴ *"Amen! Alleluia!"*

d) ⁶ *"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"*

2. Hallelujah is Hebrew for "Praise the Lord," in the imperative (do it!) sense

C. PRAISE FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB - *"⁶ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

1. *for the marriage of the Lamb has come*

a) In OT, Israel is presented as God's (often unfaithful) wife (Hos. 2:19-20; Isa. 54:5; Eze. 16)

(1) *"For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth." (Isaiah 54:5 niv)*

b) In the New Testament, the church is presented as the 'fiance' of Jesus, awaiting the day of marriage (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32)

(1) *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him." (2 Cor 11:2 niv)*

c) In Biblical times a marriage involved two major events, the betrothal and the wedding. These were normally separated by a period of time during which the two individuals were considered husband and wife and as such were under the obligations of faithfulness. The wedding began with a procession to the bride's house, which was followed by a return to the house of the groom for the marriage feast." (Mounce)

d) Marriage is the most powerful analogy of intimacy among God's pictures of our relationship to Him (creator-creature; shepherd-sheep; Lord-servant; father-child; husband-wife)

D. ⁸ *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.* ⁹ *Then he said to me, "Write: `Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."*

1. What do we do to make ourselves ready for this wedding? *the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints* There is much for us to do, but it is ultimately a work God does in us - *to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen*

a) ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:25-27)*

2. Jesus Himself eagerly anticipates this marriage supper; He spoke longingly of the day when He will drink of the fruit of the vine again, with His disciples in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29)

a) *"tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."* (Matt 26:29)

b) The thought is of a banquet or party; of tremendous joy. In Jewish culture, there was no more joyful occasion than a wedding. In fact, according to Rabbinic teaching, obedience to the commandments was suspended during a wedding celebration if obeying a commandment might lessen the joy of the occasion.

3. *"These are the true sayings of God"* is a note of assurance; though it seems too good to be true, it will happen

E. JOHN WORSHIPS AN ANGEL, AND IS CORRECTED - ¹⁰ *And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

1. Why would John make a blunder like this?

a) "John either felt that the angel represented God or he was beside himself with excitement over the glorious consummation" (Robertson)

b) John views the glorious scene of the Church in heaven, clothed in the righteousness of Christ and ready to be received by Him, and he is just overwhelmed. [CS]

2. No created being is to be worshipped; this is in contrast with Jesus, who receives the worship of angels (Hebrews 1:6) and of men (Matthew 8:2; 14:33; John 9:38)

3. *"the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."*

a) All prophecy centers around Jesus Christ. The entire Old Testament concerns Jesus.

(1) *John 5:39 niv - "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me",*

b) The true spirit of prophecy always shows itself in bearing witness to Jesus: "any teaching of prophecy that takes our minds and hearts away from Him is not being properly communicated" (Hocking)

4. *"I am your fellow servant"* - there are important differences between humans and angels, but both are servants of the same Lord.

II. JESUS RETURNS TO RULE

A. "11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

- There is a sense in which all previous Revelation has been an introduction to this revelation (unveiling) of Jesus Christ

1. **"Faithful and True"** represents Jesus as the keeper of promises

a) He is Always Faithful! - He is Always True! - We Can Always Trust Him!

2. **in righteousness He judges and makes war**

a) "Any view of God which eliminates judgment and his hatred of sin in the interest of an emasculated doctrine of sentimental affection finds no support in the strong and virile realism of the Apocalypse" (Mounce)

b) This is a Jesus we can't control; one who demands not only our attention, but our submission

3. **"on His head were many crowns"** is a visible expression of the fact that Jesus is the King of kings; His Sovereignty is Unlimited

a) The last time this earth saw Jesus He wore a crown of thorns; Now, He wears many crowns [diadema, the crown of royalty and authority, not the stephanos, the crown of achievement].

B.13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

1. **He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood;**

a) "1 Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendour, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? "It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save." 2 Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone; from the nations no-one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing. 4 For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come. 5 I looked, but there was no-one to help, I was appalled that no-one gave support; so my own arm worked salvation for me, and my own wrath sustained me. 6 I trampled the nations in my anger; in my wrath I made them drunk and poured their blood on the ground." (Isaiah 63:1-6 niv)

2. **"clothed in fine linen, white and clean"** - The same clothing as The Bride - because it's the same group.

a) Interesting Picture - A Bride Coming Out of the Bridal Chamber Prepared for Battle!

