

AN OUTLINED COMMENTARY ON

REVELATION

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Acknowledgment

These various commentaries and other Biblical studies were developed through many years of hard and close study of the Bible. I have had an insatiable appetite to learn all of God's Word possible. I grew up in the Beans Creek Community of Coffee County Tennessee. My family started attending the Lord's church at Beans Creek in 1949, where I was privileged to have sister Ethel Croft as an outstanding Bible class teacher. All seven member of my father's family were baptized into Christ, plus my wife, Marie. Each of our five children also obeyed the gospel.

Sister Croft greatly encouraged me to study the Bible and to become a good worker for the Lord. I tried not to cause her any disappointment. In 1978, after preaching for many years, the brethren at Beans Creek invited me to conduct a gospel meeting. Sister Croft, though she was in advanced years and had to drive a good distance, did not miss any of the services.

Since first becoming acquainted with the gospel more than seventy years ago, I have had the honor to hear some of the greatest gospel preachers of the time. Some of these well-known to most members of the Lord's church, but some of them labored in the shadows, learning and dispensing the truth of God quietly and effectively. Not so many people in the brotherhood today knew such preachers as Luke Gibbs and Henry Simmons. I have learned much and have been profited greatly from many gospel preachers and teachers through these many years. I am fully appreciative also to those many sound brethren who have published books which I have had the privilege to study. I began preaching in July of 1961 in Italy.

A debt of gratitude is owed by many to the instructors of Memphis School of Preaching for the tremendous work they did through the years, patiently teaching their students the wonderful word of life. I am especially grateful to these great men who were serving in this capacity during 1970-72, when I attended the school: Roy Hearn Frank Young, Richard Curry, Charles Pledge, Ray Hawk and E.L. Whitaker.

I claim no originality for all of the material presented in the material included in my books. There is no way to give proper credit to all who have contributed to the information I have learned, but in every case possible, acknowledgment is cited. I have attempted to be as accurate, clear and concise as my finite knowledge allows, but, as with all human productions, there will doubtless be imperfections. Our grasp of the infinite will of God is not absolute, despite the diligence of our efforts; there is always more to learn.

Some have incorrectly thought that my books are merely expansions of the notes I took while studying at MSOP. But those notes were skimpy at best, and were not in my possession when I wrote my material. The notes were put together in connection with Bible classes I have taught over much time. For several years, a hundred or more hours weekly were required as I prepared to teach two different Bible books each week, Sunday morning and Wednesday evening, while at the same time, during full-time work as a gospel preacher. These notes became the "Outlined Bible Commentaries" that have been made available to countless people. "Outlined" does not imply skimpy—these are full-length books.

It has not been my aim to make money through these efforts—indeed, we barely cover our expenses. Many of my books have been given away without charge to the recipients. An uncounted numbers of books and compact discs were ordered and shipped out, for which no payment was ever received. A good many of these non-paying costumers were gospel preachers. I have learned from brethren who operated Bible Bookstores that they have had the same problem. One of these brethren reported that he had to secure his supply of Bibles, in locked cases, to prevent their being stolen by preachers. How sad!

The Bible quotations in my books are from the King James Version, unless noted otherwise. These books were intentionally put on 8.5 by 11 inch pages, to make the outline format easier to view. A normal hardback book contains about 800 words per page; my pages contain twice that number of words. The spiral-bound or wire-bound books are much less expensive to produce. My wife and I have done all the manual labor required to produce the books. The supplies, software and equipment are very costly. Marie still helps as much as she can despite the dementia she has had for several years— and her many surgeries and broken bones and heartaches.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Revelation

Introduction	Page 5
Chapter 1	Page 23
Chapter 2	Page 40
Chapter 3	Page 57
Chapter 4	Page 76
Chapter 5	Page 82
Chapter 6	Page 90
Chapter 7	Page 99
Chapter 8	Page 111
Chapter 9	Page 119
Chapter 10	Page 129
Chapter 11	Page 134
Chapter 12	Page 149
Chapter 13	Page 161
Chapter 14	Page 174
Chapter 15	Page 182
Chapter 16	Page 186
Chapter 17	Page 200
Chapter 18	Page 212
Rome and Babylon	Page 222
Chapter 19	Page 223
Chapter 20	Page 234
Chapter 21	Page 252
What Do To Be Saved?	Page 268
Chapter 22	Page 269
Summary of Revelation	Page 283
Bibliography	Page 286

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

A. Introduction.

1. The Book of Revelation is considered by many to be so dark and mysterious that they are hesitant about trying to discover its secrets.
 - a. "Man may fathom many of the mysteries of the physical world, coming to an almost complete understanding of them, at least to the point that he loses his sense of awe in their presence. But in contrast, although we can grasp something of Revelation's meaning and use for us, we never cease to stand in amazement and wonder at its mysteries which continue to challenge us" (Hailey, p.).
 - b. We should not be afraid to study it, however one should be extremely cautious about the conclusions he reaches. The sensationalists and other false teachers have abused this book to the extent that its real message is obscured amid their speculations and perversions.
 - c. The book has, therefore, been neglected, misunderstood, and terribly twisted, but this should not cause us to be fearful of examining its challenging contents.
2. Even though we may not be able in errantly to determine the precise significance of every symbol in the book, nevertheless we ought to make the attempt. There are, to say the least, many valuable spiritual lessons to be learned from Revelation. These include the following:
 - a. The great truths of Chapter 1.
 - b. The information contained in the letters to the seven congregations of the Lord's people in Asia, recorded in Chapters 2-3.
 - c. The seven beatitudes of Revelation:
 - 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - d. The description of the Judgment in Chapter 20.
 - e. The description of heaven in Chapters 21-22.
 - f. The great truths of Chapter 22.
3. The Book was written to be understood by the saints.
 - a. The Holy Spirit inspired it and preserved it. If it is utterly incomprehensible, why was it given and preserved for us?
 - b. Because Revelation is different from the other books of the New Testament does not warrant its neglect; we should try to learn its message.
4. It complements and completes the Bible (Jackie Stearsman).
 - a. Genesis details the beginning of heaven and earth (1:1); Revelation tells of the consummation of heaven and earth (21:1).
 - 1) Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
 - 2) Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth

were passed away; and there was no more sea."

- b. Genesis tells of the entrance of sin and its curse into the world (3:1-19); Revelation speaks of the end of the same (21:27; 22:3).
 - 1) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - 2) Revelation 22:3: "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."
- c. Genesis reveals the commencement of Satan's activities (3:1-7); Revelation foretells the doom of Satan and his work.
- d. Genesis tells of the taking away of the tree of life from man (2:9; 3:24); Revelation tells of the tree of life regained in heaven (22:2,14).
 - 1) Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."
 - 2) Genesis 3:24: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."
 - 3) Revelation 22:2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- e. Genesis describes the entrance of death (2:17; 5:5); Revelation speaks of the end of death (21:4).
 - 1) Genesis 2:17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Genesis 5:5: "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: **and he died.**"
 - 3) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
- f. Genesis gives details of the beginning of sorrow (3:16); Revelation speaks of sorrow being banished (21:4).
 - 1) Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."
 - 2) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

5. The correct interpretation of Revelation requires:

- a. That obscure passages be interpreted in the light of clear, literal passages.
- b. A knowledge of the author, the date of its writing, the purpose it was intended to serve, and some information about the ones to whom it was initially addressed.

B. The Author of the Book of Revelation.

1. To one who believes the Bible, the authorship is not in question: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant **John**" (Rev. 1:1).
 - a. The message came from God, through Christ, by the angel, to John the apostle.
 - b. The process was inspired by the Holy Spirit:
 - 1) "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly

furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

- 2) 2 Peter 1:19-21: "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (ASV).
 - 3) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
2. John the apostle was the human instrument through whom the Revelation was given to the saints (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). There was only one John so well known that he did not need to identify himself more.
 - a. Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John."
 - b. Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
 - c. Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - d. Revelation 21:2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
 - e. Revelation 22:8: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things."
 3. Uninspired writers of the second and third centuries affirm that John was the author. These ancient scribes include Hippolytus, Nepos, Origen, Crispian, Methodius, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Melito, Theophilus, and Justin Martyr (*Studies in the Revelation*, Jerry Moffitt, p.21).
 - a. "Early tradition is unanimous in its opinion that the Apocalypse was written by John the apostle" (Robert Mounce, *ibid.*).
 - b. "The historical testimonies in favor of John's authorship are singularly distinct and numerous, and there is very little to weigh against them" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 8, pp.1062f).

C. The Purpose of the Book of Revelation.

1. John wrote to motivate the persecuted Christians of the first century to die for their Lord, if need be, in order to remain faithful to him.
 - a. In Revelation 2:10, he calls on the saints to be faithful *unto* [*eis*] death; to maintain their loyalty to Christ even though they would be slain for their obedient faith.
 - b. A careful reading of other key passages will also make this clear:
 - 1) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
 - 3) Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Revelation 13:10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

- 5) Revelation 14:12-13: "Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 6) Revelation 18:24: "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
 - 7) Revelation 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
 - c. It was written to prepare the saints for the persecution to be brought upon the church by unbelieving worldly and religious forces.
2. Why did Rome and others want to oppose and destroy Christianity?
- a. Christianity was an illegal religion—from the Roman perspective.
 - b. It aspired to universal acceptance, calling on all men everywhere to receive it, even at the expense of other religions. [Cf. Matt. 6:14].
 - c. It was an exclusive religion, denying that any other religious system had the approval of God. Thus, as it spread, it uprooted other religious systems. But the gospel is not an enemy of civil government.
 - d. Christians were accused of all kinds of evil activity, which brought them opposition from those who believed the charges, including the officials of the Empire.
 - e. Christians refused to sanction every act of Rome in her wars.
 - f. Many of those who accepted Christianity were from the ranks of the poor and outcast, which would tend to besmirch the official view of the church.
 - g. They would not compromise the faith, thus refused to worship the emperor.
 - h. Their zeal led many to believe they were fanatics.
 - i. Christianity conflicted with the temporal interests of some. "For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre" (Acts 19:24-29).

D. Apocalyptic Literature.

1. The word "Revelation" of 1:1 is from the Greek word *apokalupsis* ("apocalypse").
 - a. The meaning of the word is "something not concealed; an uncovering, a laying bare, making naked." It is from the root word *apokalupto* meaning "to uncover, unveil."
 - b. The book uncovers (unveils) by the use of symbols, signs, imagery, and visions. It seeks to prepare the people for the persecutions that were then impending.
 - c. The apocalyptic method prevented the enemies of Christianity from understanding the message, while making known to the saints the "things which must shortly come to pass."
2. Apocalyptic literature is a special kind of writing.
 - a. Only Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah (and parts of other prophets) are apocalyptic in the Old Testament; Revelation is the only one in the New Testament.
 - b. A fairly large number of counterfeit books containing apocalyptic literature were written between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. These uninspired writings include the "Apocrypha" and "pseudepigrapha."
 - c. Inspired apocalyptic writings always came during a period of trial and suffering. Ezekiel was given

during the period of captivity. This helps us to see why the information was recorded in the apocalyptic form.

- 1) It protected the writer and the readers.
 - 2) It hid the message from enemies and revealed it to the friends of the truth.
3. There are comparisons to be drawn between prophecy and apocalyptic literature.
- a. Both contain predictive elements, however:
 - 1) Prophecies are usually specific:
 - a) Cyrus was called by name about 150 years before his birth: "That saith of Cyrus, *He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid....* Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call *thee* by thy name, *am* the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me*" (Isa. 44:28, 45:1-5).
 - b) A period of seventy years of captivity was predicted for sinful Israel: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, *and* an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations" (Jer. 25:11-12; cf. Jer. 29:10).
 - 2) The predictive element of the apocalypse is more general; it is not intended to deal with specific matters, but is broader in outlook, and often deals with longer periods of time.
 - b. The scope of the apocalypse is greater.
 - 1) The prophet may deal with the present, then jump to far into the future and back again. This change may be discerned in the text.
 - 2) The apocalyptic writer combines present, past, and future all in one unit, with one sweeping motion.
 - c. There is a difference in the form between the two styles of writing. Prophetic visions are descriptive in order to exhort, and not to predict. In prophecy, symbols are usually natural; in apocalyptic literature they are usually arbitrary (they do not follow a set rule).
 - d. Barnes offers these comments about picture-symbols:
 - 1) A picture may be a correct representation of an event. It was thus among the Mexicans, who, by means of pictures, were enabled to give a correct representation of the landing of the Spaniards, and to convey to their monarch a correct idea of the number and character of the Spanish forces.
 - 2) The following extract from Dr. Robertson's "History of America," book v., section xii, referring to the landing of the Spaniards in Mexico, will illustrate this: "During this interview (an interview between Cortez and the ambassadors of Montezuma), some painters in the train of the Mexican chiefs had been diligently employed in delineating, upon white cotton cloths, figures of the ships, the horses, the artillery, the soldiers, and whatever else attracted their eyes as singular. When Cortez observed this, and was informed that these "pictures" were to be sent to Montezuma, in order to convey to him a more lively idea of the strange and wonderful objects now presented to their view "than any words could communicate," he resolved to render the representation still more animated and interesting, by exhibiting such a spectacle as might give both them and their monarch an awful impression of the extraordinary prowess of his followers, and the irresistible force of their arms." [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc.].
4. Some characteristics of apocalyptic literature.
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- a. There is always a historical significance of a critical nature. The book of Revelation was written during the reign of a tyrant. It is important to know the history of the times described in order to see the events predicted.
 - b. The message is presented mainly through visions. These are often highly elaborate.
 - c. It deals chiefly with the character of the events predicted rather than with details. Isaiah 7:14 (a prophecy of Christ's virgin birth) deals with minute detail, but apocalyptic writers were intent on dealing with the character of the events described and not the close details.
 - d. Symbols are used extensively. The writer had to describe events that could not be put into plain words. Symbolism is a system in which qualities, ideas, and principles are represented, not plainly stated.
 - e. It has a dramatic effect. The meaning of the figure is to be discerned by viewing it in broad perspective—as a whole and not by trying to determine the meaning of each minute detail. One must not become so interested in the actor that he forgets the plot and its meaning (Ray Summers, p.26).
5. Numbers bear special meanings in apocalyptic literature.
- a. "In Revelation the numbers three, four, seven, ten, twelve, and multiples of some of these have special significance. Throughout the book the following numbers are found: one-fourth, one-third, one-half, one, two, three, three and a half, four, five, six, seven, (eight is not found, though 'eighth,' 'ninth,' etc., are found in a sequence), ten, twelve, forty-two, one hundred forty-four, six hundred sixty-six, one thousand, one thousand two hundred, one thousand six hundred, seven thousand, twelve thousand, one hundred forty-four thousand, one hundred million, and two hundred million. The fractions, one-fourth, one-third, one-half, are used in a symbolic or figurative sense to designate a minor part of the whole under discussion" (Hailey, pp.41f).
 - b. The number **one** symbolizes uniqueness and unity.
 - c. The number **two** signifies strength (two men are stronger than one man; the testimony of two witnesses is stronger than the word of one).
 - d. The number **three** is a symbol of the divine (there are three divine beings in the Godhead).
 - e. The number **four** symbolizes the terrestrial environment in which men live. From the human perspective, the earth is a flat surface, having four corners; there are four cardinal directions. Four angels, four living creatures, and four horsemen are discussed. Four became a cosmic number in the thinking of the ancients (Summers, p.22).
 - f. The number **five** appears to have a special significance in the Scriptures. There were five wise and five foolish maidens (Matt. 25); five loaves were multiplied to feed a multitude of five thousand men (Matt. 14:15-21); Paul said he would rather speak five words that were understood than ten thousand words that could not be understood (1 Cor. 14:19). "In Revelation John seems to use the number five as a symbol of a short but definite period, as when he speaks of the locusts hurting men for five months (9:5, 10)" (Hailey, p.44).
 - g. The number **seven** occurs "twenty times more in this book than in all other books of the New Covenant combined" (Hailey, p.45). We are told about seven churches, seven spirits, seven lampstands, seven stars, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven thousand slain, seven heads, seven crowns, seven plagues, seven golden vials, seven mountains, and seven kings. Christ spoke of forgiving an offending penitent brother seventy times seven times (Matt. 18:22). "From its repeated use in Scripture, we observe that almost beyond question 'seven' stands as the numerical symbol of the complete or perfect. If it is correct that three is the symbolic divine number and four the symbolic world or creation number, then a proper combination of these would be perfection, completeness, and fullness" (Hailey, p.45).
 - h. The number **six** falls one short of the perfect number seven, hence, can be classified as symbolic of that which is sinister. Six was to the Jews what thirteen is to many today. [However, there could be no evil connotations placed on the six wings of the beings of Revelation 4:8—three pairs of two wings could indicate the rapidity with which they were able to carry out their duties]. The number [666] of the evil beast (Rev. 13:18) is certainly indicative of a sinister power.
 - i. The number **ten** bespeaks of fullness and completeness. References are made in Revelation to ten
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kings, ten crowns, ten horns, and ten days.

- j. The number **twelve** had special meaning in the Old Testament. Jacob had twelve sons; his descendants were formed into twelve tribes which constituted the nation of Israel. Levi, the priestly tribe, was not reckoned as part of the twelve tribes; this tribe was not given their own territory in Canaan, but was spread through the nation, especially near the tabernacle. The Mosaic system called for twelve precious stones to be mounted on the high priest's breastplate (Ex. 28:15-21), twelve cakes of showbread were kept on the table in the tabernacle, and in Solomon's temple, there were twelve metal oxen which supported the laver. In the New Testament order, Christ selected twelve men to serve as his apostles. Paul was a special case—he was sent especially to the Gentiles. The heavenly city has twelve gates, guarded by twelve angels, and is established upon twelve foundations. Many other cases of the use of twelve may be found in the Bible and in Revelation.
- k. The number **three and a half** (or its equivalent) is found several times in the Scriptures and in this book. This time frame is used of periods of testing and hardship.
 - 1) During Elijah's time, there was a severe drought that lasted for three and a half years (Jas. 5:17); Daniel spoke of an occasion when the saints would be in the hands of a certain beast for "a time and times and half a time" (Dan. 7:25—three and a half).
 - 2) The two witnesses were slain and their bodies lay unburied in the street for three and a half days (Rev. 11:9-11). This was a period of sorrow and hardship.
 - 3) The woman who gave birth to a baby boy was forced into the wilderness for twelve hundred and sixty days (i.e., three and a half years).
 - 4) "In every instance where three and a half is used, it is used of a time of oppression, opposition, trial, or persecution. This fact leads to the conclusion that, just as seven is the symbolic number for fullness, completeness, or perfection, so three and a half, a broken seven, is the symbolic number for a period of trial, persecution, famine, and oppression. The number is used in each instance symbolically, not literally" (Hailey, p.48).

E. The Methods of interpreting the Book of Revelation.

1. Futurist Method.

- a. This method claims that Revelation 4-22 is yet future. This is the method of the premillennialists. They think Revelation tells of Christ's return and reign on the earth for a literal thousand years. These are extreme literalists: they do not believe in the symbolic. They claim to take the Bible word-for-word, but will spiritualize a passage to make it fit their views. From the same verse, they view one or more items as literal but one or more as figures. This they do arbitrarily.
- b. They think their method is the only one which keeps alive an active hope in the Lord's return, but reject other Bible information about his return. They think that any other view will not promote active evangelism.
- c. This approach has most of the book dealing with things of the future. It is the method employed by most of the denominations, especially the dispensational and premillennial brands. They usually outline it in the following manner:
 - 1) Chapters 2-3 are interpreted spiritually to be a sweep of the entire history of the church from the days of Christ to his second coming. The dispensational premillennialists divide human history into seven ages and view the seven letters as a description of seven ages of church history.
 - a) It lists seven stages of human history. [This division is based on mere speculation]:
 - Innocence: from the Garden of Eden to the fall.
 - Conscience: from the fall to the flood.
 - Government: from the flood to the promise given to Abraham.
 - Promise: from the promise given to Abraham to the giving of the Law.
 - Law: from the giving of the Law to the sacrifice of Christ.
 - Grace: from the sacrifice of Christ to his return.
 - The Kingdom: from his return for the 1000-year reign to the end of time.
 - b) Dispensationalists say the 7 churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3) represent seven stages of church

history in which the conditions of the 7 churches depicted the condition of the church during subsequent times. These are mere assertions—no proof exists for the conclusions these errorists have reached.

- Ephesus: Duty Without Love: 33-100 A.D. (Rev. 2:1-7).
 - Smyrna: Poor and Persecuted, but rich: 100-312 A.D. (Rev. 2:8-11).
 - Pergamos: Compromise with the World-System: 312-590 A.D. (Rev 2:12-17).
 - Thyatira: The Great Counterfeit: 590-1517. (Rev. 2:18-29).
 - Sardis: Dead Orthodoxy: 1517-1750. (Rev. 3:1-6).
 - Philadelphia: Revival and Evangelism: 1750-1900. (Rev. 3:7-13).
 - Laodicea: Compromise and Apostasy: 1900-Tribulation. (Rev. 3:14-22).
- 2) Chapters 4-18 are applied to the great tribulation which they think is still future.
 - 3) Chapter 19 is said to be the battle of Armageddon, a literal battle between the armies of Christ and Satan.
 - 4) Chapters 20-22 are thought to describe a literal one thousand year reign of Christ and the final judgment.
- d. There are some strong argument against the futurist view.
- 1) It does not allow Revelation to have a message to the Christians of the first century, the very ones to whom the book was addressed.
 - 2) It is inconsistent with the plain statement of Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John."
 - 3) This theory is based on a materialistic concept of the kingdom, and turns the cross from its spiritual intent.
 - 4) Having assumed this view of Revelation, all other passages are forced to fit this mold. Thus they think Christ will reign over a literal, earthly kingdom for a thousand years, that Daniel 2:44 has not been fulfilled, that there will be two literal resurrections separated by one thousand years, in the so-called Rapture, etc. Those who must "prove" their doctrines, usually pervert the plain statements of other passages to fit their fanciful interpretation of this symbolic book.
 - 5) Revelation is made a Jewish book.
2. Continuous-historical Method.
- a. This view takes Revelation to be a symbolic forecast of the history of the church from the days of Christ to his second coming. Many of our brethren have taken this approach, including John T. Hinds in the Gospel Advocate series of commentaries.
 - b. It demands detailed interpretations, and makes Revelation prophesy in detail the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - c. Some objections to this method.
 - 1) What happens when all the symbols have been used in application to historical events? What about the rest of time?
 - 2) Why should the applications be limited to the Western Roman Empire?
 - 3) It would be out of touch with the very ones it was addressed to. How could the division of the Catholic Church have any significance to the saints living in a time of persecution in the first century?
 - 4) It attaches undue importance to the apostasy of the Catholic Church. It is true that the Catholic heresy has brought many evils, but other counterfeit churches have done the same. It is true that the pope is the enemy of the truth, but so also are all the other false teachers. Revelation was not written especially to set forth arguments against error except in the principles taught incidentally.
 - 5) It stoops to details as absurd as the futurist. Some apply the thirty minutes of silence in heaven to seventy years in the history of Rome. The seven thunders are said to be the seven *anathemas* hurled at Luther by the pope.
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- d. The view had some favorable aspects. It avoids the literalism of the futuristic method. It foresees the eventual overthrow of evil.
 - e. An example of this method (from Barnes on Rev. 6-11):
 - 1) The first seal: fulfilled in the state of the Roman Empire from the death of Domitian (96 A.D.) to the accession of Commodus (180 A.D.).
 - 2) The second seal: from the death of Commodus (193 A.D.) to 210 A.D.
 - 3) The third seal: the time of Carcella, 211-241.
 - 4) The fourth seal: the time of Decius to Gallienus, 243-268.
 - 5) The fifth seal: fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the persecutions especially in the time of Diocletian, 284-304.
 - 6) The sixth seal: the invasions of the Barbarians, beginning in 365.
 - 7) The seventh seal: the seven trumpets. These trumpets are interpreted to describe historical events from the invasion of Alaric the Goth (395-410, the first trumpet), to the time of the Muhammadans (the fifth trumpet), to the time of the Turks (the sixth trumpet), to the final triumph of the church (the seventh trumpet).
3. Philosophy of History Method.
- a. This method views Revelation as the expression of great principles of God's government, whose operation may be observed in every age. It sees the book merely as the setting forth of the principles which form the basis of God's dealing with man. The events recorded are not as important as the underlying principles they describe.
 - b. Symbols of the book represent certain principles applicable to all ages equally. The wild beast of chapter 13 simply represents the secular powers which oppose the church when and where these powers arise.
 - c. The visions are compared to several reels of film showing the same thing from different viewpoints. There is no continuity on the book, according to this view.
 - d. There are some objections to this view.
 - 1) It removes the book too far from those to whom it was written, but not as far as do the futurist and historical methods.
 - 2) It confines the book to too narrow a channel. It asserts that the symbols refer to forces or tendencies, and that there are no specific prophecies or events in the book.
 - 3) This method is weakened due to the lack of connection between the book and its historical setting.
4. Preterist Method.
- a. This position maintains that the book was written for the people of John's day and was fulfilled in that general time period.
 - b. Some hold that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem and was fulfilled in that event. Others maintain that it was written later and was fulfilled in the conflict between the church and the Roman Empire.
 - c. This view is the very opposite of the futurist interpretation. The futurists say that none of the last 19 chapters have been fulfilled, while the preterists say all was fulfilled in the days of the Roman Empire.
 - d. This method sees Revelation as a book primarily for Christians during the days of the Roman Empire with only secondary or incidental application to those living today.
 - e. The left wing of preterist thought denies the inspiration of the book; the right wing includes Foy Wallace, Jr., whose commentary on Revelation will be noticed at various points of these notes.
 - f. There are some strong point of this method.
 - 1) It is true to the background of the book.
 - 2) It makes the book meaningful to those to whom it was first written.
 - 3) It gives room to universal application of the message of the book.
 - 4) It allows an interpretation that is consistent with the scriptural teachings throughout the New Testament.
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5) It has more good points than bad.

5. Historical Background Method.

- a. This method states that the author wrote primarily for the encouragement of the Christians of John's day. Therefore, a study of the book must include a close study of the conditions then prevailing in the church and in the world. The message of the book is seen to be one of hope and comfort to the suffering saints.
- b. This view states that the book is written largely in symbolic language. A symbol represents something else, thus an interpretation must be made by which the meaning of the symbols are applied to certain events or abstract ideas.
- c. It understands the book to use many Old Testament terms with New Testament meanings. References to the temple do not necessarily mean the literal Old Testament temple.
- d. This view also states that one must grasp the visions as a whole without pressing the details too far. Christ's parables are often pressed too far, which results in obscuration of their true meaning. Many of the details of Revelation are for dramatic effect and have no special significance.
- e. A fifth principle of this method is that it is addressed to the imagination. This aspect of the method is especially dangerous, for imagination can be very misleading and unreliable.
- f. This method is sometimes identified with the Preterist Method, but with this difference: this method says Revelation has a pertinent message for each generation.

6. Spiritual Method.

- a. This method seeks to interpret the book spiritually.
- b. It claims that Revelation figuratively discusses the conflict between good and evil, and refers to no specific historical events.

7. Contextual Method.

- a. This is a cross between the Philosophy of History and Historical Methods.
- b. It is probably the most accurate and reliable method.
- c. This method is a mixture of principles of the other methods.

F. The Date Revelation was Written.

1. The date is important for it can determine the interpretation made.

- a. If one holds to the early date (64-68 A.D.), then one has the basis for applying the symbols to the fall of Jerusalem.
- b. If it can be established that it was written at the late date (95-96 A.D.), then the application cannot be made to the overthrow of Jerusalem.
- c. The true exposition of Revelation depends, in no small degree, on knowing something about the existing conditions at the time of writing. Thus, what effect these circumstances and conditions would naturally have on the first readers' understanding of the book is significant (i.e., what would the Revelation signify to the first recipients?). The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, thus future wars and political intrigue hundreds of years in the future would not likely be the thrust of the book.
- d. If the latter date view is held, then the things signified had nothing to do with events then past (the destruction of Jerusalem, the persecutions of Nero, etc.). The interpretation of the symbols would exclude these. The early date view would at least admit the possibility Jerusalem's overthrow could be included.

2. Evidence supporting the early date (64-68 A.D.)

- a. The title page of the Syriac Version indicates the early date. This is the earliest direct version; it was made in the second century. On the title page is found this inscription: "The Revelation which was made by God to John the evangelist in the island Patmos, into which he was thrown by Nero Caesar." This would place the date about 68 A.D. [This does not necessarily mean that the book was written while Nero was on the throne, for we do not *know* how long John was exiled on Patmos; if he was there for several years, it *could* have been later, during the reign of Domitian, that the visions were given. Also, it is possible that the title page is incorrect]. Eusebius says John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian.