3. **His name is called The Word of God** - John 1:1, 14 niv - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

4. **The armies in heaven** are God's people (but angels will also be present)

a) "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful." (Revelation 17:14)

b) "14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones 15 to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (Jude 1:14-15 niv)

c) "The world likes a complacent, reasonable religion, and so it is always ready to revere some pale Galilean image of Jesus, some meager anemic Messiah, and to give Him a moderate rational homage" (Torrance)

C.15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

1. out of His mouth goes a sharp sword Five times in Revelation, John emphasizes that Jesus' sword comes out of His mouth; this is a dramatic way of referring to the power of His Word: "Christ conquers by the power of His Word" (Johnson)

a) *"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him--the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." John 12:48*

2. He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron

a) He comes to rule the nations with a rod of iron as predicted in Psalm 2

(1) *7 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You will rule them with an iron sceptre; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." (Psalms 2:7-9 niv)*

b) The word "rule" in the Greek is the word "shepherd." "He will shepherd them." This speaks of the nature of the rule He will have.

(1) David said, *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."*

(2) Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd... and I lay down my life for the sheep."*

c) Shepherds always had rods. But instead of a wooden rod, His will be of iron.

III. INVITATION TO THE GREAT SUPPER - "17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, 18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

A. HERE WE SEE THE CULMINATION OF THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON where the evil spirits have gathered the kings of the earth to the valley of Megiddo to battle against God. Jesus will just speak the Word and they will be destroyed.

1. *"12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." Revelation 16:12-14*

B. The beast has so much power that people will say, "Who is able to make war against the beast, or to stand against him?"

1. The Answer? Jesus, The King of Kings and Lord of Lords is able!

C. The repetition of **flesh** (5 times) in verse 18 is revealing. "The race has walked in carnal enmity against God, living after the flesh, and now the day of His patience is at an end." (Barnhouse)

IV. WAR AND THE VICTORY OF JESUS CHRIST - *"19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

A. THESE ARMIES ARE GATHERED TOGETHER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST HIM WHO SAT ON THE THRONE.

1. This is the logical extension of man's constant opposition against God since the fall.
 - a) "This is the incurable insanity of sin, which wars away in spite of defeat after defeat, against a holy God." (Newell)

B.20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

1. John says nothing about a battle; this is more a simple act of judgment than a war
 - a) With the brightness of the Lord's coming, the Antichrist will be destroyed.
 - (1) "*And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.*" (2 Thess 2:8 niv)
 - b) The beast and the false prophet receive special treatment; they are cast alive into the lake of fire
2. The lake of fire is what we normally consider Hell; it is real, and there is nothing more important than avoiding it

Revelation 20 - Satan, Sin and Death Are Finally Eliminated

I. SATAN IS BOUND

A. AN ANGEL BINDS SATAN WITH A GREAT CHAIN - "¹ *And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.* ² *He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;*"

1. Satan is not God's opposite or equal;

2. "The final importance of Satan is perhaps indicated in the fact that it is not the Father who deals with him, nor Christ, but only an unnamed angel" (Morris)

a) But, even in his rebellion, he indirectly serves the purposes of God. An ultimate irony.

(1) "²¹ *Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?* ²² *What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,* ²³ *and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,*" (Romans 9:21-23)

3. God could stop Satan's activity at any time.

a) Why did God ever let Satan go free? If God is finally going to do him in, why didn't He do it a long time ago and save us all this misery?" The reason is that God wants you to love Him freely. You see, God could have made everything good. Then there would be no evil and, thus, no alternative. God wants to know that you truly love Him and serve Him by your own choice.

B. SATAN IS IMPRISONED FOR 1,000 YEARS - "³ *and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

1. *that he should deceive the nations no more* - Satan's main mode of attack is revealed.

a) Satan tried to imprison Jesus in a tomb, but couldn't; here, God has no problem restraining Satan;

b) By implication, the demonic hordes are also imprisoned

c) "One very important detail is to notice that the conquest of Satan and his powers does not come by any human effort" (Barnhouse)

2. *the thousand years* - This refers to the Millennium, or Thousand Year Reign of Jesus on Earth.

a) **millennium** comes ultimately from two Latin words: : *mille*, 'thousand,' and : *annum*, 'year.'