- b. "And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8). The reference to Jerusalem ("where our Lord was crucified") indicates that the city was still standing. [However, the fact that the book is filled with symbols would at least suggest that the reference to Jerusalem could be taken as symbolic, thus the literal city of Jerusalem may not be the one indicated].
- c. Part of Revelation occurs during the reign of the sixth Roman Emperor. "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev. 17:10-12).
- 1) The first six kings were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The one which was "not yet come" was Domitian. Late date advocates say Revelation was written during Domitian's reign; early date supporters say it occurred during Nero's reign, the sixth ruler.
 - 2) Some say that Julius must be omitted from the list, thus making Domitian the emperor at the time of Revelation. *Caesar* was the official title of the Roman Emperors and was derived from the first emperor (Julius Caesar) who was the most famous of them all. [See the comments under the text for a discussion of these facts].
 - 3) Nero's reign extended from 54-68 A.D. Between these dates the book of Revelation was given, according to the early date advocates.
 - 4) Some have tried to escape this conclusion by trying to qualify certain vice-regents and mock rulers as genuine emperors and place them in the above-mentioned line, but this would also eliminate Domitian and void the argument for the Domitian-period date.
 - 5) It assumes that the kings of Rome are meant.
- d. Revelation 2:19,25: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first....But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come." This admonition to faithfulness was directed to those who comprised the church at Thyatira then; they were told to remain loyal "till I come." This could not be the second coming [they would not live that long], for the statement implies they would still be alive and subject to temptation until this "coming." The most natural interpretation seems to be as in Matthew 24:30, where a representative coming of Christ is described: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The coming was representative, in the awesome events of the time when Judaism was overthrown. The advocates of the early date view find several parallels between Matthew 24 and Revelation:
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MATTHEW	REVELATION
Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if <i>it were</i> possible, they shall deceive the very elect."	Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified <i>it</i> by his angel unto his servant John."
Matthew 24:21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."	<p>Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."</p> <p>Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."</p> <p>Revelation 7:14: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."</p>
Matthew 24:2: "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."	<p>Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."</p> <p>Revelation 18:10: "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."</p> <p>Revelation 18:21: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast <i>it</i> into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."</p>
Matthew 24:16-21: "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."	Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred <i>and</i> threescore days."
Matthew 24:7-8: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these <i>are</i> the beginning of sorrows."	Revelation 18:8: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong <i>is</i> the Lord God who judgeth her."
Matthew 24:34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."	Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become <i>the kingdoms</i> of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

- e. Only seven congregations were in Asia, a province in Asia Minor. Later, presumably there were many more congregations.
 - f. The character of the Greek and Hebraistic expressions are said to indicate the early date. [But with the Holy Spirit giving the message, using the vocabulary of John, this argument is insignificant, and does not disprove the late date or prove the early date].
 - g. The number "666" fits Nero: *neron kesar* (Nero Caesar). But others argue that it can be made to fit the family name of Titus Vespasian (*Teitan*), *Lateinos* (the Roman Empire), and the antichrist (*annoume*, to deny). In recent years some have tried to get *Hitler* out of it.
3. Evidence supporting the late date (95-96 A.D.)
- a. The primary evidence seems to be a statement made by Irenaeus who lived in the second century. He was writing about the mystic number given in Revelation 13:8, when he said: 'If it were necessary to have his name distinctly announced at the present time it would doubtless have been announced by him who saw the apocalypse; for it was not a great while ago that (it or he) was seen, but almost in our own generation, toward the end of Domitian's reign.' Brother Wallace says that the object of *was seen* is ambiguous, and may be understood to refer to either John or the Apocalypse (p.25). [However, it *could* be in reference to the book of Revelation, thus does not disprove the late date].
 - b. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus, Jerome, Eusebius, Hippolytus, and Hegesippus are said to have supported the late date view.
 - c. In Revelation 2 and 3, there is a spiritual decline noted in Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea that would have taken several years to develop. But see Galatians 1:6-9, where Paul expresses shock that the brethren in Galatia had so quickly begun to apostatize. [However, the Galatians had only begun the downward plunge; the warning in Revelation 2 is very strong, suggesting the Ephesians were on the brink of utter rejection, while the Galatians were still in good standing with the Lord].
 - d. A new Sect, the Nicolaitans, had developed, which is not mentioned in the rest of the New Testament.
 - e. It is claimed that the church at Smyrna may not have existed until after 60-64 A.D. It appears to be well-established in Revelation.
 - f. The Laodiceans are said to be rich, but the city was destroyed by an earthquake about 60-62 A.D. If Revelation was written during the late sixties of the first century, the city would not likely have had time to re-acquire its wealth, but thirty years later it could have.
 - g. It is asserted that emperor worship was not started until Domitian, which is said to support the late date.
4. Many other arguments are given in support of each of these two views, and many are given in rebuttal to them. All of the arguments can be controverted; none of them appear to establish the date indisputably. To accept the early date does not bind us to the conclusions that some have reached in applying the whole book to the destruction of Jerusalem. In this material, we have accepted the late date. The crux of the interpretation rests on the identity of the "Babylon" of Revelation. Some assert that Jerusalem is meant. It is more likely that it is the Roman Empire (with Rome as its heart and the emperor as its head).
- a. The Babylon of Revelation is one which ruled the world, a fact that does not fit Jerusalem. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem or Judaism has caused all men to go into sin? Was there any time when the Jews ruled the world (as did the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire)? This fact discourages the view that Revelation pertains primarily to the Jewish nation and its overthrow at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.
 - b. Revelation 14:8-11: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Which does this passage more logically fit—Jerusalem or Rome?
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G. Miscellaneous Information.

1. There were several persecutions against the church by Rome.
 - a. Nero—67 A.D.
 - b. Domitian—81 A.D.
 - c. Trajan—108 A.D.
 - d. Marcus Aurelius —162 A.D.
 - e. Severius—192 A.D.
 - f. Maximus—235 A.D.
 - g. Decius—249 A.D.
 - h. Valerian—257 A.D.
 - i. Diocletian—303 A.D.
 2. Five reasons why pagan Rome fell (Edward Gibbon).
 - a. Rapid increase of divorce with the undermining of the sanctity of the home which is the basis of society. Laws had to be passed to force people to marry. Some women counted their age by the number of husbands they had had.
 - b. Higher and higher taxes. Public money was spent on bread and celebrations. This was done to keep the lower classes contented.
 - c. The mad craze for pleasure. Sports became more exciting and more brutal.
 - d. The building of gigantic armaments, while the real enemy was within: the decadence of the people.
 - e. The decay of religion.
 3. Causes for the fall of Rome (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1944, pp.665-670).
 - a. Importation of foreigners in great number who later gained the majority.
 - b. Pestilence, revolution, and war.
 - c. Moral decay: sex ran riot in freedom while liberty decayed.
 - d. Christianity: undermined and exposed the weak underpinnings of a corrupt empire.
 - e. Economic causes: farms were abandoned when the tillers of the soil thought they could live as well on the public dole as from farming.
 - f. The Roman army was manned by foreigners who were not committed to the Empire's best interests.
 4. The conditions within the Roman Empire during the first century.
 - a. During the first century, Rome was at the peak of its greatness.
 - 1) Its boundaries extended from the African desert to the British Isles; from the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean.
 - 2) The Mediterranean ["middle of the terrain"] was in the center of the Empire. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters....And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. 17:1,15).
 - 3) To the people then, the Roman Empire was everything; it was all the civilized world.
 - b. Several things held the Empire together.
 - 1) It had a well-organized army.
 - 2) It was built on conquest and commerce. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were
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- dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all" (Rev. 18:11-14).
- c. It was a time of great wealth and extravagance for many. Summers (pp.90f) gives several items which illustrate the point.
 - 1) Palaces of Rome were extremely beautiful.
 - 2) Caligula is reported to have spent \$500,000 on one banquet; a Roman citizen gave a dinner in Nero's honor and spent \$16,000 on roses alone.
 - 3) Slaves were used not only to serve masters, but also to show off the owner's riches. Many slaves were more cultured than their masters.
 - 4) The fashionable women of Rome had a different slave to apply each shade of color on their faces. Caligula's wife was reputed to wear emeralds valued at \$2,000,000.
 - d. There were only small middle class groups.
 - 1) People were extremely rich or poor; there was no need for hired labor—servants did the work.
 - 2) The idle poor streamed into the city to be supported by the dole system (welfare).
 - 3) The government provided circuses to keep people occupied, and from causing trouble.
 - e. As a result of these conditions, morality plummeted (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
 - 1) Teachers were inconsistent. Seneca preached against riches but amassed \$12,000,000 in a short time.
 - 2) Crime multiplied.
 - 3) Nero was homosexual and openly practiced this sin. By the time he was 25, already "he had murdered his innocent wife and his adopted brother, and had dyed his hands in the blood of his mother. Yet even these enormities seem to have disgusted the Romans less than his prostitution of the imperial purple, by publicly performing as a musician on the stage and a charioteer in the circus" (Conybeare & Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p.742).
 - 4) The sanctity of marriage was lost.
 - 5) Christians were warned not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed into the image of Christ.
 - a) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - f. Emperor worship was characteristic of the first century. Roman rulers were deified.
 - 1) Domitian strictly enforced this evil practice. Each year the people were to show their loyalty by sacrificing to the emperor. Certificates were issued to worshipers of the Emperor which they were required to show when questioned. Avid worshipers wore marks on their arms and foreheads.
 - 2) There was an organized group in each city [*Oraefactus Urbi*] which was empowered to enforce worship of the emperor.
 - 3) "Domitian delighted in being looked upon as divine and in being so worshiped. To the Christian such homage was idolatry and an utter denial of faith in Christ. To the Romans the refusal to worship the emperor was a sign of disloyalty to the State and an act of treason. Emperor worship was forced upon the Christians as a test of their loyalty to the State.
 - a) "At first Christians were called upon to perform the ceremonies of loyal service and worship to the emperor—the placing of a pinch of incense upon the altar. To refuse was disloyal; to agree was to prove that one was not a Christian...."
 - b) "As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the '*praefectus urbi*' for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for

punishing people in the various cities over a province.

- c) “The group with the greatest authority was the *concordia* composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and punished in various ways all who refused. Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty.
 - d) “All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom” (Summers, pp.92f).
- 4) The Romans had no reason to fear any rebellion on the part of faithful Christians against their Empire, for they were directed to support the government, pray for its rulers, and follow its laws.
- a) Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
- g. Christians were reduced to poverty (cf. Rev. 13). They lost their positions, their homes, and their wealth.
5. The fall of Rome.
- a. “Externally the fall of the Western Roman Empire was hastened by the expansion and migration of the Hsiung-nu, or Huns, in northwestern Asia. Defeated in their eastern advance by Chinese armies and the Chinese Wall, they turned westward, and about A.D. 355 reached the Volga and the Oxus. Their pressure forced the Sarmatians of Russia to move into the Balkans; the Goths, so harassed, moved again upon the Roman frontiers. They were admitted across the Danube to settle in Moesia (376); maltreated there by Roman officials, they revolted, defeated a large Roman army at Adrianople (378), and for a time threatened Constantinople. In 400 Alaric led the Visigoths over the Alps into Italy, and in 410 they took and sacked Rome. In 429 Gaiseric led the Vandals to the conquest of Spain and Africa, and in 455 they took and sacked Rome. In 451 Attila led the Huns in an attack upon Gaul and Italy; he was defeated at Chalons, but overran Lombardy. In 472 a Pannonian general, Orestes, made his son emperor under the name of Romulus Augustulus. Four years later the barbarian mercenaries who dominated the Roman army deposed this ‘little Augustus,’ and named their leader Odoacer king of Italy. Odoacer recognized the supremacy of the Roman emperor at Constantinople, and was accepted by him as a vassal king. The Roman Empire in the East would go on until 1453; in the West it had come to an end” (Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.669f).
 - b. “The brief reigns of Publius Helvius Pertinax (193) and Didus Severus Julianus were followed by that of Lucius Septimius Severus, who ruled from 193 to 211; his short-lived dynasty included the emperors Caracalla, who reigned from 211 to 217; Heliogabalus, from 218 to 222; and Alexander
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Severus (208-35), from 222 to 235. Septimius was an able ruler, but Caracalla was noted for his brutality and Heliogabalus for his debauchery. Caracalla, who in 212 granted Roman citizenship to all freemen living in the Roman Empire, is said to have so decreed in order to impose on them the taxes to which only citizens were liable. Alexander Severus was noted for his wisdom and justice.

- 1) "After the death of Alexander Severus, a period ensued during which great confusion prevailed in Rome and throughout Italy. Of his 12 successors who ruled in the next 33 years, nearly all came to a violent death, usually at the hands of the soldiers who had established them on the throne. A temporary revival of peace and prosperity was brought about by the Illyrian emperors, natives of the area now known as Dalmatia, namely, Claudius II, surnamed Gothicus, who in a short reign (268-70) drove back the Goths; and Aurelian, who, ruling from 270 to 275, was victorious over both the Goths and the Germans and defeated and captured Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, who had occupied Egypt and Asia Minor. For a brief period the unity of the empire was restored. Aurelian was followed by a rapid succession of historically unimportant emperors, of whom six ruled in the 9-year period before the accession of Diocletian, also an Illyrian, who ruled from 284 to 305.
 - 2) "An able administrator, Diocletian introduced many social, economic, and political reforms. He removed the political and economic privileges that Rome and Italy had enjoyed at the expense of the provinces. He sought to regulate rampant inflation by controlling the prices of provisions and many other necessities of life, and also the maximum wages for workers. To provide a more efficient administration, uniform throughout the empire, he initiated a new system of government by selecting a capable colleague, Maximian, who, like Diocletian, took the title of Augustus. He further reinforced this dual control by associating with him and Maximian two able generals, Galerius (242?-311) and Constantius, whom he proclaimed as Caesars, below the two Augusti in rank but with the right of succession to their posts. Diocletian himself had control of Thrace, Egypt, and Asia; to Maximian he gave Italy and Africa, to Constantius Gaul, Spain, and Britain, and to Galerius the Danubian provinces. This system created a stronger administrative machinery but increased the size of the already huge governmental bureaucracy, with the four imperial courts and their officials proving a great financial burden on the resources of the empire.
 - 3) "Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in 305, leaving the new Augusti and Caesars involved in a conflict that resulted in civil wars, not ended until the accession of Constantine the Great in 312. Constantine the Great, who had previously become Caesar of the army in Britain, overcame all rivals and reunited the Western Empire under his rule. In 314 the defeat of Licinius (270?-325), emperor in the East, made Constantine the Great sole ruler of the Roman world. Christianity, which had risen during the reign of Augustus and spread during that of Tiberius and of later emperors, had triumphed over Diocletian's attempts to crush it by persecution, and the politic Constantine the Great, adopting it as his own religion, made it also the official religion of the Roman Empire, an event of far-reaching significance. The other important event of Constantine the Great's reign was the establishment of a new seat of government at Byzantium, which was refounded as Nova Roma and subsequently called Constantinople (now Ýstanbul). The death of Constantine the Great in 337 was the signal for civil war among the rival Caesars, which continued until Constantine the Great's only surviving son, Constantius II, succeeded in 353 in reuniting the empire under his rule. He was followed by Julian, known as the Apostate because of his renunciation of Christianity, who ruled from 361 to 363, and by Jovian (331?-64?), who ruled in 363-64. Thereafter the empire was again split in two. Theodosius I, the Great, was Eastern emperor on the death of the Western emperor Valentinian II in 392. Three years later, when Theodosius died, the empire was divided between his two sons, Arcadius (337?-408), emperor of the East, and Honorius (384-423), emperor of the West.
 - 4) "During the last 80 years of the Western Roman Empire the provinces, drained by taxes levied for the support of the army and the bureaucracy, were visited by internal war and by barbarian invasions. At first the policy of conciliating the invader with military commands and administrative offices succeeded. Gradually, however, the barbarians established in the east began to aim at conquest in the west, and Alaric I, king of the Visigoths, first occupied Illyricum, whence he ravaged Greece. In 410 he captured and sacked Rome, but died soon after. His successor, Ataulf (reigned 410-15), drew off the Visigoths to Gaul, and in 419 a succeeding king, Wallia, received
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formal permission from Honorius to settle in southwestern Gaul, where at Toulouse he founded the Visigothic dynasty. Spain, already divided between the Vandals, the Suebi, and the Alans, was in like manner formally made over to those invaders by Honorius, whose authority at his death in 423 was nominal in the western part of the continent.

- 5) “His successor, Valentinian III, witnessed the conquest of Africa by the Vandals under their king Gaiseric and the seizure of Gaul and Italy by the Huns under their famous leader Attila. The Vandals, having taken Carthage, were recognized by Valentinian in their new African kingdom in 440, and the Huns, the rulers of central and northern Europe, confronted the emperors of east and west alike as an independent power. Attila marched first on Gaul, but the Visigoths, being Christian and already half-Romanized, opposed him out of loyalty to the Romans; commanded by Flavius Aëtius, they signally defeated the Huns at Chalons in 451. The following year Attila invaded Lombardy (Lombardia) but was unable to advance further, and he died in 453. Two years later Valentinian, the last representative of the house of Theodosius in the west, was murdered. The 20 years after the death of Valentinian saw the accession and the overthrow of nine Roman emperors, but the real power was General Ricimer (died 472), the Suebe, called The Kingmaker. The last Western Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was overthrown by the mercenary Herulian leader Odoacer (circa 435-93), who was proclaimed king of Italy by his troops. The history of Rome would subsequently merge with that of the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papal States, and Italy” (Encarta, 1999).
 - c. A period of about three hundred years was involved in the fall of Rome, a time that is longer than the total existence of some nations.
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REVELATION 1

A. Revelation 1:1: The Source of Revelation.

1. Verse 1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John."
2. The message originated with God, was passed by Christ through an angel to the apostle John. The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the revelation.
 - a. Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."
 - b. Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - c. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
3. Revelation has a three-fold purpose.
 - a. To outline the fortunes of the church in the near future.
 - b. To bolster the sagging faith of Christians.
 - c. To teach Christians how to pay for their faith—faithfulness is costly during persecution.
4. The first verse contains the title, the source, and the time framework (in part) of the Book. It was given by Christ to his servants through the apostleship of John.
5. The book was designed to show some things which "must shortly come to pass." The statement emphasizes the swiftness, speed, and rapidity with which the things indicated were to occur.
 - a. The word translated "shortly" is found also in 22:6, Acts 25:4, and Romans 16:20. The same word is translated "quickly" in Acts 12:7; 22:18, and Revelation 2:5; it is translated "speedily" in Luke 18:8.
 - 1) Luke 18:8: "I tell you that he will avenge them **speedily**. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
 - 2) Acts 12:7: "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up **quickly**. And his chains fell off from *his* hands."
 - 3) Acts 22:18: "And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee **quickly** out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."
 - 4) Acts 25:4: "But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart **shortly thither**."
 - 5) Romans 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet **shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen."
 - 6) Revelation 2:5: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee **quickly**, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."
 - 7) Revelation 22:6: "And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must **shortly** be done."
 - b. "Shortly" is a relative term that must be understood in the light of the context. It can mean immediately or within a reasonably short period of time. The nearness of the things is what is stressed, and the quickness with which they are to transpire. This statement (with 1:3) shows conclusively that the events described were not then thousands of years in the future. Many today claim that nearly all the things in the book are yet future—even to our time. *Shortly* shows this is manifestly false.
6. The word "signified" is a highly important word. The things revealed were *signified*, communicated by means of signs or symbols. While there are some references to literal entities in the book (e.g., 1:9,11), the book is filled with figurative and symbolic language. The same word appears also in the following places:
 - a. John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said,

signifying what death he should die."

- b. John 18:31-32: "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, **signifying** what death he should die."
 - c. John 21:18-19: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, **signifying** by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."
 - d. Acts 11:27-28: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and **signified** by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar."
 - e. Compare Acts 21:10-11: "And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles."
7. Many modern expositors try to make every horn and hoof literal; hence the 1,000 year reign, the 144,000, etc., are made literal. Verse one issues a warning against such a literal interpretation. The language of the book is couched in symbols, a code language which the Lord's people could comprehend, but which their enemies could not.

B. Revelation 1:2-3: The Message of Revelation is the Word of God.

1. Verse 2: "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."
 - a. John states that he bore record of the word of God, of the testimony of Christ, and of the things he saw. These things comprise the contents of Revelation.
 - b. The testimony of Christ and the things which were revealed to John are the word of God; the book of Revelation is another inspired component of God's revealed word.
 - c. It is significant that at the very first of this book, a bold claim to inspiration is made in behalf of the book; and at the end, a strong word of warning is issued against changing its inspired contents: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).
2. Verse 3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
 - a. The first of seven beatitudes is given here. The others are located in 14:13, 16:15, 19:9; 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14. Here, a state of blessedness is pronounced upon the one who reads and understands the words of this prophecy, and keeps the things recorded therein.
 - 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

- 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- b. Note the *he* that reads and *they* that hear. This probably refers to the practice of publicly reading the Scriptures. The reader and hearer alike are blessed. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).
 - 1) Luke 4:16: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."
 - 2) Colossians 4:16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea."
- c. Those who read and hear the *words of prophecy* are blessed. The phrase "words of prophecy" affirms the contents of the book to be inspired. To prophesy is to speak for God, with his approval and under his control. The prophetic message might relate to the past, the present, or future.
 - 1) Ephesians 3:5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
- d. The time is at hand: the woes, the fears, the battles, and the hopes were all in the near future to the time John penned these words. This is given as strong motivation for heeding the things revealed.

C. Revelation 1:4-8: The Salutation.

1. Verse 4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
 - a. The information was initially addressed to the seven congregations in the province of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
 - b. The gospel accounts contain announcements of the coming church; Acts shows its beginning and development; the epistles show the growth of, and admonitions to, the church; Revelation shows somewhat of the future of the church.
 - c. Once again it is affirmed that John is the inspired writer. But the real source of the message is "him who is, and who was, and who is to come." The Eternal God of heaven is this great personage. There has never been a time when God did not exist, and there will never be a time when he will cease to be. The same truths also describe the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.
 - d. The source of the message is also attributed to the seven Spirits which are before the throne of God. The seven Spirits is obviously a unique reference to the Holy Spirit. The number seven is used in the book to indicate fullness and completeness of him who was God's agent in revealing his message to the saints,
 - 1) This could not represent the seven churches since the greeting would be from the churches to the churches, in that case.
 - 2) In this context, the logical reference is to the Holy Spirit. Taken with the next part of the statement, the greeting is from the entire Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).
2. Verse 5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"
 - a. The salutation is also from Jesus Christ. He is mentioned third in the list here since it is he who is to be described in detail in the following verses.
 - b. He is called "the faithful witness" because he cannot be false in any way or matter. This description of the Redeemer is calculated to give comfort to the saints in their forthcoming struggles. He will remain faithful to them and will reward their faithfulness.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or

- Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
- 2) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
- c. He is called "the first begotten of the dead." [Cf. Eph. 1:19-23]. He was not the first one raised from the dead, but he was the first one to be resurrected to die no more. Lazarus was resurrected from the tomb, but he faced death again.
 - d. He is called "the prince of the kings of the earth." His authority is greater than earth's mighty rulers. "Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27). What a comfort this truth could be to the persecuted Christians! Those rulers who were the cause of their problems would be brought down by Christ in due time, and must themselves give account of themselves to Christ in the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." This applies to the great and the small!
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 - e. The last clause of the verse is a plain statement that is not to be explained away. Christ loved us and cleansed us from the guilt of our sins in his own blood.
 - 1) Zechariah 13:1: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:12: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."
 - f. Three facts are given here and in the next verse: he loved us; he loosed us from our sin; and he made us a kingdom and priests. The ASV has *loosed* in place of *washed* in the KJV. These two terms have slightly different connotations, but have the same practical meaning. One who is washed from his sins has been cleansed; one who is loosed from his sins has been freed from sin's guilt.
3. Verse 6: "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - a. Christians have been made to be kings and have become priests. The ASV uses the word *kingdom* in the place of *kings*. We are not kings, but we are citizens in his kingdom; we comprise his kingdom. Collectively, we are his kingdom; individually, we are priests. Even the premillennialists admit that Christians are priests now, but they deny that the kingdom is presently in existence. However, this verse affirms that we are even now both priests and a kingdom; therefore, the kingdom has come.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of **the kingdom of heaven**: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." [Terms used interchangeably].
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - 3) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the

- kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
- 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - 5) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- b. Two duties of Old Testament priests—to mediate and teach. They mediated for the people by offering sacrifices. Each Christian is a priest and offers his worship directly to God through Christ; and each Christian has the obligation to teach others what he has learned from God's word.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:15: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
 - c. We are a kingdom and priests unto God the Father. God is our Father because he is the Father of our Lord, and we belong to the Lord. The Fatherhood of God is emphasized in the New Testament. We are his children because he has adopted us into his spiritual family.
 - 1) Matthew 23:8: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - d. To God be the glory and dominion for ever and ever. The definite article *the* is in the original, which indicates the universality of God's glory and power—all glory belongs to him.
4. Verse 7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
 - a. Some sound brethren have thought that this is not the second coming of Christ, but rather refers to his coming in judgment against the Roman Empire, or against Judaism. Some make this verse parallel with Revelation 18.
 - b. But this verse is in a literal context (verses 4-8). It is as literal as the statement in verse 5 that we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. Furthermore, the description given here fits perfectly with the picture of the second coming given elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - 1) Matthew 24:27: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - 2) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we
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- which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
- 4) 2 Peter 3:10-11: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness,"
 - c. Every eye shall see him, even those who pierced him. All kindreds (tribes) of the earth will wail because of him—due to the awesomeness of his coming and of the Judgment. The universality of his coming is plainly evident in the statement. Those who were involved in his crucifixion will be aware of his coming; all tribes of the earth will wail. The greatness of that day will be beyond any other day or event in all of human history! If we could only convince the world of the reality of this truth!
 5. Verse 8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - a. This is a description of Christ. He is Alpha and Omega—the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This figure of speech is immediately followed with the more literal depiction—he is the beginning and the ending. He was present at the beginning of time and he will be present at the end of time.
 - b. What was said in description of the Father in verse four is given here in reference to the Son. Christ is, he has ever been, and will always be; there has never been a time when he did not exist; there will never be a time when he will not exist. Christ is not a created being, but is as divine and eternal as is the Father.
 - 1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 2) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - 4) Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 5) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - c. This emphasis on Christ's dominion and eternal being was needed. The Romans on some occasions would march in the streets holding up two banners inscribed with "Lord God Emperor" and "Lord Christ" (Pledge, Class Notes). This was done to pressure the populace to choose between the two. It would intimidate some to shun Christ and to worship the emperor. This passage would encourage the saints to refuse to compromise.
 - d. It is hard to distinguish between God and Christ except in the fact that they are separate individuals and are different in authority. God has primary authority; Christ has been given all authority in all matters pertaining to the kingdom. Christ's authority is delegated authority.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head

- over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - e. Christ is referred to in the verse as *the Almighty*. This uproots the Watchtower doctrine that makes him a second-rate god. There is no degree of Deity.
 - 1) Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
 - 2) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
 - 3) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - f. The Second Person of the Godhead (Christ) is spoken of as the "Son of God," but this does not imply that there was a time when Christ did not exist. If that were the case, he could not be deity; a divine person has no beginning or end. In what sense is Christ the "Son" of God?
 - 1) In the sense that the Father has greater authority, as is also the case between an earthly father and his son. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him" (John 13:16). God sent Christ into the world (John 6:44); Christ sent the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). The only distinction between the members of the Godhead is in the realm of authority.
 - 2) In the sense that he brought him forth into the world as a member of the human family. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, **this day have I begotten thee?** And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb. 1:5). God audibly declared him to be his beloved Son on two great occasions: at his baptism (Matt. 3:15-17) and as the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-5). Compare: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes" (John 12:28-30).
 - 3) In the sense that he raised him up from the dead.
 - a) Psalms 2:7: "I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; **this day have I begotten thee.**"
 - b) Acts 13:33: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, **this day have I begotten thee.**"

D. Revelation 1:9-11: John's Commission.

1. Verse 9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - a. The apostle continues his introductory statement by describing his relationship with the brethren and his present condition. He says he is their brother and companion. He is joint-partaker with them in the persecutions they were suffering.
 - 1) Tribulations are external pressures. The external circumstance under which Christians of various generations live differ, but the internal circumstances remain unchanged. We face varying degrees

- of opposition but inwardly we all are challenged to be faithful. The same internal battles have to be fought by every Christian regardless of the outward problems.
- 2) Tribulation is like a winepress crushing juice from grapes; it exerts constant pressure, with no let-up. But what appears to destroy really is helpful. Crushing wheat results in flour; tribulations help us to be better servants of God. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:2).
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
- b. He is their brother and companion in the kingdom. If one is John's spiritual brother, he is in the kingdom also; and if in the kingdom, he is a brother to John. This is another scriptural affirmation that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has been established. Therefore the premillennial view obtained from a perverted interpretation of Revelation 20 is seen to be false.
 - c. He was in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Two uses are made of the Lord's spiritual kingdom in the New Testament:
 - 1) In reference to the church.
 - a) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - 2) In reference to heaven.
 - a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c) 2 Peter 1:11: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - d. He was on the isle of Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea, 24 miles off the southwestern coast of Asia Minor, about 70 miles southwest of Ephesus, 40 miles from Miletus. It was a rocky, uninviting island about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. Pliny, a writer from ancient Rome, says Roman authorities sometimes banished criminals to Patmos. Eusebius says John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian.
 - 1) "Pátmos, island, Greece, one of the most northerly of the Dodecanese (Greek *dhodhek nisos*, 'twelve islands') group. It lies close to the coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea and has an area of about 34 sq km (13 sq mi). This small island is crescent-shaped, dry, and volcanic in origin. About 2500 people live on Pátmos growing grapes, olives, tomatoes, wheat, and other crops. The main town, also called Pátmos, is in the southeast. Overlooking the town is the fortified monastery...founded...in 1088. It houses a library of rare Christian books, some of them dating from the 6th century. According to tradition, the author of the biblical Book of Revelation, John the Evangelist, wrote it in a cave partway down the mountain from the monastery in AD 95. The cave is now in the Convent of the Apocalypse and is a place of pilgrimage....For hundreds of years in the Middle Ages the island was virtually deserted, but it passed into Venetian and then Turkish occupation from 1537 to 1912. It was ruled by Italy after 1912 and became part of Greece in 1947" [Encarta].
 - 2) Patmos: "Turkish island of the group Sporades, Southwest of Samos, mentioned once in the Bible, Rev 1:9, 'I, John....was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (*dia ton logon tou theou kai ten marturian Iesou*). The island Isa 10 miles long, and about

6 broad along the northern coast. It is for the most part rocky. The highest part is Mount St. Elias, which rises to a height of over 800 ft. As in Greece, and in the adjacent mainland of Asia Minor, the land is treeless. Near the city of Patmos there is a good harbor. A famous monastery, St. Christodulos, was founded on the island in 1088. Near this is a thriving school, attended by students from all parts of the Archipelago. The population of the island numbers 3,000, almost entirely Greek. The ancient capital was on an isthmus between the inlets of La Scala and Merika. Many ruins can still be seen. The huge walls of Cyclopean masonry, similar to those at Tiryns, attest their great age. In Roman times Patmos was one of the many places to which Rome banished her exiles. In 95 AD, according to a tradition preserved by Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome and others, John was exiled here—in the 14 th year of the reign of Domitian—whence he returned to Ephesus under Nerva (96 AD). The cave in which he is said to have seen his visions is still pointed out to the traveler. Only a small part of the once valuable library in the monastery of St. Christodulos is left. Just 100 years ago (1814) Mr. E.D. Clark purchased here the manuscript of Plato which is now in the Bodleian Library, the celebrated Clarkianus, a parchment written in the year 895, and admittedly the best of all for the 1 st of the 2 volumes into which the works of Plato were divided for convenience. Patmos is mentioned by Thucydides (iii.33), by Pliny (NH, iv.23), and by Strabo (x.5)” [J. E. HARRY, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].