II. THE SAINTS REIGN

A. LIVING AND REIGNING FOR 1,000 YEARS - *"⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, ..."*

1. Who sits on these thrones?

a) Perhaps the twenty-four elders representing the church (Rev 4:4);

b) or, the apostles (Matt 19:28);

(1) "Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt 19:28 niv)

c) or, the company of saints as a whole (1 Cor 6:2-3)

(1) "² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!" (1 Cor 6:2-3 niv)

2. **Beheaded** is actually broader; meaning "executed" - cf. Capitol offense of 'conversion'

- [Ω see 'Execution Trial' in Appendix]

B. *"⁴ ... who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."*

1. All those who overcome in Christ will rule and reign with Him (Revelation 2:26-28; 3:12, 22; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3);

a) "²⁶ And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations--²⁷ 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'--as I also have received from My Father; ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star." Revelation 2:26-28

b) "¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name." ... "²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." Revelation 3:12, 21

III. THE FIRST RESURRECTION - *"⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."*

A. **This is the first resurrection**

1. John 5:28-29 niv - "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

2. "The 'first resurrection' is not an event but an order of resurrection including all the righteous who are raised from the dead before the millennial kingdom begins." (Walvoord)

a) "It must be especially emphasized that our phrase in the Apocalypse covering this resurrection is a retrospect that looks back over all three phases (of resurrection)" (Barnhouse)

3. The First Resurrection is "the resurrection of life" encompassing previously dead believers, the raptured church, and tribulation saints.

B. The First Resurrection Gives Victory Over The Second Death - *"⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."*

1. The two events are separated by a 1,000 year period

IV. THE FINAL BATTLE

A. SATAN IS RELEASED, AND GATHERS AN ARMY - *"⁷ Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸ and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.*

1. Outward Obedience to Jesus will be required during The Millennium, but a Personal Commitment to His Lordship will still be up to the individual

a) CS - The fact that amazes me is that so many people at this point will rebel against Jesus Christ. Living under the ideal conditions of the Kingdom Age with the earth restored, people will be able to have very large and healthy families. There will be no sickness, disease, or suffering. People will live to be 1000 years old. At the end of the Kingdom Age the earth will probably be tremendously populated. Many people wouldn't have had a chance to make a real choice for Jesus Christ, because they were forced to serve Christ during the Millennium. At the end of the thousand years ... Many will choose at that time to rebel against Jesus Christ. This is almost unthinkable, yet Satan will gather an army from the nations to try to destroy Christ.

b) "Infants born during the millennium will live to its conclusion and will not be required to make a choice between the devil and Christ until the end." (Walvoord)

c) "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed." (Isaiah 65:20)

2. Who are Gog and Magog? These are prophetic enemies of Israel in Ezekiel 38-39; but the battles seem distinct and different. This will be the last, brief convulsion of Satan's rebellion against God.

V. THE BATTLE ENDS BEFORE IT BEGINS - *"⁹ They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.*

A. *the camp of the saints* - 'camp' here is word for military encampment. Used of Roman barracks, and an army in battle array. Used in the LXX of Israel's encampments in the Wilderness Wanderings.

B. IT IS OVER BEFORE IT HAS BEGUN; God has finally dealt with the devil forever

C. THE DEVIL IS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE, WITH THE BEAST AND FALSE PROPHET - *¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

1. This argues against annihilation, showing that the beast and the false prophet are still present after 1,000 years in the lake of fire

2. "There would be no way possible in the Greek language to state more emphatically the everlasting punishment of the lost than here in mentioning both day and night and the expression 'forever and ever,' literally 'to the ages of ages.'" (Walvoord)

- [Ω see 'MILLENNIUM' in Appendix]

VI. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

A. AN AWESOME THRONE - *"¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.*

1. *a great white throne*

a) **Great** in status, power and authority; **White** in purity and holiness; a **Throne** in kingly sovereignty

2. Who *sat on it*? - *¹² And I saw the dead ... standing before God*

a) Heaven and Earth Flee from His Presence
b) The Dead can only Wish They Could Flee

3. Judgment has been Entrusted to Jesus (John 5:22-27).

a) *"²² For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, ²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. ²⁴ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. ²⁵ Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. ²⁶ For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, ²⁷ and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."* John 5:22-27

B. A JUDGMENT ACCORDING TO WORKS - *"¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

1. *I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God*

a) "Their standing posture means that they are now about to be sentenced." (Walvoord)

2. *and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life*

a) "Their standing posture means that they are now about to be sentenced." (Walvoord)

3. *The sea gave up the dead who were in it?* The sea represents the place of unburied bodies; Thus the emphasis is on the universal character of this judgment - everyone is included

4. *the dead were judged according to their works ... they were judged, each one according to his works* - Those not listed in the Book of Life, are judged according to their works

a) Those who refuse to come to God by faith will be judged (and condemned) by their works

b) There are degrees of punishment for unbelievers, according to their works (Matthew 11:20-24 niv)

(1) *"²⁰ Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. ²¹ Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you."*

(2) *"²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."*

c) Note the silence of those being judged; there is nothing for them to say.