- e. John was on the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. He was there because of (*dia*) the word and testimony, not in order to (*eis*) preach it. This suggests that he was banished there because he had been preaching the gospel. Compare:
 - 1) Revelation 6:9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."
 - 2) Revelation 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
2. Verse 10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."
 - a. John continues to give the background for the message. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. "In the Spirit" is a reference to being under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) Revelation 4:2: "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne."
 - 2) Revelation 17:3: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The scene he beheld was visionary; he had to be under the influence of inspiration to see it.
 - 3) Revelation 21:10: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Again, the scene was visionary; he had to be under the influence of inspiration to see it.
 - b. The text here is parallel to certain statements in Ezekiel.
 - 1) Ezekiel 3:12, 14: "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place....So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me."
 - 2) Ezekiel 8:3: "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where *was* the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy."
 - 3) Ezekiel 11:24: "Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me."
 - 4) Ezekiel 37:1: "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones."

- 5) Ezekiel 43:5: "So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house."
- c. Being *in the Spirit* is a reference to being under the control of the Holy Spirit, empowered to see and learn certain divine revelations, and inspired to record them (Mark 13:11; 1 Cor. 2:9-14; Acts 10:9-48; 2 Cor. 12:1-12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16). By the power of the Spirit, John saw and heard the things recorded.
- 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - 3) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 10:9-48: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the

third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

- 5) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? *even* so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 12:1-12: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but *now* I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me *to be*, or *that* he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 7) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
- d. John states that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. The text does not further identify the day. The Sabbatarians claim it is the Sabbath, but the Sabbath ended when Christ died on the cross. We can know with certainty that the Lord's day is not the Sabbath.
- 1) Only the Israelites and God were involved in the Sabbath Law:
 - a) Exodus 31:13: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it *is* a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD that doth sanctify you."
 - b) Deuteronomy 5:3: "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day."
 - 2) The Law of the Sabbath was not revealed until Israel came to Sinai. Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham did not observe the Sabbath; no one else under Patriarchy observed the Sabbath. The

- Law of the Sabbath pertained only to the Jews during the time the Law of Moses was in effect.
- a) Nehemiah 9:13-14: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."
 - b) Ezekiel 20:10-12: "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which *if a man do*, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I *am* the LORD that sanctify them."
- 3) The Law of the Sabbath has been removed.
- a) Romans 7:1-7: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? *is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
 - b) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - c) Colossians 2:14-17: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross....Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."
 - d) Hosea 2:11: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts."
 - e) Amos 8:2,9: "And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more....And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:" Compare Matthew 27:45: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour."
- e. The term "Lord's" (*kuriakos*, belonging to the Lord) occurs only here and 1 Corinthians 11:20, where the *Lord's* supper is named. Both the supper and the day belong to him. The supper is the communion we eat with Christ and the day is the one that pertains exclusively to Christ. Ancient Christian writers dating from Ignatius (35-110 A.D.) taught that the Lord's day was the first day of the week. As significant as their uninspired record is, the inspired testimony of the New Testament places the matter beyond question.
- 1) Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week:
 - a) Mark 16:9: "Now when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."
 - b) Luke 24:1: "Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them."
 - c) Luke 24:13: "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* threescore furlongs."
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- d) Luke 24:21: "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."
 - e) Luke 24:46: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:"
 - 2) The Holy Spirit came in power upon the apostles on the first day of the week:
 - a) Leviticus 23:15-16: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD." The Day of Pentecost always fell on the first day of the week.
 - b) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - 3) The church began on the first day of the week (Acts 2; Lev. 23:15-16).
 - 4) The church met on the first day of the week for worship:
 - a) Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - 5) The gospel was preached in its fullness for the first time on the first day of the week (Acts 2).
 - 6) In the light of these facts, which day of the week has a peculiar and special connection to the Lord? It could only be the first day of the week (Sunday).
 - f. The "Lord's day" should not be confused with "the day of the Lord" in the Old Testament. The latter expression refers to a day of judgment and retribution.
 - g. John reports that he heard a great voice akin to a trumpet. The sound came from behind him. The voice is described as a trumpet due to its clarity and loudness. Trumpets have been used to call attention. Others heard sounds in connection with supernatural experiences.
 - 1) Exodus 19:16: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled."
 - 2) Exodus 19:20: "And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up."
 - 3) Ezekiel 3:12: "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, *saying*, Blessed *be* the glory of the LORD from his place."
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 3. Verse 11: "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."
 - a. The voice spoke an intelligible and intelligent message, not gibberish. Christ is identified in the following verses as the spokesman. John is instructed to write what he sees and hears in a book (a scroll).
 - b. The phrases "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" and "in Asia" are omitted from the ASV.
 - c. The information is to be sent to the seven churches in Asia; the seven are named. On the map, their
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locations describe a rough circle. A personal note is addressed to each of these seven congregations, but the entire book is addressed to the seven collectively—and the seven congregations represent the entire body of Christ.

E. Revelation 1:12-20: The Majesty and Glory of Christ is Described.

1. Verse 12: “And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.”
 - a. As John turned at the sound of the voice, he saw the visionary scene depicting the glorious Christ in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). The candlesticks are identified in verse 20 as representing the seven congregations.
 - b. John recognized this great one as Christ. The Lord is described as “like unto the Son of man” (verse 13). He had seen Christ in the transfiguration scene (Matt. 17:1-5), had been with the Lord after his resurrection, and had seen the Lord ascend back to heaven (Acts 1:9-11).
2. Verses 13-14: “And in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire.”
 - a. Christ is pictured as being in the midst of the candlesticks, perhaps indicating that they were arranged in a circle. Being in their midst shows his closeness with them; he knows their struggles, problems, strong points, sins, and needs. He is their controlling force and sustaining power.
 - 1) Colossians 1:17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 2) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:3: "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
 - b. He is spoken of as the Son of man. Daniel spoke of him under the same description. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (Dan. 7:13).
 - c. The clothing with which he was dressed are signs of high rank in ancient oriental custom. His head and his hair were as white as wool and snow. The description emphasizes his purity. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
 - d. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which denotes his penetrating, all-seeing knowledge. He knows us all (2 Tim. 2:19); all of our affairs, thoughts, motives, words, and deeds are open to him (Heb. 4:13). His eyes can show various emotions (Mk. 3:5; 10:21; Lk. 22:61).
 - 1) Mark 3:5: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."
 - 2) Mark 10:21: "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."
 - 3) Luke 22:61: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 5) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
3. Verses 15-16: “And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.”

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- a. The original text uses a Greek term [*burnished brass*, ASV] which is found only here and in Revelation 2:18. The exact metal is unknown, but some think it was a mixture of metals similar to brass or bronze.
 - b. The point is clear: when he comes in judgment his feet will enable him to trod underfoot all who oppose him.
 - 1) Acts 2:34-36: "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:25: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."
 - 3) Revelation 14:14-20: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs."
 - c. His voice was as the sound of many waters, which gives a picture of authority, power, and majesty. Think of the mighty roar of ocean waves crashing upon a rocky shore; also of the mighty sound of Niagara Falls (cf. Ezek. 1:24; 43:2; Dan. 10:6). On the other hand, his voice can be one of tenderness and comfort.
 - 1) Ezekiel 1:24: "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings."
 - 2) Ezekiel 43:2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."
 - 3) Daniel 10:6: "His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude."
 - d. He is pictured as having seven stars in his right hand and a two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth. The seven stars are identified in verse 20 as the angels of the seven churches. The sword represents his word.
 - 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - e. His countenance is compared to the brightness of the noontime sun.
 - 1) Matthew 17:1-5 "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the
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- cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
- 2) Luke 9:28-35: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white *and* glistening. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
4. Verse 17: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."
 - a. The glorified Christ dominates the book of Revelation. Notice the effect this vision of Christ had on John. If one fails to see that Christ dominates everything in Revelation, he is not apt to grasp the great message of the book. John is charged to write the thing he has seen. The scene described here introduces and sets the stage for the things yet to be unfolded. It has a message for saints of all time.
 - b. John fell down as if dead after seeing this wondrous scene. Imagine standing before Christ, which we must all do in the Judgment. Felix trembled when Paul preached on the Judgment (Acts 24:25).
 - c. The Lord expressed compassion to John by reaching out and putting his right hand on the apostle. Christ comforted and encouraged him by this tender act and by the words he spoke: "Fear not; I am the first and the last." He had no beginning and will have no end. He will still be around at the end of time to condemn the ungodly and to reward the righteous.
 - d. There is no reason for a faithful saint to be fearful or unsettled. What if one is faced with the choice of denying Christ or being slain? What if one has the daily danger of being denounced as a Christian, and be imprisoned or put to death as a result? "Fear not!" What are a few moments, or even many years, of persecution compared with eternal salvation? "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
 5. Verse 18: "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - a. Christ had lived on earth, had been put to death on the cross, and was alive forevermore. It was only his human body that died; his eternal being has never ceased to live and be operative. He is spoken of as the firstborn from the dead (1:5). He affirms his resurrection here.
 - b. The Lord states that he has the keys of hell (*hades*) and death. Having keys indicates having authority and privilege. Someone giving you the keys to his car indicates you have the authority to drive it. When someone is given the "key to the city," he has received honorary authority in that city. Peter and the other apostles were given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18; 18:18) which they used on the Pentecost day of Acts 2.
 - c. Christ has the keys of hades and death. *Hades* and *sheol* (an Old Testament word) are both used to designate the place of the dead. Christ's body went into the tomb at his death, and his spirit went into hades (Lk. 23:43; Acts 2:27,31). When the time came for his resurrection, the gates of hades could not retain his spirit (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 2:14; John 10:17-18). The meaning of this to us is obvious.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:26: "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."
 - d. Death claims the physical body and Hades is the place to which the soul (spirit) goes when the body and spirit are separated (Jas. 2:26; Eccl. 12:5,7). The body and the soul (or spirit) are different. The
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references to Hades being emptied of its inhabitants in the events of Revelation makes untenable the position that Christ released all from Hades at his ascension, and that all who die from that time onward go directly to their eternal destiny. Death will be ended at the Second Coming of Christ and those in Hades will be brought forth by the resurrection into the Judgment. Hades will not be vacated until the end of time.

6. Verse 19: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."
 - a. John is commanded to write the things he has seen, what he is now seeing, and the things which will be revealed to him in the forthcoming visions. Things that are written are not nearly as likely to become obscured, twisted, or forgotten as things which are passed on by word of mouth only.
 - b. The things John is to write have to do with the fortunes of the church in the then past, present, and future.
7. Verse 20: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."
 - a. The mystery of the vision is revealed. A *mystery* is something that cannot be known without more information.
 - 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - b. The seven stars depict the angels of the seven churches. An angel is a messenger, whether heavenly or human: "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger [same word that is translated *angel* elsewhere] before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee" (Mark 1:2). Many interpretations are offered, including the eldership, the preacher, a guardian angel, a representative of the church, and the personification of the church. It may be impossible for us to know the specific entity to which the Lord referred. [Note: the doctrine of guardian angels is not taught in the Scriptures].
 - c. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches addressed.

REVELATION 2

The Letters to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira

A. Introductory information about the 7 churches.

1. Their spiritual conditions.
 - a. Ephesus—a cold church.
 - b. Smyrna—a poor and suffering church.
 - c. Pergamos—an impure church.
 - d. Thyatira—church with false teaching.
 - e. Sardis—a dead church.
 - f. Philadelphia—the open-door church.
 - g. Laodicea—a lukewarm church.
2. Descriptions given of the Author.
 - a. Ephesus—he holds the 7 stars and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.
 - b. Smyrna—he is the first and last, the one who was dead and lives again.
 - c. Pergamos—he holds the two-edged sword.
 - d. Thyatira—his eyes of fire and feet of brass.
 - e. Sardis—he has the 7 spirits of God and the 7 stars.
 - f. Philadelphia—the holy and true, and has the key of David.
 - g. Laodicea—the amen, the beginning (the author) of all creation.
3. The appraisal of the churches.
 - a. Smyrna and Philadelphia are only good.
 - b. Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira are both good and bad.
 - c. Sardis had only a faithful remnant.
 - d. Laodicea is condemned—no commendation is given.
4. Promises made to the churches: (1) made to the whole church but the individuals are responsible; (2) the promises are conditional (“to him that overcometh”).
 - a. Ephesus—the tree of life.
 - b. Smyrna—a crown, and not hurt by the second death.
 - c. Pergamos—manna, and a stone with a new name.
 - d. Thyatira—authority, and the morning star.
 - e. Sardis—white garments; name in the book of life, and that name confessed before the Father.
 - f. Philadelphia—pillar in God’s temple, security, and 3-fold inscription (name of God, name of New Jerusalem, and name of Christ),
 - g. Laodicea—fellowship, and a throne.
5. Threats if they do not repent.
 - a. Ephesus—remove the candlestick.
 - b. Smyrna—none.
 - c. Pergamos—make war against them.
 - d. Thyatira—cast into a bed of affliction, tribulation and death.
 - e. Sardis—come as a thief.
 - f. Philadelphia—none.
 - g. Laodicea—spew thee out of my mouth.

B. Revelation 2:1-7: The Letter to Ephesus.

1. The city of Ephesus was prominent in that day with a population estimated at 300,000. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world was located there—the Temple of Diana (Artemis). This temple served as
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- a center for idol worship, as a bank, and a business (silversmiths). The morality of the pagans was nearly non-existent. Paul experienced much evil treatment at the hands of the Ephesian pagans.
- a. 1 Corinthians 15:32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9: "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are many adversaries.*"
 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."
2. The history of Ephesus goes back to about one thousand years before the coming of Christ. At one time long ago, its population is estimated to have been about three hundred thousand, but today only a little village remains.
 - a. "The great Ephesian temple of Artemis (loosely identified with Diana) was ranked by ancient writers as one of the seven wonders of the world, its importance deriving not merely from its architectural beauty and size, but from the status which the temple management enjoyed as 'bankers of the whole world.' It has been said that the temple of Diana was the equivalent in ancient pagan society to the Bank of England in modern times. The principal industry of Ephesus was that of manufacturing and selling images" (Coffman, p.373). The temple was about eighty thousand square feet in size, or about four times the size of the Parthenon in Greece.
 - b. "Ephesus, one of the 12 cities of Ionia (an ancient Greek district on the western coast of Asia Minor), located near modern Ýzmir, Turkey. As a port city at the mouth of the Cayster (modern Küçük-menderes) River, it was a major departure point for trade routes into Asia Minor. Known in antiquity for its sacred shrines, notably a famous temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) to the goddess Artemis, or Diana, the city was also an important center of early Christianity. Probably founded in the 11th century BC by Ionian Greeks, Ephesus was conquered by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC; by Croesus, king of Lydia, in the 6th century; and soon after, by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. Later it was a tributary of Athens, but it sided with Sparta against Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404BC). Sparta ceded it to the Persians, who were driven out by Alexander the Great in 333BC. Under this Macedonian rule Ephesus flourished, and it was briefly renamed Arsinoë. The city passed to Roman rule in 189BC and remained an important commercial center....Having been destroyed by the Goths in 262, Ephesus, although rebuilt, never regained its former splendor. Under the Byzantine Empire it declined, and its harbor silted up; it was abandoned in the 14th century" (Encarta, 1999).
 - c. The New Testament contains information about the church located there [See Acts 18:24—20:2; 20:17-38; Ephesians; 1 and 2 Timothy].
 3. Verse 1: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."
 - a. The author is described as in chapter one. The seven stars depict the angels of the seven churches. An angel is a messenger, whether heavenly or human (Mark 1:2). Many interpretations of the identity of the angels are offered, including the eldership, the preacher, a guardian angel, a representative of the church, and the personification of the church. It may be impossible for us to know the specific entity to which the Lord referred as "the angel of the church." [The doctrine of *guardian angels* is not taught in the Bible].
 - b. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches addressed. The Lord's close association with (and knowledge of) his people is emphasized. This fact offers comfort and caution to thoughtful members.
 4. Verse 2: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."
 - a. Christ, being in their midst, knew their situation perfectly. "I know thy works, and thy labor...." He knew what they were doing, and knew their struggles. They had toiled hard—the word indicates the work that produces perspiration. They had been loyal in many things.
 - b. I know thy works—a statement made when Christ was as far from the church as he is today. It is both
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a fearful and comforting expression.

- 1) He knows if a congregation is faithfully upholding the truth (1 Tim 3:15). What if you were the only Christian; what if we were the only congregation—would the truth be safe in our hands?
 - 2) He knows if a congregation is performing its mission: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV). Paul gives a summary of the work of the church in this passage (Eph. 4:12):
 - a) Edifying the members.
 - b) Helping the needy.
 - c) Converting the lost—thus building up the church in number.
 - 3) He knows the true spiritual condition of a congregation. He knows if a congregation is like a city on a hill or if it is a candle under a basket: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil 2:14-16; cf. Matt. 5:13-16).
- c. I know thy patience. They had refused evil and tried the spirits.
- 1) Passages:
 - a) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - b) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - c) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 2) They had had plenty of instruction since Paul, Apollos, and Timothy had worked there, a letter was written to them by Paul, and Christ sends this brief message to them. Despite these instructions the congregation and the city went out of business. Did the congregation completely lose its preserving influence? "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).
 - 3) At the time of this writing they were continuing to bear up under their burdens. They had not tolerated those who were evil; they had tried those who claimed to be apostles and proved them to be false.
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 5) 1 Thessalonians 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."
 - 6) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 7) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that
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- thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
- 8) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
5. Verse 3: "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." ["And thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary" (ASV)].
- a. He continues to compliment their strengths and accomplishments. They had not given up.
 - 1) Galatians 2:5: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - b. The congregation had a history of activity in the Lord's work. They had borne hardships in serving their Master; they had endured faithfully, in the face of tribulation; they had not grown weary in their service.
 - c. The danger of growing weak is very real. These brethren had begun to falter, as the next verse shows. But at this point in the letter, the Lord is commending them for their past faithfulness. It was necessary for Paul to exhort saints to continue in their faithfulness:
 - 1) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:12-15: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
6. Verse 4-5: "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."
- a. Having commended them appropriately, he now turns to correcting their weakness—they had left their first love. Outwardly perhaps there were no apparent signs of a spiritual malady, but the Great Physician knew of an internal illness. They continued to labor and endure, and did not tolerate false teachers, and practiced discipline; but something was missing: they were doing their duty but without the love or the degree of love they formerly had. When love for Christ wanes, love for brethren will also fade. Without fervent love for Christ, for service, worship, Bible study, godliness, prayer, soul-winning, etc., we do not measure up to the Lord's standards.
 - b. The pattern for their restoration was simple: remember, repent, and return to the first works. The rich, cultured and sinful nature of Ephesus had affected the saints. They had done what millions today deny is even possible—to fall away from Christ.
 - c. This fall would be fatal unless they repented. Godly sorrow produces repentance which in turn produces a reformed life.
 - 1) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 3) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - d. Unless they repented the Lord would come and remove their candlestick—would take away their identity as Christians. The church in Ephesus is not in existence today. The Lord must have destroyed it. When this happened the city was without the light of Christian influence, and perhaps this is the cause of the city itself being abandoned. The once rich city is now in ruins—only a village remains.
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7. Verse 6: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."
- a. This is a further commendation: they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans which Christ also hated. There are many things the Bible says God hates.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 12:31: "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 16:22: "Neither shalt thou set thee up *any* image; which the LORD thy God hateth."
 - 3) Psalms 5:5: "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."
 - 4) Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
 - 5) Psalms 11:5: "The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth."
 - 6) Psalms 45:7: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
 - 7) Amos 5:21: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." Compare: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*"(Isa. 1:14).
 - 8) Zechariah 8:17: "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these *are things* that I hate, saith the LORD."
 - 9) Hebrews 1:9: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
 - b. Because God and Christ love righteousness, they hate wickedness. "The child of God who does not hate wickedness does not love righteousness, however strongly he may boast of his love" (Hailey, p.123).
 - 1) Psalm 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."
 - 2) Psalm 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
 - c. Little is known about the Nicolaitans. We know that they flourished at Ephesus and Pergamos, but we know nothing definite about their origin, peculiar doctrines, and their later history.
 - d. NICOLAITANS: "A sect or party that arose in the apostolic period of the church, mentioned twice by name in the book of Revelation (Rev 2:6,15). In the former passage it is said, to the credit of the church in Ephesus, that she shared in the feelings of the Lord concerning the Nicolaitans, viewing them with the hatred they deserved. The charge is made that some in Pergamos (v. 15) held to teachings of the Nicolaitans, who are compared to those who 'hold the teaching of Balaam,' etc. 'The general voice of antiquity accuses them of holding the lawfulness of eating things offered to idols, and of mixing in and encouraging idolatrous worship; and as they are charged with denying God to be the creator of the world, and attributing its existence to other powers, they could unquestionably, on such grounds, permit themselves so to act, and thus far it is probable that the accusation is not ill-founded. The community of women was another doctrine which they are said to have adopted, and their conduct seems to have been in the highest degree licentious' (Imperial Bible Dictionary, s.v.). The origin of the sect will perhaps never be ascertained with certainty" [The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
8. Verse 7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
- a. This command is repeated in each of the seven letters. It is similar to a statement frequently made by Jesus in his ministry.

- 1) Matthew 11:15: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 2) Matthew 13:9: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 3) Matthew 13:43: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 4) Mark 4:23: "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 5) Luke 14:35: "It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; *but* men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
- b. The Lord taught the need to take heed how we hear and what we hear.
- 1) Mark 4:24: "And he said unto them, Take heed **what** ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."
 - 2) Luke 8:18: "Take heed therefore **how** ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."
- c. Hearing is personal and individual; each is to hear what the Spirit says to all the congregations. Notice that the information given in Revelation is attributed to the Spirit, but the source is the Father, through Christ, by the angel, to John—and on to men. The Father and the Son speak through the Spirit-revealed written word of God.
- d. To him that overcometh: this is stated in each of the letters. The very statement indicates the necessity of diligent effort in order to be saved ultimately.
- 1) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 2) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- e. The tree of life denotes that which man lost by sin in Eden which is now restored in Christ.
- 1) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:12-16: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 - 4) Revelation 22:2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- f. Paradise is a Persian word meaning "pleasure park." The word is used in other passages (see below). The context determines which pleasure park is meant.
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- 1) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." [This was the location of the Lord's spirit between his death and resurrection].
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:4: "How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." [This is also the place of comfort and rest in the Hadean Realm].
 - 3) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." [This Paradise is Heaven].
- g. Our going to Paradise depends on *our overcoming*; the Lord will not do it for us.
- 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 2) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

C. Revelation 2:8-11: The Letter to Smyrna.

1. Verse 8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."
 - a. The description of Christ is given: he is the first and the last; he was dead but is now alive. "...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Rev. 1:11).
 - b. This declares his eternal nature.
 - 1) Psalms 90:11: "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath."
 - 2) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - 3) John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."
 - 4) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 5) Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - 6) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - c. He was put to death by man (and for man) but death could not keep him.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) Acts 2:23-24: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."
2. Verse 9: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan."
 - a. Smyrna was the second great city in Asia (behind only Ephesus). It had a population then of about 200,000; today (known as Izmir, Turkey) it has about two million inhabitants. It is on the coast of the

- Aegean Sea, about 40 miles north of Ephesus. In John's day it was a center of emperor worship for the surrounding area; it had special favors granted to it by Rome because of its loyalty.
- b. He knew their works, tribulation, and poverty. Though their fair city had much of which to boast, Christ was the real source of hope for the saints. They had undergone tribulation, were poverty-stricken (perhaps due to persecution), but had continued to serve the Lord faithfully. Living the Christian life was a genuine sacrifice for them. They were poor in material goods, but rich in faith and good works.
 - c. He knew of the blasphemy of those who claimed to be Jews. The real *Jew* today is a faithful Christian (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:16). [The name *Jew* means "praised"]. Unbelieving Jews had put the Lord to death, and were now opposing the Lord's church in Smyrna. Christ knew of their evil. These wicked ones were not God's people, but were of the synagogue of Satan. They are no longer God's people.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - d. To wear the name of *Israel* ("Prince of God"—Gen. 32:28) or *Jew* ("Praised") was an honor; but it carried with it an obligation to live up to those noble names. To wear the name *Christian* is the highest of honors we may have on earth, and with it comes the greatest obligations one can have here.
 - 1) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
3. Verse 10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
- a. Christ has not promised an easy road to his followers.
 - 1) Luke 6:26: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."
 - 2) John 14:18-21: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - b. He warns them of even more suffering to come. The devil, working through his devious disciples, would cast some of them into prison. They would have tribulation for a certain period of time, the length of which may not be ascertainable. **Ten** is said by scholars to be a number indicating completeness. If so used here, the point made is that the brethren would undergo the full measure of persecution. The reference to ten **days** may mean a relatively short period of time.
 - c. The main emphasis of the verse is the closing clause: be faithful unto death. Be faithful even to the point of death. Polycarp was from this congregation; he died as a martyr in 155 A.D.
 - d. The reward of the faithful is the crown of life.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:24-25: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."
 - 2) Colossians 1:5: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
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- 4) James 1:12: "Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
 - 5) 1 Peter 5:4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
 - 6) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life."
4. Verse 11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
- a. The promise is to those who overcome (the tribulations, temptations). To give up before the end is to lose the reward.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - b. The overcomers are told that they will not be hurt by the second death. This is equivalent to saying that they will have eternal life in heaven, and will not go to *Gehenna*.
- D. Revelation 2:12-17: To the Church at Pergamos.
1. Historical information about Pergamos.
 - a. This city was situated about 60 miles north of Smyrna. It was renowned for its great library of 200,000 books, second only to the great library of Alexandria, Egypt. When it was denied papyrus by Egypt, it developed a better material for writing—parchment. The name “parchment” (*pergamena*) is derived from the name of the city.
 - b. It had a medical center where Galen, one of the most famous physicians of ancient times, lived and practiced medicine.
 - c. The people worshipped Aesculapius [identified with the Greek god *Asclepius*], the god of medicine under the form of a serpent. They also worshipped Zeus, Apollos, and Aphrodite. Idolatry and immorality flourished in Pergamos, but some unknown saint had planted the Lord’s church there. The brethren were being opposed.
 - d. “Asclepius, in Greek mythology, the god of medicine. He was a son of the god Apollo and Coronis, a beautiful maiden of Thessaly (Thessalia). Angry because Coronis was unfaithful to him, Apollo killed her and tore the unborn Asclepius from her womb. He later sent Asclepius to the centaur Chiron to be raised. Asclepius learned all that Chiron knew about the art of healing and soon became a great physician. Because Asclepius threatened the natural order by raising people from the dead, the god Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt. The cult of Asclepius was centered in Epidaurus, but it was popular throughout the Greco-Roman world. The sanctuaries of Asclepius functioned as health resorts, where therapeutic regimens such as exercise and diets were prescribed. The most important practice associated with the cures was the ritual of *incubation*, in which afflicted people slept within a temple or sacred enclosure in the hope that the god would come to them in dreams and prescribe cures for their illnesses” (Encarta).
 - e. “Aesculapian Snake, common name for a harmless snake that symbolizes the Greek god of medicine, Asclepius. Asclepius is often pictured with his staff, around which is entwined one of these snakes. Aesculapian snakes were kept in the combination hospital-temples built by the ancient Greeks and, later, by the Romans in honor of the god. They are found today in southern Europe, as well in warmer areas of Germany and Austria” [Encarta, © 1993-2003 Microsoft Corporation].
 2. Verse 12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."
 - a. The Lord is described as one having the sharp two-edged sword.
 - 1) Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
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- 3) Revelation 1:16: "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength."
- b. Who could hope to oppose him successfully? He does not directly fight against his enemies with a literal sword, and his servants are not so to do. The kingdom of Christ is not defended by carnal weapons, but with word of God.
 - 1) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
- c. Converts are not to be made by force but through preaching the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 11:13-14: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - 3) Acts 14:1: "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
3. Verse 13: "I know thy works and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."
 - a. Christ had some commendations to offer. He was fully aware of their works and their situation. They served Christ in an evil place—where Satan had his throne and headquarters. This would make living the Christian life and serving Christ extremely dangerous. Compare living in an Arab land today.
 - b. Even so, they still held fast to the Lord's name. "Name" here stands for all that pertains to Christ and his cause.
 - c. They had not denied his faith. The faith of Christ is not his personal faith but his gospel. Paul had kept [guarded, defended] the faith.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith."
 - 2) Colossians 1:22-23: "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - 3) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 4) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 5) Ephesians 4:5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
 - 6) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 7) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was

- needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
- d. They had remained loyal even during the time when Antipas was slain. So at least one of their number had been martyred. We are given no further details about Antipas and how he was slain.
 - e. So wicked was this city that the Lord could refer to it as Satan's dwelling place (the devil's den). But the saints still clung to the Lord's name and had not renounced the gospel.
4. Verse 14-15: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."
- a. However, there were a few things that needed to be remedied. He had a few (but not many) things against them—the faithful element was too tolerant of the error some among them held.
 - b. Some of them held to the doctrine (teachings) of Balaam (Num 22-24). The Moabite king (Balak) hired Balaam to curse Israel; God would not permit him to do so. But Balaam wanted the money Balak promised, thus he advised the king to use his Moabite women as enticing bait before the Israelite men.
 - 1) These men were thus led into idolatry and immorality. God was obliged to punish Israel for this sin (24,000 were slain); in this fashion Balaam was able to cause a curse to be brought upon Israel. "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD" (Num. 31:16; cf. Num. 25).
 - 2) Balaam was also slain: "And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword" (Num. 31:8).
 - c. The ungodly element in the church at Pergamos followed this same kind of scheme to corrupt the faithful saints.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18: "For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."
 - 2) Jude 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
 - d. Balaam's scheme included getting the people involved in idolatry (eating meat offered in idol worship—used as part of idol-worship). So this unfaithful element tried to entice the faithful into idol worship. The eating of meat that had been used in idol worship as in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 was allowed as long as it did not go against one's own conscience or did not cause some weaker brother to violate his conscience. But eating of things offered to idols is forbidden here. In the former case some of the meat which had been used in idol worship was offered for sale in the marketplace. A Christian could buy and eat this meat. But in the latter case the eating was done in connection with the idol worship itself, and was thus wrong.
 - e. Balaam's scheme led Israel into fornication; so the ungodly members at Pergamos tried to lure the other saints into this sin. Fornication was extremely widespread and common in first century society. "Everyone is doing it, they all can't be wrong, so let's not be odd-balls! We will be able to reach more people if we will only conform a little. After all, we aren't living in the middle-ages anymore!" Unless Christians joined in with the popular lifestyle, they were outcasts. But consider the following truths:
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
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Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

- 3) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."
- 4) Colossians 2:20-22: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"
- f. They also had allowed the Nicolaitans to gain and maintain a foothold in the congregation. It appears that this error was different from the doctrine of Balaam because his use of the word "also" (vs. 15). In Ephesus the brethren hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but here in Pergamos these evil men were tolerated by the otherwise faithful members.
5. Verse 16: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."
 - a. Repent: this is addressed to the ones who were tolerating the false teachings; they were not directly involved in the sins denounced but tolerated those sins in their midst.
 - 1) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - 2) The sin of the "faithful" element was in tolerating evil and not disciplining those guilty of it. Christ will not overlook compromise.
 - b. Three groups needed to repent: the Balaamites, the Nicolaitans, and the saints who practiced neither error but tolerated those who did.
 - c. If the repentance demanded was not forthcoming, the Lord promised to come unto the church quickly and fight against "them" (those who were practicing error). If the brethren did not repent of their unlawful toleration the Lord would come and deal with the errorists.
6. Verse 17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*."
 - a. The Lord gives the standard admonition to hear these words. The promise given to him who overcomes is the privilege of partaking of the hidden manna and to receive the white stone with the new name inscribed thereon.
 - b. The hidden manna—a reference to the rich eternal blessings in heaven which are otherwise described as eating of the tree of life (2:7; 22:2,14). This food was unseen by them (and us) but will be amply supplied in heaven. "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30).
 - c. The white stone—a metaphor of some kind, but the meaning is doubtful. The reference may be to an ancient custom: those acquitted in a trial were informed of it by a white pebble dropped into an urn; those judged guilty had a black pebble dropped into the urn. Those of the church who overcome are therefore said to receive the white stone of eternal justification and vindication.
 - d. The new name would be one known only to the recipient. It is therefore entirely without profit to speculate as to the precise name indicated. White and new suggest something pure and fresh—and precious.

E. Revelation 2:18-29: The Letter to Thyatira.

1. Historical information on Thyatira.

- a. This city was situated about halfway between Pergamos and Sardis. It was a city of labor guilds which caused problems for our brethren. To pursue a trade demanded membership in a guild; but each guild had its own idol. Guild members ate meals together during which the idol was honored, and the entertainment was sometimes immoral. A failure to participate and conform meant loss of job.

- b. The ISBE give the following on Thyatira:
- 1) "Thyatira was a wealthy town in the northern part of Lydia of the Roman province of Asia, on the river Lycus. It stood so near to the borders of Mysia, that some of the early writers have regarded it as belonging to that country. Its early history is not well known, for until it was refounded by Seleucus Nicator (301-281 BC) it was a small, insignificant town. It stood on none of the Greek trade routes, but upon the lesser road between Pergamos and Sardis, and derived its wealth from the Lycus valley in which it rapidly became a commercial center, but never a metropolis. The name 'Thyatira' means 'the castle of Thya.' Other names which it has borne are Pelopia and Semiramis. Before the time of Nicator the place was regarded as a holy city, for there stood the temple of the ancient Lydian sun-god, Tyrinnos; about it games were held in his honor. Upon the early coins of Thyatira this Asiatic god is represented as a horseman, bearing a double-headed battle-ax, similar to those represented on the sculptures of the Hittites. A goddess associated with him was Boreatene, a deity of less importance. Another temple at Thyatira was dedicated to Sambethe, and at this shrine was a prophetess, by some supposed to represent the Jezebel of Rev 2:20, who uttered the sayings which this deity would impart to the worshippers.
 - 2) "Thyatira was specially noted for the trade guilds which were probably more completely organized there than in any other ancient city. Every artisan belonged to a guild, and every guild, which was an incorporated organization, possessed property in its own name, made contracts for great constructions, and wielded a wide influence. Powerful among them was the guild of coppersmiths; another was the guild of the dyers, who, it is believed, made use of the madder-root instead of shell-fish for making the purple dyestuffs. A member of this guild seems to have been Lydia of Thyatira, who, according to Acts 16:14, sold her dyes in Philippi. The color obtained by the use of this dye is now called Turkish red. The guilds were closely connected with the Asiatic religion of the place. Pagan feasts, with which immoral practices were associated, were held, and therefore the nature of the guilds was such that they were opposed to Christianity. According to Acts 19:10, Paul may have preached there while he was living at Ephesus, but this is uncertain; yet Christianity reached there at an early time. It was taught by many of the early church that no Christian might belong to one of the guilds, and thus the greatest opposition to Christianity was presented.
 - 3) "Thyatira is now represented by the modern town of Ak-Hissar on a branch line of the Manisa-Soma Railroad, and on the old Roman road 9 hours from Sardis. Ak-Hissar is Turkish for 'white castle,' and near the modern town may be seen the ruins of the castle from which the name was derived. The village is of considerable size; most of the houses are of mud, but several of the buildings erected by Caracalla are still standing, yet none of them are perfect. In the higher part of the town are the ruins of one of the pagan temples, and in the walls of the houses are broken columns and sarcophagi and inscribed stones. The population of 20,000 is largely Greek and Armenian, yet a few Jews live among them. Before the town is a large marsh, fever-laden, and especially unhealthy in the summer time, formed by the Lycus, which the Turks now call Geurdeuk Chai. The chief modern industry is rug-making" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
- c. Lydia was from this city (Acts 16:14). It is possible she is responsible for the establishment of the church there.
- d. It was an idolatrous city.
- e. This epistle is the longest of the seven letters.
2. Verse 18: "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass."
- a. The Lord plainly identifies himself as the Son of God. Again a very impressive description is given of him. He had eyes like a flame of fire. The penetrating power of his insight and knowledge of our affairs is suggested.
- 1) Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have
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- to do."
- 2) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - b. His feet are likened to fine brass—beautiful to the spiritual (cf. Rom 10:15), but awesome to the wicked when he begins to trod them down (cf. Rev 19:15).
 - 1) Romans 10:15: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
 - 2) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 3. Verse 19: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first."
 - a. Jesus knew their works and is able to offer commendations. They had been active. He knew their charity, service, faith, patience, and works.
 - 1) *Works* is used twice in the statement [the same word in the Greek]. The word is used at the first of each of the seven letters, most likely in a general sense, to include all that they had done. In the second use of the word in this verse, it is used in connection with their increase in all the works of Christian living.
 - 2) He commends their growing *charity* (love)—toward God and man.
 - 3) The Lord compliments their *service*—a reference which likely includes all the service which the saints had done in carrying out their obligations. The original word is from *diakonia*, which is used in reference to ministering, servicing, etc.
 - 4) He commends their *faith*—their continuing loyalty and obedience.
 - 5) He recognizes their *patience*—their faithful endurance even in the face of rejection and cruel treatment by their neighbors.
 - b. He knew that they had actually increased in these.
 - 1) Every Christian and every congregation must endeavor to maintain a regular pattern of growth. The public Bible study program, gospel preaching, and private studies are intended to increase our knowledge and enhance our spiritual strength. The more we learn, the greater our obligations—and the greater our blessings! We are able to promote the Lord's Cause more, and will be of greater benefit to our family, our society, and our nation.
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:3: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:10-12: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."
 - c. Divine insight is a welcomed benefit to the righteous. Faithful saints have nothing to fear from his close examination of our hearts.
 4. Verse 20: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."
 - a. There was a problem among them: they had tolerated the sinful conduct of "Jezebel." *Jezebel* is a figurative description of someone (or perhaps a group) there. It is more likely that one particular individual is meant since a singular word is used. The Lord used plural words to refer to groups:
 - b. Compare: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things
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- sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:14-15).
- c. There was something in common between this woman and Ahab's wife who called herself a prophetess, but was not speaking for the Lord. The Jezebel of our text is said to have taught and seduced others, which indicates that the fornication could have been figurative.
 - d. She seduced his servants to do evil—to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. This could be either literal or figurative—applications are possible in each case.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18: "For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."
 - 2) Jude 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
 - 3) The Book of Hosea is filled with references to the spiritual adultery of Israel.
5. Verse 21: "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."
 - a. She had been given ample time and opportunity to repent but had not done so. This implies the word had been faithfully proclaimed there so that she knew what the Lord wanted.
 - b. The Lord had been longsuffering with her as he is with others.
 - 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 6. Verse 22: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."
 - a. The Lord's warning: he would cast her and her fellow sinners into a bed of great tribulation; but he still held out the opportunity for repentance. The bed of sinful pleasure will become a bed of pain to her and all her compromising companions.
 - b. Repentance is the only way to prevent this. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though *it were* but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:8-10, ASV).
 7. Verse 23: "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."
 - a. The punishment intended was death. When he dealt out the punishment then all the congregations would know that the Lord is able to search out the innermost secrets.
 - b. Reins—literally, kidneys; but figuratively (as used here) it refers to "the seat of the deepest emotions and affections of man, which God alone can fully know" (ISBE).
 - 1) "Whatever the distinction between 'reins' and 'heart' may be, the thought is that the discerner of hearts sees the whole inner man: emotions, affections, will, mind, and thoughts of each" (Hailey).
 - 2) "Reins *nefrous* (NT:3510). An old word for kidneys, here only in the New Testament, quoted also with *kardias* (NT:2588) from Jer 17:10. See Rev 22:17 for the reward of punishment" [Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, © 1985 by Broadman Press].
 - 3) "Reins *nefrous* (NT:3510). Only here in the New Testament. Strictly, 'kidneys.' Used of the 'thoughts, feelings, and purposes' of the soul. A similar use of the physical for the spiritual organ is *splangchna* (NT:4698) 'bowels' for 'heart.' See the note on 'pitiful,' 1 Peter 3:8" [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 4) Reins: "*efros, nefrou, ho, a kidney*: (Plato (428-348 B.C.), Aristophanes); plural: the kidneys, the loins, as the Septuagint (LXX) for *k^llaayowt*, used of the inmost thoughts, feelings, purposes, of

- the soul: with the addition of *kardias*, Rev 2:23, with which compare Ps 7:10; Jer 11:20; 17:10; Sap. 1:6" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
- c. The Lord knows the real condition of each person and will give unto each one accordingly.
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
 - 3) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 8. Verse 24-25: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come."
 - 2) NKJV: "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. But hold fast what you have till I come."
 - b. He speaks to those not contaminated by Jezebel's doctrine. These had not known the depths of Satan (had not corrupted themselves by following her). It is not necessary to experience sin (murder, fornication, etc.) to understand it.
 - c. He put no other burden upon them than purity and faithfulness. He never puts a burden on anyone that cannot be borne, or offers a goal that can not be reached.
 - 1) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*."
 - d. *As they speak*.
 - 1) "Revelation 2:24-25: "But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come" (ASV).
 - 2) The Lord addresses the point of this passage to those who oppose the devil's doctrine under review. Those who opposed the error referred to it as "the deep things of Satan."
 - e. They are told to hold fast what they have: do not regress; keep on being faithful. Compare:
 - 1) Hebrews 10:35-39: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:12-15: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - f. They are to hold fast *till I come*—this is not the second coming, for this would imply his coming would be during their life time; they are now dead and he has not come. In the other letters he spoke of
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coming in judgment against them or in their aid. Thus, a figurative, representative coming is indicated here.

9. Verse 26-29: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. The promise to the overcomer is to rule over the nations with a rod of iron. The conditions are to overcome and keep the works of Christ to the end. He stresses the necessity of remaining faithful.
 - b. This faithfulness is to be *unto the end*—a strong term.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:8: "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:13: "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
 - 3) Hebrews 6:11: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."
 - c. Christ sits and reigns today.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:25-26: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."
 - 2) Hebrews 1:3, 13: "Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high....But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"
 - 3) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - d. The Lord will share his rule with the overcomer. The reigning we do is figurative.
 - 1) Romans 5:17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:6: "And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Some think that the supremacy of Christians over the nations was achieved when the gospel ultimately undermined and overthrew the ancient pagan world of Rome. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 - e. Mention is made of *the morning star*. "The meaning seems to be that as the morning star, one of the brightest in the heavens, heralds the approach of dawn and a new day, so Christ here promises that He will give to the conqueror a new day; the night is almost over" (Hailey). "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).
 - f. In verse 29, the admonition is again made to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

REVELATION 3

The Letters to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

A. Revelation 3:1-6: The Letter to Sardis.

1. Historical information about Sardis.

- a. Sardis was an ancient city; it was the first city in which coins were made. Five major highways led to it, promoting commercial success. The city was naturally fortified on three sides, and was located on Mt. Timolos. There was a narrow path to the city which could easily be defended. It was taken twice (in 546 and 218 B.C.). The city was captured when the attackers scaled the cliffs and overcame the defenders from behind. This is significant in view of the fact the Lord warned the church there to be watchful (verses 2-3).
- b. The ISBE offers the following information about Sardis:
 - 1) "Sardis is of special interest to the student of Herodotus and Xenophon, for there Artaphernes, the brother of Darius, lived, and from there Xerxes invaded Greece and Cyrus marched against his brother Artaxerxes; it is also of interest to the student of early Christian history as the home of one of the Seven Churches of Rev (Rev 1:11; 3:1 ff). It was moreover one of the oldest and most important cities of Asia Minor, and until 549 BC, the capital of the kingdom of Lydia. It stood on the northern slope of Mt. Tmolus; its acropolis occupied one of the spurs of the mountain. At the base flowed the river Pactolus which served as a moat, rendering the city practically impregnable. Through the failure to watch, however, the acropolis had been successfully scaled in 549 BC by a Median soldier, and in 218 by a Cretan (compare Rev 3:2-3).
 - 2) "Because of its strength during the Persian period, the satraps here made their homes. However, the city was burned by the Ionians in 501 BC, but it was quickly rebuilt and regained its importance. In 334 BC it surrendered to Alexander the Great who gave it independence, but its period of independence was brief, for 12 years later in 322 BC it was taken by Antigonus. In 301 BC, it fell into the possession of the Seleucidan kings who made it the residence of their governor. It became free again in 190 BC, when it formed a part of the empire of Pergamos, and later of the Roman province of Asia.
 - 3) "In 17 AD, when it was destroyed by an earthquake, the Roman emperor Tiberius remitted the taxes of the people and rebuilt the city, and in his honor the citizens of that and of neighboring towns erected a large monument, but Sardis never recovered its former importance (compare Rev 3:12). Again in 295 AD, after the Roman province of Asia was broken up, Sardis became the capital of Lydia, and during the early Christian age it was the home of a bishop [after the Great Apostasy—2 Thess. 2:1-12]. The city continued to flourish until 1402, when it was so completely destroyed by Tamerlane that it was never rebuilt. Among the ruins there now stands a small village called Sert, a corruption of its ancient name. The ruins may be reached by rail from Smyrna, on the way to Philadelphia.
 - 4) "The ancient city was noted for its fruits and wool, and for its temple of the goddess Cybele, whose worship resembled that of Diana of Ephesus. Its wealth was also partly due to the gold which was found in the sand of the river Pactolus, and it was here that gold and silver coins were first struck. During the Roman period its coins formed a beautiful series, and are found in abundance by the peasants who till the surrounding fields.
 - 5) "The ruins of the buildings which stood at the base of the hill have now been nearly buried by the dirt washed down from above. The hill upon which the acropolis stood measures 950 ft. high: the triple walls still surround it.
 - 6) "The more imposing of the ruins are on the lower slope of the hill, and among them the temple of Cybele is the most interesting, yet only two of its many stone columns are still standing. Equally imposing is the necropolis of the city, which is at a distance of two hours' ride from Sert, South of the Gygean lake.
 - 7) "The modern name of the necropolis is Bin Tepe or Thousand Mounds, because of the large group of great mounds in which the kings and nobles were buried. Many of the mounds were long ago excavated and plundered" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic

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- c. Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. and was rebuilt by 26 A.D.
 - d. It was known as one of the most permissive cities of the time.
 - e. Sardis was the capital of Lydia, and was once home to Croesus, who was worth over one-half billion dollars when Cyrus conquered his domain in 546 B.C.
 - f. Sardis was dying in A.D. 96, and so was the congregation located there.
2. Verse 1: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
 - a. The Author is described as one having the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. The "seven Spirits" is a reference to the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:4); seven stars represent the angels (messengers) of the seven congregations.
 - b. He has control of the messengers: Christ directs his followers by the Spirit-inspired word.
 - 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - c. "I know"—because he walks in their midst. This statement is made in each of the letters. His appraisal of them was far different from the proud picture they had of themselves.
 - d. They had the reputation of being alive but their true condition was not so. Based on human standards they were alive but the Lord saw them as dead. His standard is his word:
 - 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 4) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 5) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - e. Just because there is feverish activity in a congregation does not prove that the Lord acknowledges them as his own. A congregation is alive in the Lord's view if it is obedient to his will: the members being pure, sincere, faithful, and seeing to it that the mission of Christ is being done (Eph. 4:12). But the brethren in Sardis were smug with self-righteousness: the Lord gave them a jolt. Compare: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6).
 3. Verse 2: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."
 - a. There was still hope for the church in Sardis: they could make a change. They are warned to be watchful, and to strengthen the good things they still retained. He had not found their works to be perfect before God. They had works but not faith; they had some things that were right but not enough to keep them spiritually alive.
 - b. Be watchful:
 - 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - 2) Acts 20:31: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn

- every one night and day with tears."
- 3) 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love" (ASV).
 - c. To be perfect (from *pleroo*) means to "bring to completion, finish something already begun" (Arndt-Gingrich).
4. Verse 3: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."
 - a. We know nothing of the circumstances of the church's beginning in Sardis. Christ here calls on them to remember how they had received and heard the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 2) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 3) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - 5) 1 John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."
 - b. Remember: memory can be both a blessing and a curse. Compare: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented" (Luke 16:25).
 - c. Hold fast the things which are good; repent of the things that are wrong. If they were not properly watchful, he would come as a thief in the night. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1-3). There is in this warning an allusion to the times when the enemies of Sardis took the city because the guards were not watchful.
 - d. The coming of Christ referred to here is not his Second Coming but rather his bringing of judgment on the unfaithful. Compare: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5).
 - e. The church at Sardis had become much like the city itself. "Churches in the torpor of death are always blind to their own condition" (Hailey, p.146).
 5. Verse 4: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."
 - a. Not everyone in the church had soiled himself with sin: there were a few who were pure. In the midst of spiritual corpses the Lord sees the faithful, living Christians. They were to the Lord what an oasis is in the desert, or like having a refreshing shower of rain in the midst of a drought.
 - b. In a congregation where only a few are loyal, the faithful few are the only human hope for the congregation; the unfaithful many can give no hope for the congregation's survival.
 - c. Sin is pictured as defilement; sin is to the spirit what filth is to a clean garment.
 - 1) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless

- and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
- 2) Jude 23: "And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."
- d. The precious promise is made to those few individuals who had maintained their purity: they were the ones who would walk with the Lord in white; they were worthy to do so. White is heaven's color. Walking with the Lord indicates fellowship and agreement.
- 1) Ecclesiastes 9:8-9: "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that *is* thy portion in *this* life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun."
 - 2) Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
 - 3) Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
- e. To walk with him in white is to walk with him in purity and holiness which come to us initially when we put him on in baptism. In heaven, the faithful will walk with the Lord in purity and holiness.
- 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 3) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 4) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 5) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 6) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- f. They were worthy—not because of personal merit, but because they had sincerely obeyed the gospel and lived as the Lord directed.
- 1) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
6. Verse 5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
- a. To the faithful Christian who overcomes (remains loyal regardless of life's circumstances) the Lord promises a threefold reward.
 - 1) He shall be clothed in white raiment.
 - 2) The Lord will not blot out his name from the book of life.
 - 3) His name will be confessed before God and the angels.
 - b. He shall be clothed in white raiment: God will put on each one, perfect purity. On earth our holiness is at best imperfect (we cannot live above sin entirely), but in heaven we will be arrayed in all the glory that "white" implies.
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- 1) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 2) 1 John 1:6-10: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- c. The Lord will not blot out his name from the book of life.
- 1) The idea of having our names recorded in heaven occurs often in the Bible.
 - a) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - b) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
 - c) Luke 10:17-20: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - d) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
 - e) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - f) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - g) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - h) Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - i) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - j) Revelation 22:19: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
 - 2) It is thought that the Jews kept a register containing the names of their citizens; the names of the dead were removed from that list.
 - a) Nehemiah 12:22-23: "The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, *were* recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian. The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, *were* written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib."
 - b) Isaiah 4:3: "And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."
 - c) Ezekiel 13:9: "And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of
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the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD."

- 3) But God has a book of life made up of the names of the righteous: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Ps. 69:28). The fact that a name can be removed from God's book of life is proof that a child of God can fall from grace and be lost.
- d. Christ will confess his name before his Father and the angels. As the ones graduating from school have their names read before the audience, so the faithful will have their names acknowledged as they receive the crown of life. Those whose names are not in the book will not be acknowledged. To have him confess us in the *there and then*, we must confess him in the *here and now*.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Luke 12:8-9: "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."
 - 3) Matthew 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) Luke 13:27: "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."
7. Verse 6: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. Again the charge is given to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The Holy Spirit had a message for the seven churches of Asia; he spoke that message through the apostle John; the message was uttered in the letter sent to each.
 - b. The Holy Spirit speaks to our world today, but he does not do so audibly or through intuition or privately. He speaks through the message he revealed through the apostles and the prophets of the New Testament. It is a message delivered through the written word the Spirit inspired the selected men to receive, deliver, confirm, and record. That message was completed and confirmed during the first century; since then, no other message has been communicated from heaven to men.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (ASV).
 - d. Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.:"
 - e. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - f. Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was

needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

B. Revelation 3:7-13: To the Church at Philadelphia.

1. Historical information about Philadelphia.

a. Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities. It was founded in 150 B.C. to spread Greek culture. Thus the open-door idea would be clear in the minds of the people. The city was named by King Attalus II, who had great love for his brother Eumenes. The name of the city means "brotherly love." The city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17; it was rebuilt by Tiberius Caesar, and for a while it was called "Neo-caesarea." Due to its many temples and public buildings it was called "Little Athens." It had an excellent climate where grapes could be grown in abundance. The god of wine (Bacchus—Roman; Dionysus—Greek) was of chief importance there.

b. The ISBE offers this about Philadelphia:

1) Philadelphia: A city of ancient Lydia in Asia Minor on the Cogamus River, 105 miles from Smyrna. It stood upon a terrace 650 ft. above the sea. Behind it are the volcanic cliffs to which the Turks have given the name of Devitt, or 'inkwells'; on the other side of the city the land is exceedingly fertile, and there was produced a wine of whose excellence the celebrated Roman poet Virgil wrote.

2) Philadelphia is not so ancient as many of the other cities of Asia Minor, for it was founded after 189 BC on one of the highways which led to the interior. Its name was given to it in honor of Attalus II, because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, king of Lydia. Still another name of the city was Decapolis, because it was considered as one of the ten cities of the plain. A third name which it bore during the 1st cent. AD was Neo-kaisaria; it appears upon the coins struck during that period.

3) During the reign of Vespasian, it was called Flavia. Its modern name, Ala-shehir, is considered by some to be a corruption of the Turkish words Allah-shehir, 'the city of God,' but more likely it is a name given it from the reddish color of the soil.

4) In addition to all of these names it sometimes bore the title of 'Little Athens' because of the magnificence of the temples and other public buildings which adorned it. Philadelphia quickly became an important and wealthy trade center, for as the coast cities declined, it grew in power, and retained its importance even until late Byzantine times. One of the Seven Churches of the Book of Rev (Rev 3:7 ff) was there, and it was the seat of a bishop [after the Great Apostasy].

5) As in most Asia Minor cities, many Jews lived there, and they possessed a synagogue. During the reign of Tiberius the city was destroyed by an earthquake, yet it was quickly rebuilt. Frederick Barbarossa entered it while on his crusade in 1190. Twice, in 1306 and 1324, it was besieged by the Seljuk Turks, but it retained its independence until after 1390, when it was captured by the combined forces of the Turks and Byzantines. In 1403 Tamerlane captured it, and, it is said, built about it a wall of the corpses of his victims.

6) "Ala-shehir is still a Christian town; one-fourth of its modern population is Greek, and a Gr bishop still makes his home there. One of the chief modern industries is a liquorice factory; in the fields about the city the natives dig for the roots. On the terrace upon which the ancient city stood, the ruins of the castle and the walls may still be seen, and among them is pointed out the foundation of the early church. The place may now best be reached by rail from Smyrna" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].

c. It is said to have been a small city and that the church was likewise small. The church is not named elsewhere in the New Testament. The Lord has no complaint against them.

2. Verse 7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."

a. A unique description of the Author is given in the introductory part of the letter.

1) He is **Holy**—absolute separation from all evil: "For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).