(1) Many think they will "tell God a thing or two" at the final judgment - NOT!

- Note: Believers (whose names are written in the Book of Life) Will Not stand before this throne;
 - a) Our works will be judged for reward's sake (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)
 - (1) *"But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."* Romans 14:10
 - (2) *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."* 2 Corinthians 5:10
- [Ω see '7 JUDGEMENTS' in Appendix]

C. THE SECOND DEATH - ¹⁴ *Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.* ¹⁵ *And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.*

1. Remember that this eternal fire was prepared originally not for man but for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41 niv)
 - a) *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*
 2. God has provided a means of escape; those rejecting it condemn themselves
 - a) *"As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death, so after that death there is no more life" (Alford)*
- [Ω see '6 Questions on Hell' by Mark Driscoll in Appendix]

Revelation 21 - A New Heavens, A New Earth, and A New Jerusalem

I. ALL THINGS NEW

A. THIS CHAPTER BEGINS A NEW SECTION OF REVELATION

1. "In this chapter we see that the history of time is finished; the history of eternity is about to begin." (Barnhouse)
2. "From the smoke and pain and heat it is a relief to pass into the clear, clean atmosphere of the eternal morning where the breath of heaven is sweet and the vast city of God sparkles like a diamond in the radiance of his presence" (Moffatt)
3. Note: This may not quite be the end of time as we often describe it.
 - a) **22:2** *In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*
 - b) *Everlasting* = ages to ages - an age, though each may differ, is a period of time.

B. A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH - *"1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.*

1. This is a Familiar Theme in Scripture:
 - a) *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create a Jerusalem as a rejoicing, and her people a joy (Isaiah 65:17-19 niv)*
 - b) *Of old, You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes all of them will grow old like a garment, like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end (Psalm 102:25-27 niv)*
 - c) *Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat . . . Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:12-13 niv)*
2. **new** - Is this a new earth, or one that has been remade?
 - a) Jesus said that heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word would live forever (Luke 21:33)
 - b) In Isaiah 65:17, God says prophetically that He creates (bara) a new heavens and earth; the word is used in Genesis 1:1 of creation ex nihilo (out of nothing)
 - c) The Greek word used here - *καὶνε* - means new in 'quality' or 'kind' rather than meaning recent or new in 'time'
 - (1) *καίνος* 2537 - denotes the new primarily in reference to quality, the fresh, unworn
 - (2) *νεός* 3501 - denotes the new primarily in reference to time, the young, recent
 - d) "The eternal state is clearly indicated in the absence of sea, for frequent mention of bodies of water occur in millennial passages (cf. Ps. 72:8; Isa. 11:9, 11; Ezek. 47:10, 15, 17, 18, 20; 48:28; Zech. 9:10; 14:8). The evidence of Revelation 21:1 is so specific that most commentators do not question that the eternal state is in view." (Walvoord)
3. **No more sea:** to the Jewish mind, the sea is a symbol of dread;
 - a) It is the source of the satanic beast (13:1)
 - b) It is a place of the dead (20:13)
 - c) It is associated with the heathen (Isaiah 57:20) and with Gentiles in a more general sense
 - d) Three-fourths of the earth's surface is now covered by water, the oceans and the seas. There will be no sea on the earth which God creates in the new kingdom. The purpose of the sea and its salts is to collect and neutralize the pollutants so that the earth is habitable for man. Where there are no pollutants, as in the new earth, seas are not necessary. And if you happen to love sailing, God will have something much better for you!

C. THE NEW JERUSALEM DESCENDS FROM HEAVEN - ***"2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.***

1. **Holy** and **new** distinguish the city; Jerusalem gives it a continuity with earth, especially with the place of our redemption
2. The New Jerusalem is ...
 - a) The Jerusalem above - *"But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother."* (Gal. 4:26 niv)
 - b) The place of our real citizenship - *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,"* (Philippians 3:20 niv)
 - c) It is distinguished by what it does not have--no tears, sorrow, death or pain; and later, no temple, sacrifice, sun, moon, darkness, sin or abomination
3. Note: It is possible that the New Jerusalem is in existence during the Millennium as a "city suspended in the sky" - a heavenly city for the redeemed, who would have free access between the New Jerusalem and the "old" Millennial earth
 - a) see 'Things To Come' by Pentecost on this and relationship between resurrected believers and those living on earth during the Millennium.