- 2) He is **True**—absolutely trustworthy. Infidel Jews denied Jesus was the Christ; there were many such in Philadelphia; his affirmation here is in rebuttal to their denials.
 - a) John 1:9: "*That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."
 - b) John 6:32: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."
 - c) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - d) John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."
 - e) Hebrews 13:5: "*Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
 - f) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - g) 1 John 5:20: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."
 - h) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
 - i) Revelation 6:10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - j) Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."
 - b. He has the key of David—authority, legal right, and absolute power are his. As David possessed regal right over the nation of Israel, so Christ has all authority over things that pertain to his spiritual kingdom. No man has the right to make changes to his will, nor can any thwart his purpose.
 - 1) Isaiah 22:22: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 3) Acts 2:31-32: "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:24-26: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."
 - 5) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - c. He opens and closes doors—no man can defy his will successfully.
 - 1) The open door of the passage refers to opportunities. Christ will use the faithful, giving them opportunity to spread the gospel and otherwise to be useful in his kingdom. [Thirty Memphis School of Preaching graduates baptized more in 18 months than all 45 churches in Memphis did during the same period of time].
 - 2) Opportunities lost are often forever lost. We are to prepare for service, pray for opportunity to serve, use our opportunities wisely when they are given, and give him the glory.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 2:12-13: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother:
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- but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
- 5) Colossians 4:3-4: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you."
3. Verse 8: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."
 - a. He knew their works. He would give them an open door for them to serve because they had a little strength and had not denied his name. Thus, because they were faithful, he would use them in the kingdom. He will not use the services of those who are unfaithful.
 - b. Their "little strength" may indicate that the congregation was few in number. But they were stronger in the Lord's eyes than Sardis.
 4. Verse 9: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."
 - a. The synagogue of Satan was located in Philadelphia: this is a reference to the infidel Israelites who lived there. They claimed to be Jews (God's people) but were not. The true Jew (spiritually) is identified in the New Testament as a Christian.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 3) Revelation 2:9: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan."
 - 4) Matthew 21:33-45: "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."
 - b. The Lord did not make the mistake Premillennialists make: they claim Israel is still the chosen people of God. The text and the other passages cited above disprove this notion. Satan is ever active; he will always oppose the Lord's church. Satan had synagogues at Smyrna and Philadelphia, and his seat was located at Pergamos. Christ knows who his people are (2 Tim. 2:19). The Jews who did not believe in Christ are called the synagogue of Satan. They were the physical descendants of Abraham, but were totally unworthy to be called the spiritual descendants of that great man of God.
 - 1) John 8:39-45: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even*

- God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not."
- 2) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad."
 - 3) Galatians 3:6-9: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."
 - 4) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- c. The Lord promised them ultimate victory over this synagogue of Satan: they would come and worship at the feet of the saints and would know that Christ had loved these saints. How was this accomplished? "Just how this would be done is not stated.....At the judgment, if not before, all enemies of the gospel will be forced to concede that the gospel is true and the church is a divine institution" (Hinds, p.58).
5. Verse 10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
 - a. They had kept the word of Christ's patience. They had shown the same kind of endurance Christ had shown in his earthly mission. Because of this, blessings are promised to them.
 - b. He would keep them from the hour of temptation. This refers to a period of trying or testing that would afflict the world generally. They would be made immune to the tribulation indicated or would be seen safely through it. "From" (*ek*) means "out of the midst of" so it could indicate either conclusion.
 - c. The point appears to be that there was a sore trial coming on the world of unregenerated men to try them; but the saints would be kept from having to endure this trial (cf. Rev. 18). But what great trial could be meant? Barnes gives these comments:
 - 1) "Here, perhaps, all that is implied is, that the trial would be very extensive or general—so much so as to embrace the world, as the word was understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed. It need not be supposed that the whole world literally was included in it, or even all the Roman empire, but what was the world to them—the region which they would embrace in that term. If there were some far-spreading calamity in the country where they resided, it would probably be all that would be fairly embraced in the meaning of the word. It is not known to what trial the speaker refers. It may have been some form of persecution, or it may have been some calamity by disease, earthquake, or famine that was to occur. Tacitus (see Wetstein, in loco) mentions an earthquake that sank twelve cities in Asia Minor, in one night, by which, among others, Philadelphia was deeply affected; and 'it is possible that there may have been reference here to that overwhelming calamity. But nothing can be determined with certainty in regard to this.
 - 2) "[To try them that dwell upon the earth] To test their character. It would rather seem from this that the affliction was some form of persecution as adapted to test the fidelity of those who were affected by it. The persecutions in the Roman empire would furnish abundant occasions for such a trial" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, ©1997 by Biblesoft].
 6. Verse 11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
 - a. The coming here is not the Second Coming, for that coming has not occurred yet and nineteen hundred years have passed since the promise here was made. But he would come quickly to aid them and protect them as promised in verse 10. The Second Coming was not then soon to come: Paul wrote that the great apostasy must occur and the man of sin be revealed before the Lord would return (2 Thess. 2:1-12). Many years were required for the apostasy to develop fully.
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- 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."
- 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
- 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-2: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."
- 4) 2 Timothy 4:1-2: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
- b. The Second Coming will be as unannounced as the coming of the thief in the night: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1-3).
- c. They are exhorted to hold fast lest some man should take their crown. We have the crown of eternal life in promise. If we had eternal life in fact, no one could deprive us of it.
 - 1) Titus 1:1-2: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; **In hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 2) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he **hath promised us, even eternal life.**"
- d. The fact that someone can take our crown from us is clear evidence that a Christian can so-sin as to lose his eternal reward. One cannot lose what he does not have. We have eternal life in hope and promise; we can lose this hope and promise, and thus lose our crown. How can we lose the crown? Not through coercion, but through our own unfaithfulness—by accepting some religious error or by getting involved in some other kind of sin. But the possibility of losing our crown does not mean we will lose it. Cf. Possibility -vs- Probability.
- e. John 10:27-29: "My sheep **hear** my voice, and I know them, and they **follow** me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall **never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
 - 1) We must continue to hear his voice.
 - 2) We must continue to follow Christ.
 - 3) Therefore, no one can pluck us from the Father's hand,
7. Verse 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name."
 - a. To the one who overcomes, certain promises are given. Promises are given in each letter, describing the avoidance of hell and the attainment of heaven, in different ways.
 - 1) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - 2) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 3) Revelation 2:17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."
 - 4) Revelation 2:26: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

- 5) Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."
- 6) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- b. He will make him a pillar in the temple of his God. The victory and the reward are individual rewards. The letter is addressed to the church as a whole, but when blessings of overcoming are discussed, it is addressed to the individual saint. The figurative description of being made a pillar stresses permanence rather than support, since the next clause says, "he shall go no more out." Pillars in a great building are intended to last indefinitely. But since Philadelphia was an earthquake-prone city, perhaps this figurative description of eternal reward would have special meaning to the faithful saint from that place.
- c. He will write on him the name of his God and the city of his God (new Jerusalem). The saved ones in heaven will have inscribed on him (symbolically) the name of God (which indicates ownership) and the name of new Jerusalem (citizenship), and the new name of Christ (he will share with him the glory of heavenly redemption).
- 1) John 14:2-3: "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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
- 2) John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."
- d. Some apply these blessings to the church as it comes out of the great persecutions then prevalent. This position says that those that were lukewarm would be gone from the church after the sore trials came; only the truly dedicated would be left. But after the persecutions ended, the church went completely and quickly into apostasy. Persecution had often descended upon the church until 313 A.D., when Constantine, the new Roman Emperor, issued the "Edict of Toleration." He was friendly toward *Christianity*. His influence hastened the church's decline into absolute apostasy.
8. Verse 13: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
- a. This epistle closes with the clear charge that each one with ears (ability to perceive) hear (with a view to heed) what the Spirit says to the churches. The very statement itself implies that what the Spirit says is the standard by which we are to conduct ourselves. In Revelation 22:18-19, a strong warning is given to make no additions to or any subtractions from the things recorded herein by the Spirit.
- b. If there is no standard, there is no such thing as sin.
- 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
- 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
- 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
- c. If the Bible does not have authority, we would have no evidence or reason to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And why are we warned to make no alterations to what is written in it (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9)? If we can reject any part of it without penalty, we can reject it all without penalty. It all stands together or it all falls together.
- C. Revelation 3:14-22: To the church in Laodicea.
1. Historical information about Laodicea.
- a. Laodicea was founded in the third century B.C. by Antiochus II (a Seleucid king), who named it after his wife, Laodice. It was a banking center. It was known for a type of cloth made from the black wool of sheep raised there. A famous school of medicine was located nearby. An eye medicine was developed by the school, known as Phrygian powder, which was widely used. Compare: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve,

that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, the proud, independent people rebuilt their own city without Rome's aid. It was a wealthy city: bankers, millionaires, and rich retirees lived there.

- 1) "Many Jews were attracted by the city's affluence and trade and made it their home. The city's easy and opulent life made it an appealing retirement center for the wealthy. Because retired persons often conclude that they have served their purpose and reached their goal in life, they consequently become lukewarm to the issues facing society. Ramsay describes Laodicea as a city of no extremes, a city that had no peculiar characteristics unless this lack of peculiar characteristics was its peculiar characteristic. These qualities that distinguished the city were also reflected in the church" (Hailey, p.156).
 - 2) The attitudes and lifestyles of these people would naturally affect the church, thus the brethren in Laodicea thought of themselves as rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing; however, the Lord saw them as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. No Christian can ever retire from the Lord's service; though we may be able to retire from our secular occupation, yet our race is not over until we pass from earthly scenes.
 - 3) Laodicea has been described as a retirement center. Retirement years afford those in good health with golden opportunities to serve the Master, perhaps more and better than ever before; and there are many temptations to spend our time and energy on fleshly, worldly pursuits. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin" (Jas 4:17).
- b. The ISBE reports about Laodicea:
- 1) "A city of Asia Minor situated in the Lycos valley in the province of Phrygia, and the home of one of the Seven Churches of Rev (Rev 1:11). Distinguished from several other cities of that name by the appellation Ad Lycum, it was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 BC) of Syria, who named it for his wife Laodike, and who populated it with Syrians and with Jews who were transplanted from Babylonia to the cities of Phrygia and Lydia.
 - 2) "Though Laodicea stood on the great highway at the junction of several important routes, it was a place of little consequence until the Roman province of Asia was formed in 190 BC. It then suddenly became a great and wealthy center of industry, famous specially for the fine black wool of its sheep and for the Phrygian powder for the eyes, which was manufactured there (compare Rev 3:18).
 - 3) "In the vicinity was the temple of Men Karou and a renowned school of medicine. In the year 60 AD, the city was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, but so wealthy were its citizens that they rejected the proffered aid of Rome, and quickly rebuilt it at their own expense (compare Rev 3:17). It was a city of great wealth, with extensive banking operations (compare Rev 3:18).
 - 4) "Little is known of the early history of Christianity there; Timothy, Mark and Epaphras (Col 1:7) seem to have been the first to introduce it. However, Laodicea was early the chief bishopric of Phrygia, and about 166 AD Sagaris...was martyred. In 1071 the city was taken by the Seljuks; in 1119 it was recovered to the Christians by John Comnenus, and in the 13 th century it fell finally into the hands of the Turks.
 - 5) "The ruins, now called Eski Hissar, or old castle, lie near the modern Gonjelli on the railroad, and they have long served as a quarry to the builders of the neighboring town of Denizli. Among them nothing from before the Roman period has appeared. One of the two Roman theaters is remarkably well preserved, and there may still be seen the stadium, a colonnade, the aqueduct which brought the water across the valley to the city by an inverted siphon of stone pipes, a large necropolis, and the ruins of three early Christian churches" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
- c. The origin of the church in Laodicea is unknown. It was 11 miles from Colossae, and 6 miles from Hierapolis. Epaphras is mentioned in connection with all three of these cities (Col. 4:13,16), and may have been instrumental in starting the church there. "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them *that are* in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis....And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea" (Col. 4:13,16).

- d. Nothing good is said about the church in Laodicea.
2. Verse 14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
- a. **The Amen.** The definite article (the) is in the original. What he says will surely be dependable; used as a proper noun here, it guarantees all that he says. The word is akin to the Hebrew word meaning "truth" (cf. Isa. 65:16). The Greek word is used by Christ very often, translated *verily*. It is used of Christ in 2 Corinthians 1:20, stressing the certainty of his promises.
- 1) Isaiah 65:16: "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
- b. **The faithful and true witness.** There is no unfaithful particle in his character or person. As a witness, he is true: there is no deceit or guile about him. His testimony is true, and his warnings and promises are to be taken seriously. A properly qualified witness must (1) have first-hand knowledge of the information he affirms, (2) be competent to recall and present the information, and (3) be willing and able to present it faithfully and truthfully (Trench). Our Lord is fully qualified in each of these.
- c. **The beginning of the creation of God.** The Watchtower Witnesses claim this means Christ was the first thing God created; and that Christ is a "lesser god" (Cf. Isa. 44:4; John 1:1-3); they reject the eternity of Christ. However, see Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18. The word (*arche*) translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation. According to Thayer, the word carries this definition: "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1f. b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64. 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11. 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy Luke 12:11" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
- 1) Significant passages:
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - b) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - c) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - 2) Their assertion about the eternal nature of Christ violates Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting." There has never been a time when Christ did not exist; he is eternal.
 - 3) Their assertion that he is not God violates John 20:24-28: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

- 4) Their assertion that Christ was created by God (and is not eternal) violates the very passage they claim as proof, for the word *arche* means “that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause” (Thayer, p.77); “the beginner, or author” (Vincent, p.695). See Hebrews 12:2 (author, leader). The passage does not say that Christ is the first of God’s creations, but that he is the one who did the creating (he was God’s agent in bringing the universe into existence, John 1:10 ASV; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-18).
 - a) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (ASV).
 - b) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (ASV).
 - c) Hebrews 1:5-8: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - 5) If he were created, he would be praising himself here: "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, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).
 - 6) “(1) Hebrews 2:10 refers to Jesus as the ‘author’ (Grk. *archegos*) of salvation. Would this kindred form of *arche* indicate that Jesus was the *first person saved*, or does it denote that He was the *originator* of salvation? The latter, of course (cf. Arndt & Gingrich, *Greek Lexicon*, p.112). Similarly, Revelation 3:14 refers to Christ’s role as Creator (cf. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2), and not to an alleged origin. (2) God is designated ‘the beginning (*arche*) and the end’ in Revelation 21:6. Does this mean that Jehovah was created? The Witnesses do not so argue. Further, if ‘beginning’ denotes the Lord’s commencement in time (as per 3:14), would ‘end’ suggest an ultimate termination for God?” (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, p.180).
 3. Verses 15-16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."
 - a. Christ, being the all-powerful head of the church, could know fully the real condition of the church at Laodicea (and elsewhere). “I know thy works.”
 - b. They were neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm; they were not committed for him nor were they committed against him.
 - 1) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 2) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 3) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - c. Christ would rather they be hot or cold: he could not permit their lukewarmness. In effect, they were trying to serve two masters (Matt. 6:24); one cannot hold to the hand of the Lord and the hand of the world at the same time.
 - d. To be hot is to be fervent; to be cold is to be hard-hearted, indifferent, or antagonistic.
 - 1) Acts 18:25: "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."
 - 2) Romans 12:11: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
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- e. Why is lukewarmness worse than coldness? The cold person might perchance be softened by the gospel or providence and be saved; one who is lukewarm might not even realize he is lost—or care.
- 1) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an open shame."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:20: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."
4. Verse 17: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."
- a. The cause and consequence of their lukewarmness is stated here. They viewed themselves as rich, increased with goods and in need of nothing. They were self-deceived; their assessment of themselves was not their true condition. The Bible frequently warns against self-deception.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:18: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."
 - 2) Galatians 6:3: "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."
 - 3) James 1:22: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
 - 4) 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - b. The Lord's evaluation is not always the same as man's. These were not as they thought but were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—by Christ's standard. His assessment is the only one that counts.
 - 1) Hosea 12:8: "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: *in* all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that *were* sin."
 - 2) Luke 18:9-14: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as *his* eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
 - 3) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - c. The Lord used some strong language in describing their real condition:
 - 1) The Lord said they were *wretched*. This is the same word used by Paul in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
 - 2) He also said they were *miserable*. This term is used also in 1 Corinthians 15:19: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."
 - 3) He said they were *poor*. This word is used here to describe the poverty-stricken nature of their souls.
 - 4) He said they were *blind*. This term is used elsewhere:
 - a) Romans 2:19: "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness."
 - b) 2 Peter 1:9: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."
 - 5) He also said they were naked. This described the soul without its heavenly habitation:
 - a) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
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- b) 2 Cor. 5:2-3: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."
- d. The cold person, having rejected the gospel, will certainly be rejected; and the lukewarm Christian, being indifferent toward Christ and the gospel, will be spewed from the Lord's mouth (that is, be rejected, sent to torment). A saved person can lose his salvation and be removed from the Lord's body.
- e. One might get the idea that because he is in good physical health, that his soul is also well; he might think that because he is physically handsome, his soul is likewise handsome; he might get the notion that because his body is in excellent condition and full of strength, that his soul is also in a similar condition; he might have the thought that since he is financially wealthy, that his soul is also well-endowed with spiritual wealth.
- 1) The statement that the Laodiceans thought of themselves as being rich indicates that they were well-blessed with financial prosperity. Obviously, one can be wealthy in this world's goods and still be poverty-stricken in the spiritual realm. Christ stated the unvarnished truth that their spiritual condition was far from what they thought.
 - 2) Prosperity and wealth can make a Christian to become complacent and lukewarm. This was the precise condition of the Laodiceans. When economic times are hard, or when a condition of war exists, or when one is in dire need of the essentials of life—these are times when individuals see their need for Heavenly help! But when times are prosperous, when peace exists in society, when men have more than sufficient of this world's goods—these are exceedingly dangerous times to the soul!
- f. Other passages:
- 1) Hosea 12:8: "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: *in* all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that *were* sin."
 - 2) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
5. Verse 18: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." [This is the Lord's counsel to the lukewarm].
- a. They should buy from him gold that has been tried in the fire; this is a reference to spiritual riches—true and lasting wealth.
 - b. They should buy white raiment; this is a reference to pure spiritual clothing.
 - c. They ought to buy eyesalve from him; the purpose of this was to give them the ability to see their true condition. The eye medicine made at Laodicea would not suffice to relieve their spiritual blindness.
 - 1) Psalms 19:8: "The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes."
 - 2) Psalms 119:18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."
 - 3) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - d. The price by which they could buy the proffered benefits was that of a dedicated, obedient life.
6. Verse 19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
- a. The Lord's rebukes are indications of his love, not his hatred; wise parents discipline their children out of love and concern, not hatred or malice.
 - 1) John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."
 - 2) John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of
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- the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
- 3) Galatians 4:16: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"
- b. To allow another Christian to continue in a sin or error unrebuked is not to show love, but indifference and unconcern; it would be like allowing an innocent little child to play with something dangerous.
- c. The Lord called on the Laodiceans to be zealous (become hot) and repent. It is not his wish that any be lost; but he will not compromise his will. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. *It is* a faithful saying: For if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*: If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*: if we deny *him*, he also will deny us: If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put *them* in remembrance, charging *them* before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, *but* to the subverting of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2: 10-14.).
- d. In the text the Lord uses the Greek word *phileo* (love), not *agape*. The latter is a broader and more inclusive term which involves the will (indicating an intelligent and purposeful principle by which we live and act toward God and man); the former (*phileo*) is a term indicating warmth and affection. His love here (*phileo*) expresses his warm concern for them even though they were lukewarm toward him.
7. Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
- a. This invitation is addressed to lukewarm, indifferent saints. He had already called on them to repent; here he is pictured as standing outside their spiritual door; thus here is a case where Christ has been shut out of the lives and hearts of his own people (that a child of God can fall from grace is thus illustrated).
- b. Only the individual has the power to open the door: Christ will not and cannot do so because of the nature of his will. An artist has pictured this scene and showed the only doorknob as being on the inside.
- c. This passage (especially verse 20) clearly shows that the Calvinist theory is wrong, which asserts that the individual has no power of choice regarding his eternal destiny.
- d. Christ shows his willingness to be in communion with these lukewarm Christians: he will enter and sup [eat a meal] with them and they with him—provided they repent. Supping with them is a beautiful figure to the Oriental mind of the warm, close communion which Christ desires to have with people.
8. Verse 21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- a. This is the usual statement regarding the one who overcomes. The blessing—they will be allowed to sit with Christ in his throne. This is a reference to the great blessings made available by Christ.
- b. Christ even now sits on his throne, contrary to the notions of the millennialists. The Bible nowhere teaches the fanciful theory of the materialists.
- 1) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
- 2) Hebrews 8:1: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."
- 3) Zechariah 6:11-13: "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- c. The throne is God's throne because he was the one who gave it to Christ.
- d. The blessing indicated could be applied to our present relationship with Christ or future blessings in heaven. Even in this life we reign with him.
- 1) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also

- overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- 2) Romans 5:17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
- e. "The faithful share with him in this life and his victory over sin and in his reign in righteousness, and shall also share in the reign for ever and ever in eternity (22:5)" (Hailey, p.163).
9. Verse 22: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. Although the promise of this letter is directed to those in the church at Laodicea, it is all-inclusive: all who overcome reign with him.
 - b. All are enjoined to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

A Brief Preview of the Coming Chapters

1. Chapter 4: This pictures the reigning God and his sovereignty.
 2. Chapter 5: This vindicates the sovereignty of God by the works of Christ; it pictures the redeeming Lamb.
 3. Chapters 6-20: This section shows God's wrath against his enemies.
 4. Chapters 21-22: This concluding section shows the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people.
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REVELATION 4

The Throne Scene

A. A Survey of the Chapter.

1. "In Chapter 4 John finds himself again in the spirit (see Rev. 1:10). This time he sees a throne in heaven upon which Almighty God is seated. He is surrounded by 24 thrones upon which 24 elders, representing, in all probability, respectively, the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Lamb. In the midst of and round about the throne are four living creatures, the first like a lamb, the second like a calf, the third like the face of a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle. Great emphasis is placed in this chapter on the worship of God by all creation, expressed by doxologies" (W.B. West, *Studies In Revelation*, p.65).
2. Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
3. Psalms 99:1: "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved."
4. Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

B. Revelation 4:1-4: The Throne Scene.

1. Verse 1: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."
 - a. This introduces a new aspect of the message, which follows what began in Revelation 1:1. The entire revelation was probably seen in one continuous vision.
 - b. In the letters to the churches, certain victories are promised to those who overcome. The question before the minds of the saints at this point would be, "What shall become of the enemies and what shall be our fate?" The following chapters detail the fierce struggles and the final outcome.
 - c. But before describing the conflict ahead, God drew aside the curtain of heaven to give John a vision of the majestic court of the Almighty. This scene is not intended to be understood as a literal description of heaven, but is a picture of the awesome presence of God (cf. Isa. 6:1-5). The setting had been on Patmos; now it switches to heaven.
 - d. Having this great image of heavenly might stamped on the heart, the suffering saint can be assured of a pleasant outcome if he remains loyal to his Lord.
 - e. A door was opened in heaven. This is the third door spoken of thus far—the door of opportunity (see Rev. 3:8) and the door of the human heart (Rev. 3:20) are the first two. This open door was the means by which John was able to see the heavenly scene described.
 - f. He heard a voice speaking, which is likened to a trumpet—with a clear and powerful sound. He was told to come and see things which must be hereafter. These things would follow in the future, but how far in the future is not stated. We remember the opening words of the book, which spoke of things "which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1).
 - g. The identity of the speaker is not given.
2. Verses 2-3: "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."
 - a. John was already "in the Spirit" (1:10). Since he is to see and record even greater things, he repeats the statement, "Immediately (straightway) I was in the spirit." He now is to see and write of wondrous things in heaven—additional information was to be conveyed to him. He receives here a fresh outpouring of inspiration to empower him to see the forthcoming mysteries God wished to reveal to him.

- b. "He does not affirm that he was caught up into heaven, nor does he say what impression was on his own mind, if any, as to the place where he was; but he was at once absorbed in the contemplation of the visions before him. He was doubtless still in Patmos, and these things were made to pass before his mind as a reality; that is, they appeared as real to him as if he saw them, and they were in fact a real symbolical representation of things occurring in heaven" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- c. He sees a throne set in heaven. The word *set* emphasizes the firmly established nature of the throne. God's word is also said to be *set* in heaven (Ps. 119:89). The reference is to the Father and his throne. God is here depicted as sitting on his throne, but notice that no personal description is given of God by John, nor is any given elsewhere by other divine writers.
- 1) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 2) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 6) 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
- d. "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven; or, a throne was situated....There is no action of placing or setting up. Compare the vision of Ezekiel, 'In the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne' (Ezek 10:1), where the throne appears above the cherubim, in the position of the cloud of glory (cf. also Isa 6:1,2, where the seraphim are above). And one sat on the throne. Probably the Triune God The Person is not named, because (1) the Name of God is incommunicable; it is the 'new Name' (see on Rev 3:12); or (2) because the seer describes only what is seen; or (3) it is suppressed from a sense of reverence" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
- e. What John beheld is likened to a jasper stone—this is an opaque species of different colors, subject to high polish. The sardine stone had lasting beauty of color, with a brilliant flash. John is describing the grandeur and glory of God's divine Being; he is not giving a description of God's form or countenance, but is saying that to look upon him was like looking upon precious stones.
- f. A rainbow was about the throne. The colors of the scene depict the beauty, splendor, grandeur and the majesty of God and his throne room.
- g. The saints needed a reminder of the fact that God was on his throne in heaven, thus everything would turn out all right eventually. The things occurring on earth do not change his splendor and sovereignty.
3. Verse 4: "And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."
- a. Around the throne were 24 seats upon which sat 24 elders. Crowns, thrones, and elders may indicate authority in some secondary sense. The crowns may indicate victory (as in 2:10), thus the beings who are pictured are representative of all the saints who endure to the end.
 - b. Why are they called "elders"? This term used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to identify authority figures.
 - 1) Exodus 18:13-14: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What *is* this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?"
 - 2) Deuteronomy 27:1: "And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 3:1-7: "This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good
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- behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."
- 4) Titus 1:5-9: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."
- c. Their presence enhances the glory of God, as does their praise (vs. 10), and their being before God's throne shows that ultimate victory is assured for the faithful.
 - d. Why 24 in number? Probably to represent people under both covenants: there were 12 patriarchs (and tribes) and there were 12 apostles of Christ (Levi was an extra tribe and Paul was an extra apostle). This being so, the 24 are representative of all the redeemed from each dispensation.
 - 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:15: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
 - 5) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - e. They were clothed in white, which indicates purity. The One on the throne is pure and those who come before him must be pure.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 5) Revelation 7:14: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
 - 6) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - f. The crowns of gold suggest victory, and perhaps authority in some sense.
 - 1) Revelation 2:26-27: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."
 - 2) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also

overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

C. Revelation 4:5-8: Manifestations of God's Marvelous Might.

1. Verses 5-6: "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind."
 - a. Some marvelous manifestations of might are here shown in the vision. Lightnings, thunderings, and voices would be manifestations of God's power. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled" (Ex. 19:16; cf. Heb. 12:18-26).
 - b. This picture of God's awesome power forms an important truth for the suffering saint. Where is God when this persecution is being meted out by ungodly men? He is in heaven; he has not forgotten his people. His wrath and his might are expressed in the great sounds emanating from his throne; he voices his great displeasure against the persecutors. His people can take heart in the knowledge that God will take care of them, and will punish the oppressors. This majestic scene was designed to stress the greatness of God and thus encourage the saints.
 - 1) Psalm 18:13-24: "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail *stones* and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments *were* before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:18-26: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which *voice* they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more *shall not* we *escape*, if we turn away from him that *speaketh* from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."
 - c. The seven lamps John saw are identified as the seven Spirits of God. It is the Holy Spirit that is thus represented. The seven Spirits is obviously a unique reference to the Holy Spirit. The number seven is used in the book to indicate fullness and completeness. This could not represent the seven churches since the greeting would be from the churches to the churches, in that case. In this context, the logical reference is to the Holy Spirit. Taken with the next part of the statement, the greeting is from the entire Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, *be* with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).
 - 1) "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. The Holy Spirit, represented in his sevenfold operation, by lamps, which illumine. The same idea is expressed under another figure in Rev 5:6, where the searching, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit is typified by seven eyes" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by

- Biblesoft]. The Holy Spirit works through the word which he enabled the New Testament apostles and prophets to receive, confirm, communicate, and record.
- 2) Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
 - 3) Revelation 5:6: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Here, the seven Spirits are represented by a figure having seven horns and seven eyes. Seven indicates completeness and perfection; thus the HOLY Spirit. He is before God's throne, ever at God's command. The enemies of the early saints (including Domitian and other Roman authorities) are powerless in comparison to God! What power do the enemies of God's people have that can withstand God?
- d. John saw a sea of glass which looked like crystal. A sea was a pool or lake [a different word from the one used in John 5:4; 9:7]. A "sea" (of a different kind) was at the Old Testament temple (1 Kings 7:23; 2 Kings 16:17; 25:13). Solomon's sea was a great laver containing water. Here in our text, the sea before God's throne represents the transcendancy of God over his lowly offspring, the infinite distance between the holy God and sinful man. "It can only be bridged by overcoming through the trials and persecutions which Peter (1 Pet. 4:12) and Paul (1 Cor. 3:5) refer to under the term 'fire'" (Tom Gaumer, *Studies In The Revelation*, p.128). Passing through this sea of glass mingled with fire (15:2) is this process; and when this trial is over, the sea is no more (21:1).
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. Verses 6-8: "And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."
- a. Four living creatures [*beasts*—KJV] are introduced. *Beasts* is from *zoe*, meaning "life." The pictures given are similar to those of Ezekiel 1 and 10.
 - b. They are described as having eyes before and behind—nothing escapes their gaze.
 - c. The face of the entire creature was like the earthly being named. These creatures, having the appearances of the beings indicated, possess the prominent characteristics of those earthly beings.
 - 1) The lion is known for its strength and regal appearance.
 - 2) The calf [ox] suggests faithful service. "Calf *moschoo* (NT:3448). Compare Luke 15:23. In the Septuagint for 'an ox or steer.' Ex 22:1; Ezek 1:10" [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament."
 - a) Exodus 22:1: "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."
 - b) Ezekiel 1:10: "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

- 3) Man is known for his intelligence.
- 4) The eagle is known for its swiftness.
- d. They had six wings and were full of eyes—this symbolized their mobility and awareness. God's eternal watchfulness of all that occurs on earth is depicted.
- e. These creatures are the highest order of angels (since they are closest to the throne), or are some heavenly beings who continually worship God and carry out his will: "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. 18:10). They are servants of God and worshipers of him. They are either seraphim (Isa. 6:2-3) or cherubim (Ezek 1, 10).