D.3 ***And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.***

1. **The tabernacle of God:** the Mosaic tabernacle was a *symbol* of God's presence; this is the *reality* of His presence
 - a) The essence of God's desire and man's purpose: to live with God; and to be His people

E.4 ***"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."***

1. This is Personal! God, Himself, will wipe away every tear!
2. "There is no just ground for imagining from this text that the saints will shed tears in heaven concerning the failures of their former life on earth. The emphasis here is on the comfort of God, not on the remorse of the saints." (Walvoord)

3. OBSERVATIONS

- a) The Christian concept of heaven as a city - a place of life, activity, interest, and people - is very different from the New Age conceptions of a blank "Nirvana" or state of empty bliss where the individual is swallowed up into a great, impersonal oneness or unity.
- b) Man has never known a community unmarred by sin - Adam and Eve only knew a limited community, and community in a larger context only came long after the Fall. Here, in the New Jerusalem, we have something totally unique: a sinless, pure, community of righteousness
- c) Problems arise when believers expect such a community now, or fail to realize that it only comes down from heaven - this city is not, and never can be, the achievement of man, but only a gift from God

F. ALL THINGS NEW - *"5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."*

1. *And He said to me, "Write,* - John is probably so astounded that he forgot to write - and must be told to do so

2. *I make all things new* - This statement is in the present tense, "I am making everything new";
a) "Presumably this means not only that everything will be made new, but also that everything will stay then new. The entropy law will be 'repealed.' Nothing will wear out or decay, and no one will age or atrophy anymore." (H. Morris)

3. This is one of the few times in Revelation where we clearly see God speaking directly from His throne

• Interesting Thought: 'Our instinct is to romantically consider innocence as man's perfect state, and wish Adam would have never done what he did. But we fail to realize that redeemed man is greater than innocent man; that we gain more in Jesus than we ever lost in Adam. God's perfect state is one of redemption, not innocence.'

G. THE INVITATION AND A WARNING - *"6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."*

1. It is done! God's eternal purpose in Jesus is now accomplished!

a) *"9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." (Ephesians 1:9-10 niv)*

2. *I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts* - Drinking and thirst are common pictures of God's supply and man's spiritual need

a) Drinking is an action, but an action of receiving - like faith

b) Jesus made this declaration earlier and continues it today!

(1) *"37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." John 7:37-39*

3. *He who overcomes*

a) *"Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God." (1 John 5:5 niv)*

4. *shall inherit all things* - He's going to say. "It's all yours! Just enjoy it."

You'll have a new body in which you can probably roam the universe and explore the vastness of God's glorious creation. Note again the declaration, "These words are faithful and true." They sound too good to be true.

a) [Ω see illustration re 'Joint Heirs' in Appendix]

H. *"8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*

1. *Cowardly*: "John is not speaking of natural timidity, but of that cowardice which in the last resort chooses self and safety before Christ." (Morris)

2. In Order for Heaven to be HEAVEN, Only The Heavenly May Enter

a) How Do We Become Heavenly? Through Jesus!

b) *"48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man." 1 Corinthians 15:48-49*

3. What a sharp contrast to the New Jerusalem. Yet, God lays it out for all to see. You can have your choice. Choose your destiny.

II. THE NATURE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

A. AN ANGEL WILL SHOW JOHN THE CITY IN GREATER DETAIL - *"9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, "11 having the glory of God. ..."*

1. The New Jerusalem is the dwelling place of the Bride of Christ.
2. Paul refers to the church as the chaste virgin espoused to her husband which is Christ.
 - a) *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."* (2 Corinthians 11:2 niv)

B. THE CITY'S BRILLIANCE, WALL, GATES AND FOUNDATION - *"11 ... Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.*

1. Israel's tribes will never be forgotten by God
2. The arrangement of gates harkens back to the camp layout used during the Exodus (Numbers 2)
 - a) Most jokes have St Peter guarding the gates of heaven. Not so it will be angels.
 - b) The names of the twelve tribes are written on these twelve entrances. At each one there stands an angel. He will probably welcome you as you enter into the gate of the city—"Praise God! Welcome!"

C. *14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

1. The foundations are a testimony to the apostles, and their place in God's plan
 - a) The New Jerusalem and the Church are founded upon the apostles
 - b) *"19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."* (Eph 2:19-20 niv)
 - c) Is your faith apostolic? i.e. Biblical
 - d) What About Paul? He Was Never Intended to be one of The Twelve
 - (1) *"So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matthew 19:28*
 - (2) *"21 Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection." ... "26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."* Acts 1:21-22, 26

D. THE DIMENSIONS OF THE CITY - *"15 And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.*

1. Its length, height and width are equal; it is a cube (or pyramid)
 - a) An equidistant cube is reminiscent of the Holy of Holies; the entire city is a Most Holy Place

2. The size is enormous; 12,000 furlongs equals 1,500 miles [Salt Lake City to Ft. Wayne, IN]
 - a) The cubic footage would approximate the moon's
 - b) "A city of this size is too large for the imagination to take in. John is certainly conveying the idea of splendor. And, more importantly, that of room for all." (Leon Morris)
 - c) If we assume that through the centuries there have been 20 billion who have been saved, and that 25% of the city will be devoted to housing and the rest to parks and streets, each person would have a cube of 1/3 mile or 75 acres on each face.
3. Here, a man's cubit is equivalent to an angel's

E. THE BEAUTY OF ITS STRUCTURE - "18 The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

1. The foundations are made up of 12 gem stones.
 - a) *Jasper*, like a diamond
 - b) *Sapphire*, blue
 - c) *Chalcedony*, sky blue
 - d) *Emerald*, green
 - e) *Sardonyx* red and white
 - f) *Sardius*, fiery red.
 - g) *Chrysolite*, golden.
 - h) *Beryl*, sea green.
 - i) *Topaz* transparent green.
 - j) *Chrysoprase*, purple
 - k) *Jacinth*, red.
 - l) *Amethyst*, violet.
2. These stones were in the breastplate of the Jewish priest. (Exodus 28:15-21)
3. "The constant mention of transparency indicates that the city is designed to transmit the glory of God in the form of light without hindrance." (Walvoord)
4. Perhaps Jesus was referring to this city when He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you." It is exciting to contemplate what this city will be like. The earth in which we now live is a beautiful place. Some spots in Hawaii that man hasn't yet corrupted are extremely gorgeous. There are some places in California that are really breathtaking. If He can make our earth this beautiful in six days, imagine what your place will be like. He's been working on it for almost 2000 years!
5. If the dimensions and descriptions seem hard to grasp, keep in mind that this is the city whose architect and maker is God; we should expect it to be beyond us
 - a) "For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." (Hebrews 11:10 niv)

F.21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

1. Here we get the 'Pearly Gates'
 - a) cf. "11 O you afflicted one, Tossed with tempest, and not comforted, Behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, And lay your foundations with sapphires. 12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies, Your gates of crystal, And all your walls of precious stones." Isaiah 54:11-12

III. THE TEMPLE OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

A. GOD IS ALL IN THE CITY - ***“22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.***

1. In the ancient world, it was unthinkable to have a great city without many different temples
2. Here, everything is the holy dwelling place of God
 - a) "The inhabitants need no place of worship or sacrifice, the object of all worship being present, and the great sacrifice Himself being there" (Alford)
3. Before Jesus, the temple was a prophecy; in the Christian era, God's people are His temple; in the Millennium, it will be a memorial; here the temple is everywhere.
 - a) Heaven will be a place of pure worship.

B. ACCESS INTO THE CITY - ***“24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.***

1. ***The nations will walk by its light*** - It seems that the New Jerusalem gives light to the earth.
 - a) Looking up from the earth and seeing this Holy City in its orbit will be an extremely beautiful sight.
2. What about these kings of the earth? Who are they
 - a) "How encouraging to note that not all were destroyed when the nations came to do battle against Jerusalem and the Lord Himself. There will also be 'kings of the earth' who will be a part of the eternal state." (Hocking)
 - b) "Among the mysteries of this new heaven and earth this is set forth to us: that, besides the glorified church, there shall still be dwelling on the renewed earth nations, organized by kings, and [xxii. 2] saved by means of the influences of the heavenly city." (Alford)

C. ***27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.***

1. Does verse 27 mean that such people will threaten the city? No; "the exhortation warns present readers that the only way to participate in the future city is to turn one's loyalties to the Lamb now." (Johnson)