D. Revelation 4:9-11: The Two-Fold Song of Praise to the Almighty,

1. Verse 9: "And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - a. The creatures are representative of the heavenly host praising God; the elders represent the redeemed from earth offering praise.
 - b. This praise is directed to God, not to a Roman emperor. Only God is worthy to receive adoration and reverence. No angel or human is worthy of being revered and adored. The so-called "reverends" of the denominational world take to themselves honors that they do not deserve; no man is worthy of this.
 - 1) Psalms 111:9: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name." God's name is to be revered; not so with any man's name.
 - 2) Matthew 23:8: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren." Since the Lord prohibited men from receiving these religious titles that exalt them above their fellows, so he forbids men today to use similar appellations. The Lord thus forbids here the use of this or some other such terms as a title of distinction, which exalts the individual to a position of superiority over his brethren. The Lord does not forbid our describing someone as a teacher, if that is what that person does and is; he does forbid the use of the term as a title of distinction which exalts one above another.
 2. Verses 10-11: "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."
 - a. The elders cast their crowns before God; they realize they are unworthy. They realize they are not worthy to wear the crowns of victory so they cast their crowns before Him. Compare: "Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).
 - b. The chapter presents the truth of a sovereign God: he is eternal; the Creator; the protector of his people; he will surely pour out punishment on the wicked; he is on his throne immovable. Therefore, if the invincible, sovereign God, the center of activity and point of emphasis, is in heaven, all suffering on the part of his people must be temporary. It was necessary for Israel to endure severe hardships in Egypt in order to be welded together in an unbreakable bond that has lasted thirty-five hundred years, so it was essential that the Lord's church go through great persecutions in order for it to be able to take root on earth, and survive. Faithfulness on the part of our brethren in the first century forms a strong encouragement to others living in later times.
 3. Chapter 4 emphasizes the power of God as Creator; chapter 5 presents the love of God as Redeemer.
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REVELATION 5

Worthy Is The Lamb

A. Revelation 5:1: The Book with the Seven Seals in the Hand of God.

1. This chapter shows the close relationship of Christ and the Father; when one is praised, so is the other. The previous chapter showed God's power; this chapter shows Christ's power. God brings to pass the things revealed; Christ reveals the things to come.
2. Verse 1: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."
 - a. The book was a scroll, not the flat type of book we have today. Ancient books were made of parchment or papyrus formed in a long sheet upon which the writing was inscribed; this sheet was then rolled from one cylinder to another as it was being read.
 - b. The book John saw had writing inscribed on both the inside and outside, indicating the fullness and completeness of the information recorded. Ezekiel saw a similar vision but the book he saw was open: "And he spread it before me; and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe" (Ezek 2:10).
 - c. John's book was sealed with seven seals, meaning that the information it contained was not accessible. Seals were often of wax or other soft substance on which the owner impressed his signet ring. Seven seals were on this book suggesting the futility of an unworthy person trying to open the book.
 - d. The book contained information concerning the future of Christianity and its struggles with the sinful world. It had a message of justice and destiny. No one could reveal its contents because it was in the hand of God. His providential dealings with the world cannot be seen before they occur. The book was simply a means of bringing into focus the central force of Christianity—Christ. In this unique way the Lamb in introduced into the vision.

B. Revelation 5:2-4: A Search for One Who was Worthy to Unseal the Book.

1. Verse 2: "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"
 - a. The strong angel with mighty voice asks, "Who is worthy to open the book?" None of the mighty angelic beings earlier pictured are qualified to open it; and no man was worthy to do so.
 - b. The fact that this angel is called a "strong" angel does not imply that there are any weak angels! The strength with which the angel was endowed by his creator is the point of emphasis.
 - c. "If there be any creature who thinks himself sufficient either to explain or execute the counsels of God, let him stand forth, and make the attempt" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database, © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
2. Verse 3: "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."
 - a. No man in heaven, on earth, or under the earth was found to be worthy to open the book. Only a sovereign power could open it. To open it meant more than merely loosing seals and exposing the contents. It meant to comprehend, disclose and bring about the events therein contained.
 - b. Worthy (able, ASV) is from *dunamai*: "possessing power or ability by virtue of his own resources" to open the book. No one was found who was worthy or able.
3. Verse 4: "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon."
 - a. John wept much (kept on weeping). John wept perhaps for several reasons: the overwhelming sense of urgency the powerful scene created, and his sense of disappointment over not being able to realize the promise of Revelation 4:1.
 - b. The purpose for which he was summoned (in the vision) to heaven was to see "things which must be hereafter." John was longing to know what the future will be for the church. He was deeply concerned about his beloved brethren. So he weeps (imperfect tense) as a child who has been hurt or sorely disappointed.

C. Revelation 5:5-7. One Was Found Who Was Worthy to Open the Book.

1. Verse 5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
 - a. John continued to weep until one of the elders announced to him that One was found who was able to open the book. This elder urged John to stop weeping; he knew something John did not know, thus could tell him there was no need for tears. We often are grieved over things needlessly. No created beings were able to open the book, but one who inhabits eternity was able: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).
 - b. The *Lion of the tribe of Judah* is a clear reference to Christ.
 - 1) Passages:
 - a) Genesis 49:9-10: "Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - b) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - 2) He is pictured as possessing the strength of a lion, and was predicted to have the sceptre of power (Gen 49:10; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21).
 - a) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - b) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - c. He is called the root and offspring of David.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:11-14: "And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."
 - 2) Isaiah 11:1-10: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."
 - 3) Acts 2:29-36: "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection

of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

- 4) Romans 15:8-12: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."
- 5) Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star."
- d. He has prevailed and overcome and made himself worthy and able to loose the seals, open the book, and make known and carry out its contents. He won the victory over Satan, took from him the keys of death and hades, and secured redemption for the faithful. Therefore he is worthy to open the book.
2. Verse 6: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."
 - a. John looked and saw a lamb in the midst of the throne, creatures, and elders. What he saw was not a literal, actual lamb but a Being having the ability to atone for sin. When one who is acquainted with Old Testament terminology and practice thinks of a lamb, he automatically thinks of an atoning sacrifice. Christ is represented in the vision as a lamb that has been slain ("as though it had been slain"—ASV), and prevailed to open the book because he was slain and resurrected, and is now alive in heaven. We are being brought back to the focal point of Revelation—Christ. He is the only one worthy to open the book to vindicate God's sovereignty.
 - b. The seven horns symbolize perfect divine power to put down earthy enemies. Many passages use "horn" as a symbol of power. The number seven symbolizes perfection.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 33:17: "His glory *is like* the firstling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 2:10: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 18:10: "And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed."
 - c. Thus the power of Christ is perfect and complete; he is omnipotent. What trouble would he have in overcoming the enemies who sought to defeat Christianity?
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - d. The seven eyes symbolize full and perfect knowledge. He is omniscient—he sees all. What enemy could or would be able to out-smart or overpower him?
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show

- himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart *is* perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars."
- 2) Zechariah 1:18-21: "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What *be* these? And he answered me, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the LORD showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These *are* the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up *their* horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."
 - 3) Zechariah 3:9: "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone *shall be* seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."
 - 4) Zechariah 4:10: "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel *with* those seven; they *are* the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."
 - 5) John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
 - 6) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - 7) Colossians 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
 - 8) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
- e. In the previous chapter this power is attributed to the Father; here to the Son. If one fails to see Christ as present in the midst of his people, he has failed to see the full picture of Revelation.
3. Verse 7: "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."
- a. Christ is pictured as taking the book from God's hand; he had the right and authority to do so, and took it without hesitation. "It shows an unhesitant attitude and a spirit of strong determination on the part of the Lamb as 'the first thing you know he has taken the book right out of the hand of him who sat on the throne.' Only Christ can open the book and carry forward God's judgments on wicked men. The destiny of men is in the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb who was slain" (Summers, p.136).
 - b. He had won the right to be the Redeemer; he now takes the book and reveals the defeat of his enemies and the victory of his people ("the things which must be hereafter....things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 4:1; 1:1).
 - c. The Father gave Christ all authority with regards to the kingdom during the Christian Dispensation. He obtained it as a consequence of his obedient death on the cross and his triumphant resurrection from the dead.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:22-28: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. *14* And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his

kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."

D. Revelation 5:8-10: Tributes of Praise Given to the Lamb.

1. Verse 8: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."
 - a. The action of taking the book caused great joy in heaven; those heavenly beings recognized the true significance of this, as we ought. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before him, each having harps and golden vials full of odors. These odors represent the prayers of the saints; hence the combined worship of heavenly and earthly beings is pictured.
 - b. The bowls of incense are figurative, so the harps must also be figurative. Nothing material is or will be in heaven, a purely spiritual realm:
 - 1) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 2) John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:50-53: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."
 - c. Prayer and incense are connected:
 - 1) Psalms 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee *as* incense; *and* the lifting up of my hands *as* the evening sacrifice."
 - 2) Luke 1:10: "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."
 - d. An argument is made from this verse by the advocates of instruments of music in worship. Assertions are made that whatever is permitted in heaven is surely allowed on earth. "There is an old adage—'that which proves too much, proves nothing.' It was never more true than in this circumstance. The very passage which refers to harps also mentions 'incense' offered to a 'Lamb.' Shall we burn incense to a literal lamb in church worship?..."*If the harp is authorized for church worship, so are the incense and lamb.* Further, if there is no difference in the conduct of the saints in heaven and the saved on earth, then Christians are prohibited marriage, for in heaven there is no marriage (Matthew 22:30). Moreover, in heaven there is no eating (Revelation 7:16); shall we henceforth abstain from food on earth?...The truth is, one cannot literalize the figures of speech in the book of Revelation and make earthly applications with them. That is irresponsible exegesis" (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, p.181).
2. Verse 9: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."
 - a. Worship is here devoted to Christ; what is done toward one in the Godhead is done toward the other two divine persons. These heavenly beings sang a new (*kainos*) song in which the Lamb's virtues are extolled. Vine give the definitions of two different Greek words translated "new" in English:
 - 1) "**Kainos** denotes 'new,' of that which is unaccustomed or unused, not 'new' in time, recent, but 'new' as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old. 'The new tongues,' *kainos*, of Mark 16:17 are the 'other tongues,' *heteros*, of Acts 2:4. These languages, however, were 'new' and 'different,' not in the sense that they had never been heard before, or that they were new to the hearers, for it is plain from v. 8 that this is not the case; they were new languages to the speakers, different from those in which they were accustomed to speak."
 - 2) "**Neos** signifies 'new' in respect of time, that which is recent; it is used of the young, and so translated, especially the comparative degree 'younger'; accordingly what is *neos* may be a reproduction of the old in quality or character. *Neos* and *kainos* are sometimes used of the same thing, but there is a difference, as already indicated. Thus the 'new man' in Eph 2:15 (*kainos*) is 'new' in differing in character; so in 4:24 (see No. 1); but the 'new man' in Col 3:10 (*neos*) stresses

the fact of the believer's 'new' experience, recently begun, and still proceeding. 'The old man in him...dates as far back as Adam; a new man has been born, who therefore is fitly so called' [i.e., *neos*], Trench, Syn. Sec. lx. The 'New' Covenant in Heb 12:24 is 'new' (*neos*) compared with the Mosaic, nearly fifteen hundred years before; it is 'new' (*kainos*) compared with the Mosaic, which is old in character, ineffective, 8:8,13; 9:15" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

- b. He was worthy to take the book and open the seals because he had been slain and had redeemed many to God out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation; this redemption is offered to all people. For this cause he was worthy to open the book.
 - 1) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The fact that he obtained perfection does not imply that he was imperfect in any moral sense prior to that time. He has always been perfectly sinless. But before his sacrificial death, he was not yet completely qualified as Savior (cf. John 12:32-33). By means of his ordeals on earth, he was made a *perfect Savior*—fully qualified in every respect to become the Redeemer. Having qualified as the complete Savior, he became the author of eternal salvation. He is the source of salvation (John 8:24; 14:6); his is the only name by which salvation is possible (Acts 4:12); to reject Christ is to reject God (Luke 10:16).
3. Verse 10: "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
 - a. "And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (ASV). The ones made to be a kingdom and priests are those purchased from all nations by the blood of Christ (vs. 9). John had earlier said that those cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ were made a kingdom and were priests unto God: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6, ASV).
 - b. This kingdom is the one God established in fulfillment of Daniel 2:44, which Christ received on his return to heaven: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).
 - c. In this kingdom into which Christians have been translated, redemption and forgiveness of sins are obtained: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13-14).
 - d. The ones in the kingdom are priests at the same time (5:10) that they reign on earth. As the priesthood is spiritual, so also is the reigning.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:5-6: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:15-16: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not:

for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

- 3) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
- 4) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

- e. *Reign on earth* is present tense (in the ASV). *Shall reign* in the King James Version describes the continuing action of reigning. The priesthood is now and so is the reigning: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). This passage does not give any support or comfort to the premillennialists. Death reigned over the race because of one man's sins; but many will obtain life through Christ.
- f. When a penitent believer obeys the gospel, his guilt is cleansed by the blood of Christ; he is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ; his old man of sin has been put to death and buried and he becomes a new creature in Christ. Before he was dead in sin [death reigned over him]; now he is alive in Christ—he "reigns" in life [he is alive spiritually and lives in hope of eternal life in heaven]. Consider these comments on Romans 5:17: Compare: "Reigned. The emphatic point of the comparison. The effect of the second Adam cannot fall behind that of the first. If death reigned, there must be a reign of life" [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- g. Hailey offers these succinct comments: "And they reign upon the earth," for as Christ reigns now, so are the redeemed endued with kingly power to rule with Him upon the earth at this present time. These who are saved by grace were raised up to sit with Him in this spiritual realm (Eph. 2:5f), and through this abundance of grace...they reign in life through Him (Rom. 4:17). A parallel is seen between the redeemed Israel whom God brought to Sinai and told, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom and priests, and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6) and these redeemed in Christ who are made "a kingdom and priests", "a holy nation." In summary, these purchased by Christ's blood are made a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth, exercising kingly power with Him" (p.182).
- h. All of this is designed to bring encouragement and strength to the suffering saints. Faithful saints reign—they are given authority and power to dispense the soul-saving power of the gospel (Rom. 16).

E. Revelation 5:11-14: The Praise of the Lamb Continues.

1. Verse 11: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."
 - a. A great host of angels offers praise; their number is beyond enumerating. No attempt is here made to give a definite number to the angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million; plus thousands of thousands,
 - b. If heavenly beings see the need to praise God, so should earthly beings. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14).
 - c. God and Christ are worthy of our devotion; their greatness is far beyond anything we have ever seen. If brethren and the people in the world could only see and appreciate the greatness of God, what a change would be effected! One cannot praise God with his lips and life, and live for the devil at the same time. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
2. Verse 12: "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."
 - a. The angels ascribe power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing to the Lamb. Each tribute expresses a separate characteristic. Only one definite article is used, seemingly to indicate that the seven items form one great attribute,
 - b. Passages:
 - 1) John 10:10: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly."

- 2) Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
 - 3) Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 4) Colossians 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
 - 5) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
- c. Despite the greatness of angels, they do not match the Lamb in greatness. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom....And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands...But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:5-14).
3. Verses 13-14: "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, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."
 - a. The whole creation is pictured as adoring the name of Christ. "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that *be* above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory *is* above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; *even* of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 148).
 - b. "Beyond the innumerable host of angels a wider circle is now revealed which includes the whole of creation, animate and inanimate—all created things in every realm. These join in one thunderous acclamation of praise to the Creator and Redeemer. It is not said that John *saw* the whole creation, but that he *heard* the praise of the creation as it blended with that of the creatures of heaven and earth, the spirits under the earth (cf. v.3), and all things on the sea. In this instance 'the sea' is to be taken literally, as in heaven, earth, and Hades; it is introduced here for the first time. Its creatures are included in the total praise; 'on the sea' probably means near the surface, though 'all things therein' includes everything beneath" (Hailey, p.184).
 - c. "The sound dies away with the quartet's hearty *amen* as a grand finale to the majestic scene" (ibid., p.185). The only word attributed to the four creatures is "Amen." What else was needed?
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REVELATION 6

The Opening of the First Six Seals

A. Revelation 6:1: The Main Action of the Book Begins.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."
2. The main action of the book begins here; the rest of the book explains the seals. It shows that back of all history is God (and Christ). Christ is the only representative qualified to open the seals. He does so here. Revelation chapters 6-20 depicts God's wrath against his enemies; in chapters 21-22 the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people is shown. Seven seals are opened; when the seventh seal is broken, the seven trumpets are blown; then seven vials (bowls) of divine wrath are poured upon the earth.
3. The Lamb opened the first seal; a noise like thunder was heard. Remember that what John is seeing is apocalyptic, an unveiling of information by the use of signs and symbols. Apocalyptic literature deals with the character of events rather than with the close details. Since we are not given enough specific information regarding the horsemen and their riders [Rev. 6:1-8], we are not in a position to know precisely and positively what they represent and when the events they represent would occur. The book was sealed with seven seals; the removal of one seal (in a literal situation) would not permit the opening of the book; however, in apocalyptic writings such is possible. When Christ removed the first seal the information contained in the first part of the book (the white horse and its rider) was revealed.
4. The difficulty and uncertainty of interpreting such scenes is obvious. "No person in the vision is identified as a living character; no specific historical event is defined; and no definite point in time is recorded which would enable the reader to build his interpretation around any of these. One must rely on John's assurance, received from a divine source, that he writes of 'the things which must shortly come to pass' (1:1), the general period of the church's beginning" (Hailey).
5. One of the living creatures spoke, "Come." The four horsemen appear on the scene in succession as the first four seals are opened. They pass across the stage without saying a word and vanish in the distance. The nature of what is represented is seen clearly, but the precise event referred to is obscure.
6. Horses are portrayed in the Old Testament as noble animals (Gen. 49:17; Job 39:19-25); the beasts of burden were oxen, camels, and donkeys, but horses were warriors, used by kings (Ex. 9:23; Esth. 6:8). Solomon had thousands of stalls for his many horses, although God forbade Israel's kings from having many of them (Deut. 17:16). Horses were used extensively and almost exclusively for warfare. Hence, the use of horses in the apocalypse depicts war scenes.

B. Revelation 6:2: The White Horse and His Rider—the First Seal.

1. Verse 2: "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."
2. Many commentators think this is a reference to Christ. Chapter 19 pictures Christ on a white horse and he is wearing many crowns. The word translated "crowns" (in Rev. 19) is a word describing the crown of a ruler (*diademata*), royal crowns; in 6:2 the word for crown is *stephanos*, which is the crown of the victor. Some scholars think that militarism in general (Parthian or Roman in particular) is what is symbolized.
3. If Christ is pictured as the victorious conqueror, then the conquest made is the success of the gospel as it was preached in the first century.
 - a. Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

- d. Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - e. Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - f. Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - g. Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - h. Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - i. Acts 11:19-21: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."
 - j. Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
4. If militarism in general is pictured, then some earthly conflict affecting first century Christians is described. Brother Wallace applies it to the attack on Jerusalem by the Romans. Some think that the Parthians, who used the bow successfully against Romans, are described.
 5. It seems more likely that the white horse and its conquering rider represent the successful spread of the gospel in the first century; the red horse scene that follows would depict the resultant opposition to the gospel by the Lord's enemies; the black horse scene would describe the economic effect of persecution the saints faced; the pale horse would have reference to a limited punishment on the oppressors by the Lord.

C. Revelation 6:3-4: The Red Horse and Its Rider—the Second Seal.

1. Verses 3-4: "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse *that was* red: and *power* was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."
 - a. The second living being said, "Come." The red horse came on the scene. "There is a very general agreement that the red horse signifies war—slaughter by the sword which was given to 'him that sat thereon.' Slight variations of the application occur. Wordsworth, following the more ancient expositors, thinks that only that aspect of war is intended which consists in the persecution of the saints; while Alford and others would not restrict the meaning, but consider that war in general is meant, relying upon the following words, 'that they should kill one another,' and quoting our Lord's prophecy, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt 10:34). Both views may be correct. Though there had never been persecution, war would be one of the great afflictions from which Christians in various ages suffer, and in which they need consolation; but we may well believe that John, in writing to Christians who were themselves being grievously persecuted, should refer especially to the slaughter of the saints, as one of the trials inflicted upon them with God's knowledge and permission" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - b. Brother Wallace applied this to the suffering brought upon Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 A.D. Others apply it to civil warfare in the Roman Empire (under Trajan this was so great that there was

little else but turmoil). Such events would have at least an indirect effect on the church. But since the saints were nearly all gone from Jerusalem when Rome destroyed the city, the suffering was brought to bear almost entirely upon unbelieving Jews.

2. But if the white horse symbolized the successful spread of the gospel, the scene of the red horse could represent the persecution that would naturally follow. "Red" can mean bloodshed, as a result of literal warfare or physical persecution. Our Lord showed that his gospel would be rejected and hated by many people, for the great majority will die lost (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).
 - a. Among families there would be some who believed and some who disbelieved; some unbelieving family members would hate and persecute the believing members: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:34-39).
 - b. The Romans, beginning with Nero and continuing under Domitian, brought severe persecution upon the Lord's church. In many places in the empire, when the gospel was preached and practiced by Jews or Gentiles, local people hated and opposed the saints. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Persecution was so common that every saint was most likely to suffer its ravages.
 - c. This persecution would be intense and far-reaching; it would fit this scene of the red horse and his rider. "'That they should slay one another' indicates the slaughtering of men by their fellowmen. The word 'slay' (*sphatto*), used here and also in reference to the Lamb slain in sacrifice...and to the souls underneath the altar that had been slain for the Word of God and the testimony they held (6:9), confirms the position taken above. The sword (*machaira*) was the short sword of the Roman infantry, such as the one Peter used to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (John 18:10-11.). *Machaira* was the word used by Jesus to indicate the sword he would send forth (Matt. 10:34). In the Septuagint it is the word translated 'knife' at the offering of Isaac by Abraham (Gen. 22:6,10). Hence, the 'great sword' given to the rider was a butchering sword or knife with which he would slaughter men in sacrifice; it was 'great' (or 'long,' *megas*) because of the extent to which it would be used" (Hailey, p.190)

D. Revelation 6:5-6: The Black Horse and Its Rider—The Third Seal.

1. Verses 5-6: "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine."
2. Third creature said, "Come." The black horse appeared; his rider carried balances, an ancient weighing device. The obvious purpose of this scene is to depict a time of want.
3. Brother Wallace applies this scene to Matthew 24:7: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: **and there shall be famines**, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Others apply it to a time of scarcity in the Roman Empire following the period of civil strife under the red horse symbol.
4. The "penny" was the Roman coin called *denarius*, which was the daily wage of the common working man: "And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard" (Matt. 20:2). Thus, the food supply would be so low that a day's wage would only buy food with nothing left over for other necessities. However, the oil and wine would not be limited. Wallace applies the oil and wine to "providential alleviation of suffering and mitigation of sorrow—with oil and wine he would bind up their wounds."
5. Oil and wine were among the staples of ancient societies. The terms are used in reference to the produce of the land; they are used figuratively to denote spiritual blessings.
 - a. Genesis 27:28-29: "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy

brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee."

- b. Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

6. The symbolism suggests famine.

- a. Ezekiel 4:16-17: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity."

- b. Ezekiel 5:16-17: "When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for *their* destruction, *and* which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread: So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*."

- c. But the famine was likely contrived, since the oil and wine were not hurt (not limited); in a natural famine the oil and wine would be affected: "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, *which* they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax *given* to cover her nakedness"(Hos. 2:8-9).

- 1) This third seal may represent discrimination against the saints by the pagan trade guilds: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13: 16-17). Thyatira was a city of labor guilds which caused problems for the saints. To follow a trade demanded membership in a guild; but each guild had its own idol. Guild members ate meals together during which the idol was honored, and the entertainment was sometimes immoral. A failure to participate and conform meant loss of jobs.

- 2) Economic discrimination was a major form of persecution: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34).

- d. The second and third seal would go together and describe the killing of Christians and economic oppression in which the property of the saints would be seized.

- e. "Wheat, barley, oil, and wine were the staple foods of the period, wine and oil being the more luxurious fare. On such a meager salary one could provide only a bare living and would find it impossible to afford any of these luxuries. The Christian who refused to compromise his conscience by sustaining membership in a pagan guild, as at Thyatira (2:18ff.), or bow to the emperor's image in worship, as at Pergamum (2:12ff.), or be injured in his occupation by Jewish influence, as at Smyrna (2:8ff), would be hard-pressed to find work whereby he could earn a living. As the luxury items were not hurt, it appears that the rider of the black horse symbolizes hardship and suffering through prejudice against Christians. The price of discipleship might mean discrimination by the world, loss of earnings because of conviction, or difficulty with the world in competing where corruption so often reigns" (Hailey, pp.191f).

E. Revelation 6:7-8: The Pale Horse and Its Rider—The Fourth Seal.

1. Verses 7-8: "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."
2. ASV: "And when he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, Come. And I saw, and behold, a pale horse: and he that sat upon him, his name was Death; and Hades followed with him. And there was given unto them authority over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with famine, and with death, and by the wild beasts of the earth."
3. The fourth seal is opened by Christ, and the next horse and rider appear. The rider of the pale horse is identified as "Death." Hell (hades) followed closely behind. They were given power over one fourth of

the earth to kill with sword, hunger, death, and with beasts of the earth. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezek. 5:17).

4. The afflictions noted were caused by the sword, by hunger [famine], and by death [pestilence]. Hades is the realm of the dead (personified in the vision). Hades always follows death because it "gathers" up the spirits of those who exit this world through death.
5. The color of this horse was the color of a dead body—not a pleasant shade. Their power to hurt was limited (one fourth of earth's population). Wallace applies this to the punishment the Roman army brought on Jerusalem. Others apply this to the third century, when Galinius of the Roman Empire was being attacked on every side, at which time there were famine and death everywhere, which affected all the people, saint and sinner alike.
6. But this scene probably symbolizes God's retribution against those who were opposing the gospel and persecuting the saints—a partial judgment. The prophet Daniel spoke of the kingdom having a disastrous effect on the worldly kingdom (the Roman Empire):
7. "This *is* the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:36-45).
8. If our conclusions are right on the meaning of these scenes, then the four go together. The gospel was successfully preached; the saints encountered bloody opposition; they were oppressed economically; the Lord brought a partial judgment against their oppressors in the forms indicated in verse 8.

F. Revelation 6:9-11: The Souls of the Martyrs Under the Altar—The Fifth Seal.

1. Verse 9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."
 - a. In the Old Testament Law, it was said that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23), and that the blood of the sacrifices was to be poured out at the base of the altar (Lev. 4:7,18,30). When the blood was poured out it was the life that was being offered. The Hebrew word for "altar" means "place for blood-sacrifice" (Hailey, p.194).
 - 1) Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."
 - 3) Leviticus 4:7: "And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."
 - 4) Leviticus 4:18: "And he shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

- 5) Leviticus 4:30: "And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar."
 - b. The souls (*psuchas*) John saw in the vision were the lives of those who had been sacrificed for Christ. Christ gave his life (*psuchen*) a ransom for many: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).
 - c. Those seen under the altar had given their lives for (*dia*—because of, by reason of) the word of God and for (*dia*) the testimony they held. They are later said to have overcome because (*dia*) of the word of their testimony (12:11). Compare:
 - 1) Philippians 2:17: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."
 - d. The scene is one which describes the martyrdom of many faithful saints.
2. Verse 10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - a. These martyred saints are here pictured as crying out to God for vindication. Compare:
 - 1) Genesis 4:10: "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."
 - 2) Luke 18:7: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"
 - b. Why does not God come and relieve his people and avenge his righteous self on the unrighteous enemy? Since those represented are Christians who had remained faithful unto death, their cry is not one for personal vengeance, but rather for divine retribution from the one who is "holy and true."
 - 1) Revelation 6:10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - 2) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - 3) Revelation 16:7: "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments."
 - 4) Revelation 19:2: "For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."
 - c. How long? This suggests that the struggle had been continuing for some time—from the Jewish persecution in Jerusalem, and now the Roman persecution. When would it end?
 - d. The church is in such a dire condition that only God can give it relief. The persecution is so severe that it appears on the verge of being utterly destroyed from the earth. But for our own strength and purity, God often allows suffering (Heb. 12).
 - e. Those who dwell on the earth in this passage are the unregenerated men of the earth.
 3. Verse 11: "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
 - a. God's answer to this cry is here given. White robes of victory were given to these martyred saints; they had won the victory that counts. They were to rest for a little time. God works according to his own timetable.
 - b. A *little time* was involved (cf. Rev. 2:12; 20:1-3). Two generations were involved: those who had already been slain and those yet to be martyred. "Little" is relative.
 - 1) Revelation 12:12: "Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and *ye* that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
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2) Revelation 20:1-3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

- c. They are told to rest until their fellowservants (their brethren) should be similarly slain. The persecution was not going to end immediately. God does not promise an easy life on earth but he does promise a greater life beyond death.
- d. They are not told just how long they were to rest—that was God's business. Compare: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

G. Revelation 6:12-17: The Judgment Revealed—The Sixth Seal.

- 1. Verse 12-14: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."
 - a. A heavy judgment is obviously the meaning of the sixth seal. A list of seven things is given: an earthquake, the sun being darkened, the moon becoming as blood, stars falling unto the earth, the heaven departing as a scroll, every mountain being moved, and every island being moved out of place. These are figures of speech, for a star is larger than the earth, thus would not fit on the earth.
 - b. The Lord is picturing a crashing world, earth-shaking events with no light to guide, and darkness engulfing wicked people (Hailey). This scene is filled with Old Testament pictures given in those ancient times to describe judgments God brought against heathen nations which had oppressed Israel.
 - 1) Isaiah 13:10,13: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine....Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."
 - 2) Isaiah 29:6: "Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."
 - 3) Isaiah 50:3: "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."
 - 4) Jeremiah 4:23-24: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* without form, and void; and the heavens, and they *had* no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly."
 - 5) Jeremiah 4:28: "For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken *it*, I have purposed *it*, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it."
 - 6) Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."
 - 7) Matthew 24:29-30: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." [This passage used figures from the Old Testament to depict the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.].
 - c. The picture drawn depicts the end of the world under consideration (not the end of the universe at the Second Coming of Christ).
 - d. God is here answering the question of the martyred saints of the fifth seal. He gives assurance that he will surely avenge their cause by this heavy judgment. The pagan Roman Empire was sorely afflicting the saints; the judgment would be against this cruel Roman world. The fulfillment of the passage is

therefore likely to be seen in the ultimate overthrow of Pagan Rome.

- e. "As a scroll is read, it is rolled up on the other spindle; so when a nation comes to an end, its heaven is rolled up, no longer visible. Isaiah had said of heathen nations as the end of their time had come, 'And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as the fading leaf from the fig tree' (Isa. 34:4). Their heaven should pass away, for the nations and their world would be no more. The mountains, symbols of permanence and strength and the very foundations of the earth, were removed. The isles were symbols to the ancient people of the remote lands and far-flung portions of the earth, or of a nation's possessions. At the fall of Tyre, the great commercial power of its period, the isles would shake (Ezek. 26: 15,18; 27:35). These all indicate and illustrate the fall and passing of a great national power when judged by Jehovah" (Hailey, p.198).
 - f. Wallace applies this passage to the overthrow of Jerusalem. Hinds applies the events of this seal to the time of the Emperor Constantine, who elevated Christianity to a position of respect and protection.
2. Verses 15-16: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."
- a. A list of seven groups of individuals is cited:
 - 1) Kings.
 - 2) Great men.
 - 3) Rich men.
 - 4) Chief captains.
 - 5) Mighty men.
 - 6) Every bondman.
 - 7) Every free man.
 - b. These all hid themselves in dens and rocks of the mountains; they cried out to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. At the second coming, there will be no time for this in any literal way; the scene could be applied to a limited judgment against the enemies of Christ in the early age of the church. But at the Second Coming of Christ, great events will occur:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - c. Men seeking refuge in caves and amongst rocks occurs three other times, in each case with reference to national calamity.
 - 1) Hosea 10:8: "The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us" [Samaria].
 - 2) Isaiah 2:19: "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" [the overthrow of Jerusalem].
 - 3) Luke 23:30: "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" [this is said about Jerusalem in its destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D.].
 - d. "Since the seventh seal, under which there are seven trumpets, must intervene between this seal and the end of time, the language of this text cannot refer to Christ's coming and the end of the world"

(Hinds).

3. Verse 17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - a. This judgment is called *the great day of his wrath*. The events depicted under this seal continue on toward the end of the book.
 - b. The Jews did not have power to kill Christians as described in this chapter; it seems clear that the events are more far-reaching than the overthrow of Jerusalem.
 - c. Who is able to stand? "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him" (Nahum 1:6). This was said in reference to Nineveh. In the judgment of this chapter, none would be able to stand against God's punishing power.
 - d. However, a day of judgment against God's enemies on earth is also a day of deliverance for his people!
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REVELATION 7

An Interlude

A. This Chapter is an Interlude Separating the Opening of the Sixth and Seventh Seals.

1. It also answers the question with which the previous chapter closed: "Who shall be able to stand?" When the Judgment described under the sixth seal takes place, who shall stand? When the enemies of the Roman Empire invaded, who would be able to continue and survive? Those who would stand would be those who had the seal. God did not need some physical mark to identify his people; the seal would be a symbolic identification for the benefit of the enemies of Rome.
2. The invaders would know that the Christians were not allied with Rome. Saints were told to come out from and be not part of the evil world around them.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - b. 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
3. John sees a two-part vision which relates to the saints on earth and under the altar. Those on earth are sealed; those under the altar are before the throne praising God.
4. Assurance is given about God knowing each of his people.
 - a. Isaiah 40:26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth."
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

B. Revelation 7:1-3: The Four Angels Holding the Four Winds

1. Verse 1: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."
 - a. After this—after the events of the sixth seal. "But, even if not looked upon as an integral part of the revelations made under the sixth seal, the connection is so close that the two must be regarded practically as one. The incidents of the seventh chapter are evidently the complement of those narrated in the closing verses of the sixth. They take up the question with which that chapter closes, 'Who is able to stand?' and afford comfort and help to those suffering Christians who were so sorely in need of a renewed assurance of the certainty of their final reward" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - b. The four corners—this is an accommodative description referring to the four cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west). What is described is the whole surface of the earth. "*Standing on the four corners of the earth.* That is, standing in the four opposite directions, and thus controlling all the earth (cf. Isa 11:12; Rev 20:8). The number four is the symbol of universality and of creation (see on Rev 5:9)" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - 1) Isaiah 11:12: "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."
 - 2) Isaiah 24:16: "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, *even* glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

- 3) Matthew 24:31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
- 4) Revelation 20:8: "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea."
- c. The four winds—these are representative of destructive force. "The winds blow in fact from every quarter, but it is convenient to speak of them as coming from the four principal points of the compass, and this method is adopted probably in every language. So among the Greeks and Latins, the winds were arranged under four classes—Zephyrus, Boreas, Notus, and Eurus—considered as under the control of a king, Aeolus" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 1) Jeremiah 25:32: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth."
 - 2) Jeremiah 49:36: "And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come."
 - 3) Jeremiah 51:1: "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind."
 - 4) Revelation 7:3: "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."
- d. The earth, the sea and the trees—these are probably a reference to the whole creation, and likely indicates God's complete mastery over that which he created.
- e. The destruction would be delayed until the saints were sealed and identified for all to see. After the initial waves of persecution brought upon the church by Roman authorities, everyone would know about the Christians, hence they would be identified, and thus would be spared by the invaders. Otherwise, when the Empire fell, the church would likely be severely and unnecessarily afflicted, if not destroyed.
2. Verses 2-3: "And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."
 - a. John saw the angel with the seal ascending from the east. When Jehovah is pictured as leaving Jerusalem (giving them up to destruction in 586 B.C.), he is said to have departed to the east.
 - 1) Ezekiel 11:23: "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which *is* on the east side of the city." In Ezekiel 10, the glory of the Lord is depicted as leaving the temple, which had been intended to serve as a meeting place between God and Israel. "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims" (10:18). It was no longer God's house, but a place of idolatry and sin. The Jews of the first century had polluted the temple of their time, so that it could no longer be considered a place of prayer. "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:12-13; cf. John 2:13-17; Matt. 23:37-39). The angelic beings, which were a prominent feature in the vision of which the prophet was also part, lifted up their wings and began to leave the doomed city. The heavenly vision moved to the east side of the city and stood upon the mountain. The mountain was the Mount of Olives. From this height, the destruction of the city could be clearly viewed. Our Lord gave his famous speech to the apostles from this same location (Matt. 24:3—25:46).
 - 2) Ezekiel 43:2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice *was* like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." The symbolic temple was now ready for its Resident to occupy it. Everything is now prepared for his entrance. In the vision, Ezekiel was positioned at the gate, which faced to the east. It was toward this direction the glory of God had earlier in the book departed from Solomon's temple, preparatory to its destruction by the Babylonians.

- b. This angel had the seal of God—an instrument with which one marked his belongings and validated legal documents. A seal was “used to stamp a document, giving it legal validity. Judah probably wore his suspended from the neck over the breast (Gen 38:18; Song 8:6; Job 38:14). As the plastic clay presents various figures impressed on it by the revolving cylinder seal (one to three inches long, of terra cotta or precious stone, such as is found in Assyria), as ‘it is turned,’ so the morning light rolling on over the earth, previously void of form through the darkness, brings out to view hills, valleys, etc. Treasures were sealed up (Deut 32:34); the lions' den in Daniel's case (Dan 6:17); so our Lord's tomb (Matt 27:66). Sealing up was also to ensure secrecy (Dan 12:4; Rev 5:1). The signet ring was the symbol of royal authority (Gen. 12:41-42; Esth. 3:10; 8:10). Clay hardens in the heat, and was therefore used in Assyria and Babylon rather than wax, which melts. A stone cylinder in the Alnwick Museum bears the date of Osirtasin I, between 2,000 and 3,000 B.C. The Assyrian documents were often of baked clay, sealed while wet and burnt afterwards. Often the seal was a lump of clay impressed with a seal and tied the document. Such is the seal of Sabacho or So, king of Egypt (711 B.C.), found at Nimrud (2 Kings 17:4)” [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database, © 1998 by BibleSoft].
- 1) Genesis 41:42: "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck."
 - 2) Esther 3:10: "And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy."
 - 3) Esther 8:2: "And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman."
 - 4) Daniel 6:17: "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."
 - 5) Matthew 27:66: "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."
- c. God's servants were to be sealed. The seal is not to be thought of as a literal mark on the bodies of those sealed in John's vision. The Lord would know his people, and the enemies of Rome would be aware that they had nothing to fear from the Christians—they were the enemies of none. The Christians could easily be identified by the way they lived (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 4:12; Phil. 1:27). Consider these verses in the light of our text:
- 1) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:13: "In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 6) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 7) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
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- 8) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
- 9) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
- d. No harm was to be done to the earth, sea, or trees until the sealing was accomplished. Whatever the harm was, it was not to occur until this mission was finished. Nothing can thwart God's plans; he controls the universe; nothing will interfere with the sealing of his servants.
- e. The sealing is symbolic, as are the numbers which follow. The scene depicted is similar to that of Ezekiel 9:1-8. Ezekiel's vision occurred prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In each case (Revelation and Ezekiel), God's people received a sign on their foreheads (a conspicuous place, visible to all). They are preserved against destruction, but not spared from persecution and problems on earth. "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man *with* his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them *was* clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which *had* the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old *and* young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom *is* the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which *were* before the house. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?" (Ezek. 9:1-8). The following information is from the author's material on Ezekiel (9:1-8):
- 1) The previous chapter of Ezekiel closed on a note of warning, a threat directed against Jerusalem for the sins of the people. This threat of punishment is now to be executed. The men in the vision were heavenly beings, not mere men. They came from the north, the very direction from which the Babylonian army was to come in their invasion of Palestine. One of the men was dressed in a linen garment, and instead of having a battle axe, was armed with a scribe's inkhorn. An inkhorn was a small container made of horn or other material, used obviously to hold ink. This man's work will be shown later. These men, apparently seven in number, came and stood beside the brazen altar, awaiting further instructions from the Lord.
 - 2) In the vision, the prophet sees the manifestation of God, rising above the cherub, and taking up a position at the threshold of the temple. The source of the following instructions is the Almighty. The man who was dressed in linen and equipped with the inkhorn was told to go through the city and mark those individuals on the forehead who had opposed the abominations done there. Even though the impression is left that virtually the entire population had been involved in the idolatry described before, there were some who had besought God's help in ridding the city of these abominations. Some unidentified mark was to be placed on the forehead of each of the faithful ones. We are not told what that mark was, but some have supposed it was the sign of the cross; this is speculation. It is unnecessary for us to know what the mark was, or that it had any particular or uniform shape. It was intended as an identification mark for the other men who comprised the company. Of course, the mark was not a literal inscription.
 - 3) These men with the battleaxes were told to follow the man in the linen clothing, and slay every one who did not have the mark on their forehead. They were not to spare anyone; they were to have pity for no one; the old and the young, men and women, were to be slain. They were to begin their work at the temple. Ezekiel saw these men begin to slay the old men who were in front of the temple. They were told to defile the house with dead bodies. They were faithful to their orders; they went
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forth and slew those in the city who did not bear the mark on their forehead. The temple had ceased to be the holy place it was intended to be. Instead of serving to bring the people into a closer fellowship with God, it had become the fountainhead of the spiritual corruption which had defiled the whole nation. The fact that some were to be spared in the slaughter of the majority shows that God is able to show mercy even as he dispenses punishment. Once again, we are impressed with the fact that the majority was in the wrong, and the righteous were a distinct minority. Truth, holiness, and righteousness are not palatable to the majority. Compare: "And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:2-3).

- 4) God had made provision for the deliverance of the righteous. They would be spared. But the prophet is moved by a tender heart to influence God to spare also some who did not deserve compassion. In our ignorance and misguided sensitivity, we may seek to include in the company of the redeemed certain ones who do not belong. Only God's word reveals the qualifications of the saved; we are not able to set the prerequisites. No man has the authority or ability to exclude those God accepts or to include those God rejects. Similar statements, indicating profound concern for the lost, are given in other passages.
 - a) Genesis 18:16-33 shows the intervention of Abraham in behalf of the people of Sodom and the other cities of the plain. He gained God's agreement not to destroy those cities if ten righteous souls could be found in their midst.
 - b) Numbers 11:2: "And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched."
 - c) Numbers 14:19: "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."
 - d) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

C. Revelation 7:4-8: John Reports the Number of Those Sealed.

1. Verse 4: "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."
- a. John does not describe the actual sealing, but simply reports the number of those sealed as being 144,000. The number is not to be taken as a literal number any more than the ones sealed are to be taken literally as Israelites. A reasonable view is that the sum is reached by multiplying the 12 tribes of Israel by the 12 apostles of Christ by the complete number 1000. Therefore, the point stressed by John is that the number was very great.
- b. Some take the number to symbolize the redeemed Jews and the great multitude of verse nine to represent the redeemed Gentiles. But if the number (144,000) is symbolic, then the tribes are likely symbolic, thus would include both Jews and Gentiles..
- c. The 144,000 are pictured as being on earth; the very great multitude (vs. 9) is pictured in heaven (around the throne). The two groups described are the same group pictured in two different scenes (vs. 4 and vs. 9). If this is so, then the number of 144,000 is intended to be a very great, indefinite number, for in verse 9 the number is said to be innumerable. The number is a complete number (144,000), and includes all of God's children. In verse 4 their deliverance from the terrible judgment of the sixth seal is assured; in verse 9 their ultimate victory and reward are pictured.
- d. We cannot compete with the world in wealth, numbers, physical strength, or political power. The only advantage we have over the world is our faith. In the final analysis, our faith is the only thing we need to be concerned about: our lives, our families, our property, our social standing, are all of lesser consequence than our faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith guarded the men of God in old times (Heb. 11). Faith is what makes life worthwhile, that sustains us daily, that will bring us to heaven: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim.

- 4:18).
- e. Revelation tells us that we must pay for our faith and how to pay for it.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 4) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - f. New Testament writers often spoke of Christians as being spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:15-16; Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:28-29; Ph. 3:3). Thus, the 144,000 could be in reference to all Christians, regardless of their fleshly backgrounds. The New Testament (including Revelation) is a Christian book, not a Jewish book; Old Testament names and items are used, but are given New Testament applications.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Romans 9:6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel:"
 - 3) Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - 4) Galatians 6:15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 5) Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - g. Later we will read of those who have the mark of the beast, who are the opposite of these here who have the mark of God.
 - 1) Revelation 13:15-18: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six."
 - 2) Revelation 16:2: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image."
 - 2. Verses 5-8: "Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand."
 - a. The twelve tribes are listed: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar,

- Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Notice that the listing is different from Old Testament listings. This may indicate that some other group is referred to rather than literal Israel.
- b. Judah is listed first, but Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob. Judah, however, was the kingly tribe, from whose ranks all of the kings from David through Zedekiah sprang, and the greatest King of all, Jesus Christ, was from this regal tribe.
 - 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - c. Dan and Ephraim are missing from the list. These two are singled out as sinful (Deut. 29:18-20; Hos. 4:17; Judges 18:30; 1 Kings 12:28-29). These two tribes are replaced by Levi and Joseph; both of these have pleasant connotations.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 29:18-20: "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven."
 - 2) Judges 18:30: "And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land."
 - 3) 1 Kings 12:28-29: "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves *of* gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan."
 - 4) Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone." [Ephraim, the leading tribe of the ten northern tribes, is representative of the ten tribes—the nation of northern Israel. Idolatry became characteristic of them all].
 - d. These 144,000 who are sealed probably represent the active, faithful members of the Lord's church on earth, still striving against sin, still facing persecution, still needing to avoid the slaughter, which is to be inflicted upon the Romans by the various invading hordes. Their being sealed would represent the good pleasure God has in them, recognizing them as his own, and signifies that he will protect them because they belong to him. The seal symbolically represents God's approval of them. We often speak of putting our stamp of approval on something or someone: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2: 19).
3. "According to the Watchtower Witnesses, the 'kingdom' or 'the church' will consist ultimately of only 144,000 people who will be in heaven. Supposedly, this 'ruling body' will exercise authority over the rest of those receiving eternal life, who will live upon God's glorified earth (*Let God Be True*, p.113). The Witnesses appeal to Revelation 7:4ff and 14:1ff as proof for this unorthodox concept. The theory is false for many reasons. (1) The kingdom/church is frequently represented in the New Testament as existing on earth (cr. Revelation 1:4,6,9). (2) After the return of Christ, there will be no earth, for it will have been utterly destroyed at the Judgment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1). (3) There is but 'one hope' (Ephesians 4:4) for the faithful, and it is heaven (1 Peter 1:3,4). Watchtower doctrine argues for two hopes—heaven or earth. (4) The numeral 'thousand' is used more than twenty times in the book of Revelation and not once is it employed literally. The 144,000, mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14, is a symbolic number as evidenced by the following facts. (1) If it is literal in chapter 7, only Jews would be in heaven (see 7:4ff). The fact that: Dan is omitted, Joseph is classified as a 'tribe,' and Levi is included demonstrates that the description is figurative. Moreover, in addition to the 144,000, there was a 'great multitude' there (7:9). (2) If the numeral is literal in chapter 14, only unmarried men will be in heaven, for the group consisted of virgins who had not been defiled with women (14:4). Note also that they follow

the 'Lamb' wherever He goes. Is that a literal or figurative lamb...." *If literal, only Jews in heaven....If literal, only unmarried men in heaven*" (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, pp.181f).

D. Revelation 7:9-17: The Very Great Multitude of the Redeemed.

1. Compare these passages:
 - a. Genesis 13:16: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, *then* shall thy seed also be numbered."
 - b. Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."
 - c. Genesis 32:12: "And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."
 - d. Galatians 3:7,29: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham....And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
2. Verse 9: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."
 - a. The great multitude was beyond number; they are before God's throne. Although the number of the redeemed in heaven is described as *few*, this is a comparative number; in comparison to the vast numbers who do not choose to be saved, the number of the redeemed is small. But when the number of saved persons from every generation, plus those who died in innocency, are combined, that number is multitudinous. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - b. The Roman Empire covered the known world, encompassing many nations, tribes, peoples, and languages. Converts to Christ were made from these various groups. These saints are pictured as being in heaven. This is a counterpart of verses 1-8: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were* sealed an hundred *and forty and* four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand."
 - c. These redeemed ones were wearing white robes—this pictures purity and victory. They were holding palms in their hands—these palms were symbolic of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:26-32, 39-44). It followed the atonement sacrifice, and was held after the harvest was gathered; it was a time of joy—the most joyous of Jewish feast days (cf. John 12: 13). The heavenly scene described in our text was one of joy.
 - 1) Leviticus 23:26-32: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth *day* of this seventh month *there shall be* a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it *is* a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul *it be* that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul *it be* that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It *shall be* unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye

- celebrate your sabbath."
- 2) Leviticus 23:39-44: "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day *shall be* a sabbath, and on the eighth day *shall be* a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: *I am* the LORD your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD."
 - 3) Compare John 12:13: "Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed *is* the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."
3. Verse 10: "And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."
 - a. This great multitude raised a great shout of gratitude and praise to God. To him and to the Lamb they ascribe their salvation. God made provision in Christ for a common salvation. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
 - b. The Son procured salvation through his blood.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
 4. Verses 11-12: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."
 - a. The heavenly beings pictured earlier in the book are here shown to offer their praise to the Father. Their "amen" expressed their approval of the praises offered in verse 10 by the great multitude. "The angels, through their intense interest in the scheme of redemption, desired to look into these things (1 Peter 1:12); from Eden, the angels had served as ministering servants for the sake of these who should 'inherit salvation' (Heb. 1:14), and had learned the true significance of the divine plan as they had seen it fulfilled in Christ and the church (Eph. 3:10f). Now they fell before the throne in praise and adoration for what had been achieved" (Hailey, p.208).
 - b. These heavenly beings offer a seven-word tribute of praise to God—blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might. "As in the throne scene (5:12) where the angels had offered their sevenfold ascription of praise to the Lamb, so here they offer a sevenfold attribution of worship and praise to God. In speaking of Him as 'our God,' the angels are identifying themselves with the redeemed as belonging to Him....In the praise offered by the angelic host in 5:12, only one definite article appears at the beginning of the list. Here, however, the article appears before each of the attributions, making each distinct, as in 4:11" (ibid., pp.208f).
 5. Verses 13-14: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they

which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

- a. One of the elders asked John who these of the multitude were and from where did they come. It was asked that it might be answered. John's reply indicates his ignorance of the answer and his desire for information.
- b. They had come out of great tribulation. "Came" (KJV) indicates past action; the ASV indicates a continuing process. But what tribulation is meant? Consider these four views:
 - 1) One view: The great tribulation that would befall Jerusalem as predicted in Matthew 24:21,29. For this view to be established one must first establish the early date for Revelation. Another difficulty is in the fact that these saints are said to "come" out of this tribulation as though it was continuing at the time. This tribulation applied almost exclusively to the Jews; only to a lesser degree to the Christians. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be....Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24:21,29).
 - 2) A patently erroneous view is that of the literalists who claim that there will be a great tribulation following the supposed "rapture" and before the end of time. There is no evidence for this view in the Scriptures. This view is manifestly in error.
 - 3) Another view is that reference is to the tribulation and hardship all Christians face as a consequence of serving Christ (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). It is great because it sums up all the tribulations of saints from Pentecost to the second coming.
 - a) John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
 - b) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 4) Another view holds that this is the period of physical persecution brought on the church by Rome beginning with Nero's persecution in 64 A.D. and continuing until the edict of Constantine in 313 A.D. This may be the most fitting, for it would offer great comfort and encouragement to the saints who were even then going through terrible affliction at the hands of pagan Rome. This vision of ultimate victory and reward would certainly offer great assurance.
- c. They had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This shows that they had been sinners but were cleansed of their guilt. Sin is pictured as something that dirties and stains the soul; the only cleansing agent is the blood of the Redeemer:
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."
 - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Compare:
 - a) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 4) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

- 5) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 7) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 8) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
 - 9) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- d. The washing that had been accomplished required action on the part of the individual. "They washed" is active, not passive. When they believed, repented, confessed their faith in Christ and were baptized into him, they were washed from their sins. They met the conditions and the Lord did the sin-removal.
 - e. In the first part of this vision (verses 1-8), they were being sealed for protection; in this second phase they are coming out of the great conflict victorious.
6. Verses 15-17: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
 - a. The blessed state of the redeemed is pictured. Because they had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, the blessings described are given them.
 - b. They will ever be before God's throne where they can rejoice and serve God.
 - c. God will dwell among them; he will spread his tabernacle over them; they will be secure under his protection.
 - d. They shall not suffer hunger or thirst; they shall not have to endure the scorching, blistering rays of the sun any more.
 - e. The Lamb will be their shepherd; he shall guide them to the waters of life; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.
 - 1) Psalms 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints."
 - 2) Psalms 126:5: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:1-11: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the

- judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
- 5) Philippians 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
 - 6) Revelation 21:1-4: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
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REVELATION 8

The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets

A. Revelation 8:1-2: The Seventh Seal—30 Minutes of Silence in Heaven.

1. Verses 1-2: "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."
 - a. This silence is a break in the action and prepares one for the next series of visions. It is much like the calm before the storm, or the suspense before a jury verdict is made known. Something great is about to happen. The silence was for effect.
 - b. Some think the seventh seal, which is now ready to be opened, is inclusive of the remainder of the book. It does precede the seven trumpets and sets the stage for the visions to come.
2. Revelation deals with "the fortunes of the church in the world and the destiny of the world as it opposes the church" (Hailey, p.214). When God's people [Israel] in ancient times faced hostile invasion and destruction by Babylon, the Lord admonished: "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). From his temple he then assured his people that he would aid them and punish the enemy (Hab. 3). The silence of our text focuses attention on heaven's interest in the welfare of the saints; those in heaven wait in breathless suspense and expectation for what is to follow.
3. John saw seven angels having each a trumpet. The awesome events which occurred at the sounding of these trumpets are detailed from Revelation 8:6 through 11:19.
 - a. After the seventh seal was opened, the seven trumpets were sounded in sequence. These trumpets symbolize great earth events. Brother Wallace applies these to the Jews and Rome in connection with the overthrow of Judaism.
 - b. This last seal includes the half hour of silence and the activities of the angel with the golden censer. It is likely symbolic of calamities which befell the Roman Empire from the latter part of the first century through the early part of the fourth century. But since the text does not clearly identify any specific event, we are unable to pinpoint the exact events described.

B. Revelation 8:3-5: The Angel with the Golden Censer.

1. Verse 3: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."
 - a. This scene depicts the attention that is given to the prayers of suffering saints. The prayers thus offered are carefully received; specific and elaborate attention is given to them. The description is not to be taken literally, but symbolically.
 - b. The angel was before the altar or leaning over it. Under the Mosaic system, the censer was a dish or pan on which coals from the altar were placed; on these coals incense was burned.
 - 1) Leviticus 10:1: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not."
 - 2) Leviticus 16:12: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the veil."
 - c. This Old Testament activity is used symbolically to describe the prayers of the saints arising to heaven, and the attention that is given there to these prayers.
 - d. This angel is not Christ, nor is the angel filling the role of mediator; but he is simply a servant in the scene described. We are told that there is only one mediator between man and God; that exalted one is Christ: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - e. A great lesson is demonstrated—God is not indifferent to the struggles and pains of his people.
2. Verse 4: "And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."
 - a. The prayers of the saints together with the smoke of the incense ascend up before the Father. "The

smoke [was] caused by the burning incense. John, as he saw this, naturally interpreted it of the prayers of the saints. The meaning of the whole symbol, thus explained, is that, at the time referred to, the anxiety of the church in regard to the events which were about to occur would naturally lead to much prayer. It is not necessary to attempt to verify this by any distinct historical facts, for no one can doubt that, in a time of such impending calamities, the church would be earnestly engaged in devotion. Such has always been the case in times of danger; and it may always be assumed to be true, that when danger threatens, whether it be to the church at large or to an individual Christian, there will be a resort to the throne of grace" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].