Revelation 22 - Come, Lord Jesus

I. THE INTERIOR OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

A. THE RIVER - *"1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.*

1. Clear as crystal - referring to pure, absolutely unpolluted waters
2. The river that flows from the temple in the earthly Jerusalem is not the same river of life that proceeds out of the new heaven and new earth. However, there are definite similarities between the two rivers.
3. On the banks on either side of the earthly river there are trees which bear a different fruit every month. Ezekiel describes them as similar to the trees by the river of life in the New Jerusalem.
4. God has designed earthly things to be similar to heavenly things, especially around Jerusalem. There are always those who claim that the river of life is figurative and not literal. But there is a danger in saying this. When someone says that God didn't mean what He said, and then goes into a fancy explanation to spiritualize the text, he completely destroys the meaning. I take it to be a river of life with crystal pure water in the New Jerusalem. And I plan to take a drink from it when I get there.
5. cf. Psalms 46:4 niv - *"There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells."*

B. THE TREE OF LIFE - *2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*

1. The Bible begins with a tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24) which man was not allowed to eat from after eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; now we see the tree of life again
 - a) "Now at last, almost at the end of the great drama of the Bible, man may return and legitimately enjoy the blessing which he was banished for illegitimately desiring" (Preston/Hanson)
2. Why do the nations need healing? "Rather than specifically meaning 'healing,' it should be understood as 'health-giving' as the word in its root meaning has the idea of serving or ministering. In other words, the leaves of the tree promote the enjoyment of life in the new Jerusalem, and are not for correcting ills which do not exist" (Walvoord)

C. WHAT IT WILL BE LIKE AND WHAT THE SAINTS WILL DO - *"3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.*

1. **No more curse** - Since the fall, we have lived with the effects of the curse described in Genesis 3:16-19 - sorrow and pain in childbirth for women; friction between the sexes; the necessity of hard, often futile, work for man's sustenance; and most of all, death
 - a) These things will be present during the Millennium, though greatly muted by the rule of Jesus. Now, they are gone forever.
2. **His servants shall serve Him** - There will be work for us to do in heaven.
 - a) "Heaven is not a place of indolent leisure, but a place where service is done, centering on God." (Morris)

D.4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever. Heaven will be a place where...

1. **They shall see His face;** It will be a place of intimate, face to face fellowship with God
 - a) Moses was denied privilege of seeing God face to face (Exodus 33:20,23); but all in heaven do
 - b) "*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am also known*" (1 Cor 13:12 niv)
2. **His name shall be on their foreheads;** We will forever be identified with Him.
3. **There shall be no night;** The darkness of this age will be forever gone.
4. **They shall reign forever and ever;** An eternal reign that will never end.
 - a) "As the Bible opens with the story of 'Paradise Lost,' so it here closes with the story of 'Paradise Regained.'" (Erdman)

II. PARTING WORDS

A. THE ANGEL AND JESUS ADD WORDS OF VERIFICATION - "**6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. 7 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."**

1. The angel that has been showing these things to John declares that, though it may all seem too good to be true, it is in fact true and certain
2. Jesus breaks in with a reminder to all that He is coming *quickly*; why does it seem that it has been so long?
 - a) The word *quickly* in the Greek isn't the same as our word for "quickly." "The word 'quickly' might with accuracy be rendered 'suddenly.'" (Morgan)
 - b) The early church expected Jesus' return soon - were they just wrong? No! God wants all generations expectant, watching, and ready for His return
 - (1) cf. Doctrine of Imminency (see notes on 'Rapture' in Appendix)
 - c) "What does Jesus mean 'I come quickly'? John wrote that almost 2000 years ago, didn't he?" Yes. And the Bible says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." So, it's been a couple of days—almost!
 - d) "*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.*" (2 Peter 3:8 niv).
 - e) We are not rushing towards a distant brink of the consummation of all things; we are running parallel along the edge of that brink, and have been since the time of the apostles. "Thus the time has always been at hand. The tension of imminence is endemic to that span of redemptive history lying between the cross and the parousia" (Mounce)
3. **Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book;**
 - a) prophecy gives us a word to keep, not just material for interesting discussions or debates.
 - (1) The main intent of prophecy is to lead us to trust God, and apply His truth to our lives.
 - (2) To the very end, we see the emphasis on readiness and watchfulness remaining. If we miss this practical lesson from Revelation, the lesson of readiness, then we have missed the essential message of the book.

B. JOHN IS CORRECTED FOR WORSHIPPING AN ANGEL AGAIN - "8 Now I, John, saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 Then he said to me, "See that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

1. As he did in Revelation 19:10, John is overwhelmed, and bows before an angel in worship again. In the same way, the angel reminds John that only God is to be worshipped, and that they are both on the same "team" - along with all who keep the words of this book
2. No created being is to be worshipped; this is in contrast with Jesus, who receives the worship of angels (Hebrews 1:6) and of men (Matthew 8:2; 14:33; John 9:38)

C. A WARNING IS GIVEN - "10 And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11 "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

1. Because the time is at hand, his book isn't sealed in contrast to Daniel 8:26.
2. In verse 11, the thought is probably "since Jesus is coming so suddenly, there won't be time for change" - but there is time now.
 - a) "It is the hopelessness of the final state of the wicked which is here pictured. The states of both the evil and the good are now fixed forever. There is no word here about a 'second chance' hereafter." (Robertson)
 - b) "If the warnings of this book are not sufficient, there is no more that God has to say." (Walvoord)
 - (1) "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'" Luke 16:31
3. "So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him." (Matthew 24:44 niv).

D. JESUS DECLARES: I AM COMING QUICKLY! - "12 And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 13 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

1. If Jesus will give to everyone according to his work, does that mean we are saved by our works? No; but it does show that living faith will have works with it (James 2:20; Titus 3:8)
 - a) "It is the *quality* of a man's life which provides the ultimate indication of what he really believes" (Mounce)
 - b) "28 Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" 29 Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'" John 6:28, 29, NIV.
2. He reminds us of who He is: the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last
 - a) If we really knew and understood who Jesus is, we would not have any trouble living for Him as we should
 - b) The term Alpha and Omega is "Applied to God in 1:8; 21:6; and here alone to Christ, crowning proof in this book of Christ's deity" (Robertson)
 - c) That Jesus claims to be the First and the Last is also irrefutable proof that He claims to be God: "I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.'" (Isaiah 41:4 niv)

E. A BLESSING AND A CURSE IS PRONOUNCED - **14 *Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.***

1. What about those **outside**? "The verse does not intend to teach that in the eternal state all manner of wicked men will be living just outside the heavenly city. It simply describes the future with the imagery of the present." (Mounce)
2. Why does it say that all dogs will be outside? What is meant here is "Not literal dogs, but the morally impure . . . Dogs in the Oriental cities are scavengers and excite unspeakable contempt (Matthew 7:6; Philippians 3:2)" (Robertson)
 - a) Is this a refutation of the idea of "doggie heaven"? No;
3. There is a textual dispute with the phrase *those who do His commandments*; some translations have instead *"those who wash their robes"*
 - a) The difference is between HOIPLUNONTESTASTOLAS (washed their robes) and HOIPOIOUNTESTASENTOLAS (do His commandments)

F. JESUS BRINGS A WORD OF VERIFICATION - **16 *"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."***

1. Jesus is authenticating the entire book!
 - a) "Thus the very God of all inspiration, and of all inspired men, reiterates and affirms the highest authority for all that is herein written. Either, then, this Book is nothing but a base and blasphemous forgery, unworthy of the slightest respect of men, and specially unworthy of a place in the Sacred Canon; or it is one of the most directly inspired and authoritative writings ever given." (Seiss)
 - b) It is written to the **Churches**; this is not private, but for all believers.
2. **Root and offspring of David** is a Messianic title; Jesus is both the Creator of King David and His descendent. (cf. Matthew 22:41-46 and Rom. 1:1-4)

G. THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY COME! - **17 *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.***

1. Remember, an invitation is both an opportunity and a responsibility; if we decline an invitation, we have only ourselves to blame

H. A WARNING - **18 *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.***

1. "What a solemn warning this is to critics who have tampered with this book and other portions of Scripture in arrogant self-confidence that they are equipped intellectually and spiritually to determine what is true and what is not true in the Word of God." (Walvoord)
2. In most red-letter editions, these words are in black, but "The solemnity of the injunction suggests that the speaker is Christ Himself" (Mounce)

3. These verses speak specifically of this book; but the principle applies to all of the Bible. We need all the Bible (don't take away from it), and we need only the Bible (don't add to it)

a) *Prov 30:6 - "Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar."*

b) *Deut 4:2 - "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."*

c) *Deut 12:32 - "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it."*

I. LAST WORDS - "20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

1. The Bible ends with a word of ***grace***

a) The last verse of the Old Testament contains a curse: "*Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.*" (Malachi 4:6). The last words of the New Testament speak of grace.

b) "It is a good word for the close of this marvelous picture of God's gracious provision for his people in earth and heaven." (Robertson)

The final chapter of a book is always exciting because it ties everything together. All the mysteries, the intrigue, and the questions are brought together. The answers come to us as God unfolds the beauties of His love and reveals the eternal kingdom that He has planned for those who love Him and serve Him. What a glorious and blessed time we are looking forward to!

Realizing all these things as Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly," John naturally responded, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!