- b. "The prayers, accompanied by the incense, and typically purified by it, are received by God. He hears the prayers; and the judgments against the wicked, which follow in the trumpet visions, constitute the answer to them. This makes more probable the view that the following visions are judgments against the world..." [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
3. Verse 5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - a. The angel, after offering the incense, took the censer, filled it with coals from the altar, and cast the coals upon the earth. This depicts the heavenly response to the prayers given by the saints.
 - 1) Luke 18:1-8: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
 - 2) James 5:16-20: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - b. The saints on earth cried unto the Father; he responds by casting the fire of his righteous judgment on the ungodly. Compare Ezekiel 10:1-2: "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, *even* under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter *them* over the city. And he went in in my sight." Ezekiel's vision was fulfilled when Babylonian troops destroyed rebellious Jerusalem; John's vision was fulfilled when judgment was poured out on Pagan Rome which was persecuting the saints. The seven trumpets furnish the details.
 - c. Voices, thunderings, and lightnings—these symbolize divine power and majesty; the earthquake symbolizes the divine judgment brought to bear on the oppressors of the saints.
 - 1) Isaiah 29:6: "Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."
 - 2) Joel 3:16: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD *will be* the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."
 - d. The prayers before the throne were from "all the saints," therefore these judgments cannot be localized or be made to fit any specific time and event. These judgments would certainly fit the punishment visited upon the Roman Empire, but in a broader sense, it can include judgments against wicked oppressors of any age.

C. Revelation 8:6-12: The First Four Trumpets.

1. Verse 6: "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."

- a. The seven angels prepared to sound. What an awesome omen! The seventh seal may not extend to include the seven trumpets, though some scholars think it does.
 - b. Trumpets were used to sound warnings, to give direction to soldiers to battle, to announce the entrance of royalty, and to announce coming events.
 - 1) Numbers 10:1-10: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."
 - 2) Hosea 5:8: "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, *and* the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud *at* Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin."
 - 3) Joel 2:15: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."
 - 4) Amos 3:6: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?"
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 14:7-9: "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air."
 - 6) Ezekiel 33:3-4: "If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head."
 - c. The first four trumpets produce adverse effects on the natural world; the last three produce adverse effects on the lives of men. Any explanation of these is generally unsatisfactory, but it can be safely concluded that they represent warnings and judgments of God against the wicked. To apply these judgments as physical calamities which befell the Roman Empire fits.
 - d. The earth, sea, fresh water, and heavenly bodies were the classifications ancient people used of the natural world. The destruction of a third of these is not to be understood as literal, but rather as judgment against a large part—the destruction described would not be universal, but partial.
 - e. Rome fell due to its internal rottenness, invasions from without by her enemies, and from natural disasters and calamities.
2. Verse 7: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."
 - a. When the first trumpet sounded, hail and fire mingled with blood were cast upon the earth, affecting a third of the trees and all green grass. Try to visualize the sight and sound of this furious judgment as described by John!
 - b. This symbolism is similar to the plagues sent on Egypt: "...hail, and fire mingled with hail, very grievous" (Ex. 9:24).
 - c. "The burning of a third part of the earth and the trees and all the grass seems to indicate suffering and destruction among the earth-dwellers, the world of the unregenerate in which the seat of world powers
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operate. 'A third part' suggests a large portion, but not total destruction; life is still possible. God created the good earth for man's benefit and use, and out of it his life is sustained. But man has misused the earth, and it is now affected by sin; it has become a partial waste and his enemy. This principle is expressed over and over by the prophets of the Old Testament (e.g., Jer. 7:20; Zeph. 1:2f; Nah. 1:6, et al.). The judgment is against the wicked and upon the realm in which the unregenerate find their life and objects of worship. Living only for the material and physical, theirs is a life spent in rebellion against God and the spiritual. With the destruction of that for which man lives, his pride is humbled" (Hailey, p.219). The passages Hailey referred to are these:

- 1) Jeremiah 7:20: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."
- 2) Nahum 1:6: "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him."
- 3) Zephaniah 1:2-3: "I will utterly consume all *things* from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD."

d. The Pulpit Commentary gives these observations:

- 1) "The first four are marked off from the last three (as in the case of the seals) by distinctive features. The first four refer to the natural life, while the last three are connected more closely with the spiritual life of man. The first four are connected and interdependent; the last three are distinct and more detached. The last three are specially marked off by the announcement of the angel in ver. 13. And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood....There is an evident likeness between the judgments of the trumpets and the plagues of Egypt. The resemblance is only general, but it serves to corroborate the belief that the trumpets declare God's judgments on the world, not the trials of the Church....The question next naturally arises—What are the judgments referred to, which are thus to afflict the ungodly while leaving the righteous unhurt; and when and how they are to take place? The answer evidently is—All troubles of the wicked, which are the consequence of misdoing, whether these troubles overtake them in this life or in the life to come....
 - 2) "Just as the seal visions were found to relate to the trials of God's people in all time, and the fulfilment is not completed by any one event or series of events, so now the seer is called upon to return, as it were, to his former starting point, and follow out a new path, where he would find displayed the troubles which have afflicted or shall afflict the ungodly. It is very doubtful how much of the imagery used in this series of visions is to be interpreted as applying to some definite event, and how much is to be considered merely as the accessories of the picture, necessitated by the employment of the symbol, and not needing particular interpretation. It is possible that the seer intended first to set forth the judgments which were to descend on those powers which, at the time of the vision, were pressing so heavily upon Christians, and among which the Roman empire held the prominent place...[PC Study Bible].
3. Verses 8-9: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."
- a. The second trumpet sounded; in the vision that followed, a mountain was cast into the sea; one third of sea creatures and ships perished. Rome was a great sea power and thus this could be representative of some great blow or series of blows directed against this part of her strength.
 - b. In the Old Testament prophets, the imagery of mountains was used to represent great cities and kingdoms. That being the case, as the following examples indicate, then the fiery mountain of John's vision could symbolize some great earthly kingdom, whose destructive power was to be unleashed as a judgment against the Empire of Rome. Jerusalem, which was situated on Mount Zion, is thus depicted as follows:
 - 1) Psalm 48:1-2: "Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, *in* the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King."
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- 2) Isaiah 41:15: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat *them* small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." [God promises Israel that they will be made strong, even able to assault the strength (the mountain) of their enemy].
 - 3) Amos 4:1: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." [*Mountain* is used to depict the strength of the wicked ones addressed].
 - 4) Jeremiah 51:25: "Behold, I *am* against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain." [Babylon (vs. 1) is depicted as a destroying mountain].
- c. With this Old Testament usage of this symbol, we may look for the fulfillment of the judgment in some catastrophe which befell the Roman Empire. Those who subscribe to the early date for the writing of Revelation would apply the judgment to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. But Hailey gives this wise counsel: "The vision indicates judgment upon a worldly society when its center of power is cast down and its economy falls with it. To go beyond this broad application by designating a particular city is unwise, although this pattern fits both Rome and the entire empire when they fell. The description reveals a general corrupt condition and its consequences, which could involve any society" (Hailey, p.220).
- d. Barnes offers these comments on the passage:
- 1) "A mountain is a natural symbol of strength, and hence becomes a symbol of a strong and powerful kingdom; for mountains are not only places of strength in themselves, but they anciently answered the purposes of fortified places, and were the seats of power. Hence, they are properly symbols of strong nations....
 - 2) "A mountain in a blaze; that is, with all its woods on fire, or, more probably, a volcanic mountain. There would perhaps be no more sublime image than such a mountain lifted suddenly from its base and thrown into the sea....The symbol employed here would denote some fiery, impetuous, destructive power. If used to denote a nation, it would be a nation that was, as it were, burning with the desire of conquest—impetuous, and fierce, and fiery in its assaults—and consuming all in its way.
 - 3) "[Cast into the sea]....As to the fulfillment of this, or the thing that was intended to be represented by it, there cannot be any material doubt. It is not to be understood literally, of course; and the natural application is to some nation, or army, that has a resemblance in some respects to such a blazing mountain, and the effect of whose march would be like casting such a mountain into the ocean. We naturally look for agitation and commotion, and particularly in reference to the sea, or to some maritime coasts....
 - 4) "[And the third part of the sea became blood] Resembled blood; became as red as blood. The figure here is, that as such a blazing mountain cast into the sea would, by its reflection on the waters, seem to tinge them with red, so there would be something corresponding with this in what was referred to by the symbol. It would be fulfilled if there was a fierce maritime warfare, and if in some desperate naval engagement the sea should be tinged with blood....
 - 5) "The effect was as if one-third of all the fish in the sea were cut off. Of course this is not to be taken literally. It is designed to describe an effect, pertaining to the maritime portion of the world, as if a third portion of all that was in the sea should perish. The natural interpretation would be to apply it to some invasion or calamity pertaining to the sea—to the islands, to the maritime regions, or to commerce. If the whole description pertains to the Roman empire, then this might be supposed to have particular reference to something that would have a bearing on the maritime parts of that empire.
 - 6) "[And the third part of the ships were destroyed] This also pertains to the same general calamity, affecting the commerce of the empire. The destruction of the 'ships' was produced, in some way, by casting the mountain into the sea—either by their being consumed by the contact with the burning mass, or by being sunk by the agitation of the waters. The essential idea is, that the calamity would be of such a nature as would produce the destruction of vessels at sea—either naval
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- armaments, or ships of commerce” [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
4. Verses 10-11: "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."
 - a. The third trumpet sounded: this judgment affected the fresh waters; many died from drinking the waters made bitter. Wormwood is a general name for a class of plants known as *artemisia*; which was characterized by a bitter taste. God's judgment would be bitter.
 - b. "An interpretation of what John saw is helped by looking at Isaiah's description of the king of Babylon's fall, 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star [*Lucifer*, KJV], son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations' (Isa. 14:12). The prophet further described this boastful one as seeking to ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars of God, and make himself like the Most High, 'the man that made the earth to tremble' (Isa. 14:13-17). Anyone seeking such an exalted height is bound to fall, and as a fiercely burning torch he will work havoc among men. He shall, however, be extinguished....
 - c. "'And the name of the star is called Worm-wood,' a bitter wood mentioned a number of times in the Old Testament, usually in connection with the consequences of idolatry. God warned the people of Israel that their turning to idols would bear the fruit of wormwood (Deut. 29:18); for as a divine chastisement he would feed the idolaters of his people with wormwood and give them water of gall to drink (Jer. 9:15); the prophets who would lead them into idolatry would share the same fate (Jer. 23:15). In their unfaithfulness to God, the idolatrous judges in Israel turned away from him and served idols, perverted principles of right judgment, turned 'justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth' (Amos 5:7; 6:12).
 - d. "Wormwood and gall aptly symbolize calamity and sorrow and bitterness of life. The fall of this star, Wormwood, caused a third of the inland waters to become wormwood, that is, charged with trouble, sorrow, and death....Pride and arrogance, which are part of idolatry and rebellion against God, are destined to fall, carrying misery and sorrow with them. When men prefer the bitter waters of idolatry to the fountain of the living water, they will receive these bitter waters with the fatal consequences which follow" (Hailey, pp.221f).
 - e. No nation or individual has a monopoly on pride. Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with it; he was taught the error of his way: "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4:28-37).
 - f. Jewish leaders through the centuries were often afflicted with pride (cf. Matt. 23). The Roman emperors were smitten with this spiritual disease—even to the point of thinking they were divine beings, worthy of worship. The popes make a show of humility, but they demonstrate their pride
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thereby—they proudly receive the adoration of their fawning subjects! The judgment of our text exposes the danger of pride, arrogance, and rebellion against the Almighty.

5. Verse 12: "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."
 - a. The fourth trumpet had an effect on the sun, moon, and stars. The Old Testament uses references to these heavenly bodies to describe important people, rulers, and governments:
 - 1) Genesis 37:9-10: "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"
 - 2) Isaiah 13:10: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."
 - 3) Isaiah 34:4: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig tree."
 - b. "Throughout the Old Testament, light from the sun, moon, and stars signifies salvation, well-being, happiness, truth, wisdom, and joy. The fading of light in the removal of these heavenly bodies symbolizes judgment from God (Isa. 13:10; Joel 3:15; Amos 8:9). In describing the moral decay and physical destruction of Jerusalem the prophet cried, 'I beheld the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light' (Jer. 4:23). And in lamenting the fall of Pharaoh and Egypt, Ezekiel says, 'And when I [Jehovah] shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. And all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord Jehovah' (32:7-8)" (Hailey, p.222).
 - c. "These symbols of joy and wisdom are ashamed at earth's wickedness, and in the vision of a third of them are smitten, indicating a partial judgment meant to serve as a warning to the ungodly. God's word is a lamp (Ps. 119:105), giving light and understanding (Ps. 119:130) which is the basis of all true wisdom (I Cor. 2:6-13). It seems, therefore, that the darkness in John's vision indicates a lack of understanding and insight on the part of those who direct human affairs. In ancient times God took away the wisdom of Judah's wise men (Isa. 29:14) and destroyed the wise men and their understanding out of Edom (Obad. 8; Jer. 49:7). No specific people or time is indicated in this vision, making general its application as were the first three. Before total darkness engulfs any society, God sounds a trumpet warning to that society. He sends minor judgments which mark the beginning of that society's destruction unless repentance turns the course of its destiny. These four trumpets call for the reformation, not the destruction of mankind" (ibid., pp.222f).
 - d. This vision could therefore be given in reference to the overthrow of rulers or governments, who will not give up their rebellion against God. It is entirely a fitting application to see the decline and defeat of the Roman Empire in the pictures of John's vision.

D. Revelation 8:13: The Herald of the Woes Yet to Come.

1. Verse 13: "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (KJV).
 - a. The ASV gives this rendering: "And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound."
 - b. The King James says "angel" while the American Standard Version says "eagle." In describing Jerusalem's overthrow, Jesus spoke of eagles (vultures) gathering around the carcass of Judaism (Matt. 24:28). [Whether we take the being as an angel or an eagle, the point is still the same].
 - 1) Hosea 8:1: "*Set* the trumpet to thy mouth. *He shall come* as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law."

- 2) Habakkuk 1:8: "Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle *that* hasteth to eat."
- c. In our view, the reference of this passage is to the downfall of the persecuting opponent of the saints—the Roman Empire. What is said could be more general, denoting other powers who stand opposed to the will of the Almighty.
- d. As Jerusalem was overthrown when the Roman army, with their ensign of the eagle at their head, brought their might against the holy city, so the enemies of God's cause would meet with certain destruction. This was true with the unbelieving Jews, who opposed the gospel; it would be no less true with the Roman Empire, which opposed the Lord's church.
2. "[Woe, woe, woe] That is, there will be great woe. The repetition of the word is intensive, and the idea is, that the sounding of the three remaining trumpets would indicate great and fearful calamities. These three are grouped together as if they pertained to a similar series of events, as the first four had been. The two classes are separated from each other by this interval and by this proclamation—implying that the first series had been completed, and that there would be some interval, either of space or time, before the other series would come upon the world..." [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
3. "The eagle was noted for its strong wings (Exod. 19:4; Rev. 12:14), but Scripture also emphasizes the keenness of sight with which the eagle 'spieth out the prey' (Job 39:29), and the swiftness with which it swoops down upon it (Job 9:26). In warning against impending judgment, Hosea cried, 'Set the trumpet to thy mouth. As an eagle he [the enemy] cometh against the house of Jehovah' (Hos. 8:1). Habakkuk described the horsemen of the invading Babylonians by saying, 'They fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour' (Hab. 1:8). The disasters now to come upon the earth are heralded by the voice of this eagle as it cries, 'Woe, woe, woe.' This takes the form of an ominous warning set forth in the trumpets which follow" (Hailey, pp.223f).
4. Here is a warning of even greater woes yet to come!
- E. Comments by Ray Summers on the First Four Trumpets (pp.156f).
1. "All these are pictures of natural calamity as an agent of destruction against Rome, the enemy of Christian people. One of the main things that led to the breaking down of the Roman Empire was a series of natural calamities causing disaster over the empire: earthquake, volcanic eruption, floods, etc. Many such things had happened within the memory of John and his readers. God used such environmental phenomena to present his revelation of destruction to their enemies.
2. "A few years before this writing Mount Versuvius had erupted (August, A.D. 79) pouring forth a fiery flood which engulfed Herculaneum and Pompeii and many other small villages with a horror long remembered by all in that country. The younger Pliny, writing to Tacitus, told some of the horrors of the event which took the life of his distinguished uncle, Pliny the naturalist. Ashes from the burning mountain fell on ships far out to sea and upon the distant shores of Egypt and Syria. Pliny relates that there was first an earthquake followed by the eruption which sent an avalanche of fire down the mountainside into the sea. Many who eluded the streams of lava were suffocated by the sulphurous fumes which reached far away. The sky was darkened so that Pliny said, 'It is now day elsewhere, but there night blacker and thicker than all nights.'"
3. "At another time the island volcano Santoria had erupted, giving the suggestion of a burning mountain. Fugitives told how fiery blasts destroyed vegetation, how sulphurous vapors killed the fish in the sea, and how the waters were turned red like blood. Such things were in the consciousness of John's readers. Doubtless God gave his revelation through things they would understand. Thus is he saying to them, 'I have the means of destroying your enemies.' And by just such things he called those enemies to repent and turn from their evil."
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REVELATION 9

The Sounding Of The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets

A. Revelation 9:1-12: The Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet.

1. Verses 1-3: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."
 - a. The star is identified as a person—to him was given the key to the bottomless pit (pit of the abyss—ASV). The bottomless pit is Satan's place.
 - b. The pit was opened and smoke arose so thick that the sun and the atmosphere were darkened. Out of the smoke came a great swarm of locusts possessing the power as that of scorpions.
 - c. We must keep in mind that the things being described are not to be understood as literal beings and actual events. We are not to look to history for some occasion when these events literally took place. Instead, we need to realize that the visions represent activities occurring among sinful men, activities that are symbolized by these monstrosities.
 - d. In Gehenna (Hell), Satan will not be the proprietor but an inmate. The abyss of this verse is Hades, the location of disembodied souls.
2. Verses 4-6: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."
 - a. These locusts were given orders not to hurt the grass, trees, or any green thing, but only those men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads. These were not to be slain, but only tormented for five months (the length of a locust plague).
 - b. This is not a literal locust plague for these pests do not ordinarily eat flesh but vegetation; here they are forbidden to afflict vegetation, but men. Those afflicted would be so tormented that they would desire death but would not find release.
 - 1) Exodus 10:15: "For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."
 - 2) Joel 2:3: "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land *is* as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them."
 - c. The "locusts" would not harm those the Lord had sealed. "The distinction made here between the sealed and those not sealed is further proof that the number one hundred and forty-four thousand represents the saints on earth at any point in time, and not a special group of saved persons in the final day. As the people of God escaped certain (if not all) of the plagues of Egypt (Exod. 8:22; 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23), so now the sealed of God escape the deception and delusion that torture those who reject the truth, for 'the Lord knoweth them that are his' (II Tim. 2:19)" (Hailey, p.228).
3. Verses 7-10: "And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power *was* to hurt men five months."
 - a. These "warrior locusts" are described as horses armored for battle; they wore crowns as of gold on their heads; their hair was like women's hair (note: the hair makes women distinctive); their sound was as the sound of many chariots rushing into battle; they had stings like scorpions; and had power to inflict their pain for five months (a short time, relatively).

- b. "Upon their heads rested 'as it were crowns like unto gold.' This is the only place in the Book of Revelation where the victory crown (*staphanos*) is used of any other than Christ and the saints; and even in this instance these are not crowns of permanent victory or of genuine gold, but 'as it were crowns like unto gold.' The victory of wickedness is only an imitation of the genuine; it is never lasting or true. The locusts' terrifying appearance and their crushing conquest will not last for ever. Their human faces indicate intelligence and show that these terrible inflictions were brought about by deluded and deceived mankind whose intelligent wills are in rebellion against God. Their spiritual faculties have been befogged by the cloud of spiritual falsehood, guile, and deceit turned loose on the earth by the evil one" (Hailey, p.230).
 - c. It is obvious, even from a casual reading of the passage, that John is not describing real entities. He used the term "like unto" and "as" several times.
4. Verses 11-12: "And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon. One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."
- a. Their king was the angel of the bottomless pit whose name was Abaddon (Hebrew), or Apollyon (Greek). The name means "Destruction" (Hebrew) and "Destroyer" (Greek). This "king" is appropriately named.
 - b. These terms appear also in these passages: [ASV]:
 - 1) Job 26:6: "Sheol is naked before God, And Abaddon hath no covering."
 - 2) Job 28:22: "Destruction and Death say, We have heard a rumor thereof with our ears."
 - 3) Job 31:12: "For it is a fire that consumeth unto Destruction, And would root out all mine increase."
 - 4) Psalms 88:11: "Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in Destruction?"
 - 5) Proverbs 15:11: "Sheol and Abaddon are before Jehovah: How much more then the hearts of the children of men!"
 - 6) Proverbs 27:20: "Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied; And the eyes of man are never satisfied."
 - c. The judgment described under the fifth trumpet was the first of the woes predicted in Revelation 8:13: "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" Two more are yet to come.
5. These descriptions are to be understood as symbolical language. What is symbolized by the locusts which arose from the pit and led by one named *Destruction*, a name associated with the devil?
- a. The continuous historical view applies this vision to the rise of Mohammed; others views apply it to the barbarian hordes which invaded Rome:
 - 1) Alaric led the Visigoths in 400-410.
 - 2) Gaiseric and his vandals came in 455.
 - 3) Atilla the Hun ravaged Italy in 451.
 - 4) Odoacer (another barbarian) was crowned king of Italy in 476.
 - b. Brother Wallace applies this vision to an invasion of Judea by Rome.
 - c. Others view this vision as symbolic of a hellish spirit which is spread abroad over the earth.
 - d. Another view says that the decadence of the ancient Roman world is being described, and that God would use this internal spiritual rottenness to bring about the downfall of those who were oppressing his saints. This is the view adopted in this study.
6. The first four trumpets described the judgment to come upon various aspects of Rome's far-flung empire. Historical evidence shows that their Empire fell partly because of natural calamities. But internal spiritual rottenness and corruption contributed very greatly to their demise as an empire, also.
- a. The emperors lived licentious lives; they were among the most corrupt, immoral people ever to live. They practiced fornication of every kind, committed murder, tortured their victims, had many slaves. One of them gave a big banquet at night and used the burning bodies of Christians to illuminate the festivities. They had a barbaric brand of sports—gladiators fighting to the death; vicious chariot races;
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forcing Christians to face ravenous lions. The people were very much like their rulers. [See under the introduction some of the details of their corrupted lives].

- b. In the ruins of Pompeii are to be seen murals depicting all kind of sinful behavior, preserved through more than nineteen hundred years, to the shame of those decadent people.
- c. The situation in the Roman Empire got so evil that the people became cynical toward life. They had tried everything sinful to fulfill their evil desires and found no lasting pleasure; they had nothing to live for and nothing to die for; suicide was common. This part of Revelation 9 is an extraordinary scene designed to prick the curiosity of the readers; the scene depicted never did and never will literally occur. The description is given to emphasize the whole ungodly spiritual condition of the Romans—their sins and their extravagance.
- d. Nero was homosexual—he married a young man publicly and took him on a tour. Rich men would dissolve pearls and mix them with wine, and serve to their guests. Wealth was so plentiful that it meant nothing; neither did human life. Our sinful society is nothing in comparison. Their sinfulness was indescribable, so John draws a picture of indescribable beasts to show the terrible conditions that were then prevalent. Their horrible nature could not otherwise be adequately pictured.
- e. God would use this internal decay to bring about their downfall. They had utterly rejected the living God, tried to force Christians to revile Christ, and persecuted even to death those who followed the Lord. In every way they tried to destroy the church from the face of the earth. A concerted effort was made to destroy the Bible.
- f. Christians were warned to have no part with this corrupted world.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 3) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
- g. Faithful Christians would not be hurt by this corruption which afflicted Rome. Christians need material goods to survive physically, but even if we lose our wealth, we still have something to live for and to die for. A Christian might live beside a Roman citizen, suffer the same problems, but have an entirely different attitude—the Roman would be in despair; the Christian would still have his faith.
- h. Locusts in those days were deemed a very great disaster; thus as pictured here would describe to the readers then a horrible scene. The horrible picture described was the awful spiritual condition of the people of the time. God could not allow such sin to go unpunished. The following remarks were made by Gus Nichols, a great preacher of the gospel of the preceding generation; they were made in a lecture at Memphis School of Preaching in 1971. Many years have passed since these statements were made; the world Brother Nichols described was not nearly as wicked as the one in which we now reside. This makes his remarks even more poignant:
 - 1) "We are living in a time when the world needs the gospel more than anything else.... We don't need wealth and other things very much, but we need God.... It makes me rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory when I think of the sacrifices that are being made by those who are here to study the Bible for two years, day and night—to study the Bible. It's a wonderful work. When I think of the teachers and others that are working day and night and overtime, in order to impart their

- knowledge to somebody who can pass it on to the third generation, that we spoke about last night. You know there is the [generation of] Moses and the [generation of] Joshua, but that third generation didn't get it. And so, let us remember that we are over in the Joshua period of the church, so to speak, and if we don't pass it on to the next generation, then our children and grandchildren will suffer terribly.
- 2) "Jesus is sure to come, not in the very distant future, if our world continues to grow worse. It can grow worse more rapidly than you have imagined. Sometimes nations go into atheism almost instantly, as with Darwin. They have the denominational preachers capable of putting atheism over, and liberalism and everything that is equal to atheism. They've got the talent, they've got the money back of it, they've got the plants. Denominationalism now is liberalism, largely, and they have largely given up the facts of the gospel and the Bible as we know and love it now. Think what a tremendous force for evil there will be when the religious people of the earth line up with the irreligious and the atheists, and begin to fight the church and the word of God, and take that which has been accepted, the theory of evolution, which is now an accepted 'science' by those who have left science and have gone over into the realm of philosophy and have begun to philosophize; because evolution is not a science; it is a theory in the realm of philosophy, instead. But when they delude the whole mass of our people upon the earth, it might be that if the world did stand a thousand years, that so few would get to heaven in that time that it would not justify the many that would be born and go to hell.
 - 3) "Jesus said in Luke 18:8: '...When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' God did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until there were just so few righteous people till they couldn't find ten. He did not destroy the world with the flood in Noah's day until there were few that were left that were righteous. Eight souls. If the time comes when this world is used for nothing but an incubator into which children are born by the millions and millions and millions, to grow up and to influence other people to sin, and to rear children that will sin, and to go to hell, and take all to hell with them who have been under their influence, God will not let this thing stand!
 - 4) "I think I know God. I have been studying his word, and thinking about him and his attributes for now 64 years; carefully studying it. I think I know he is too good to let this world stand for no purpose other than to populate hell. He certainly would not do it! I am confident, therefore, that we are living in serious times.
 - 5) "I would to God that we had thousands of schools like this, instead of so few. And that the churches would wake up, and encourage men, and send them, bear their expenses, and help them so that they will not suffer too much in the fiery trials as they are getting through these two years. When you go out to preach the gospel, you may have some hardships while you are getting settled and getting started, but they will all be good for you. Remember Peter says, that the trying of our 'faith is more precious than gold...though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory...' (1 Pet. 1:7-9).
 - 6) "We do not see Jesus as yet; we can't endure except as seeing him when we are not. Like it is said of Moses, that he endured as seeing him who is invisible. He endured his trials and hardships as though he could just look up and see God any time he needed encouragement and strength. We need to be close to God like that, if we can be, as it were, seeing him day by day, because we will sometimes have no one else on whom we can lean for comfort and courage. Let us be of good courage then and remember that the field is the world, sow the seed, and sow as much as we can....
 - 7) "Remember that, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him' (Psalm 126:5,5)."
7. God would use three instruments to bring about Rome's downfall.
 - a. The first, pictured by the first four trumpets, were natural calamities that weakened the Empire.
 - b. The second, pictured by the fifth trumpet, was their internal corruption.
 - c. The third, pictured by the sixth trumpet, would be the assaults from without.
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B. Revelation 9:13-21: The Sixth Angel Sounded his Trumpet.

1. Verse 13: "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."
 - a. When the sixth angel sounded, John heard a voice from the altar telling this angel to loose the four angels which were bound at the river Euphrates.
 - b. "In the language used here there is an allusion to the temple, but the scene is evidently laid in heaven. The temple in its arrangements was designed, undoubtedly, to be in important respects a symbol of heaven, and this idea constantly occurs in the Scriptures....The golden altar stood in the holy place, between the table of show-bread and the golden candlestick....This altar, made of shittim or acacia wood, was ornamented at the four corners, and overlaid throughout with laminate of gold. Hence, it was called 'the golden altar,' in contradistinction from the altar for sacrifice, which was made of stone....On its four corners it had projections which are called horns (Ex 30:2-3), which seem to have been intended mainly for ornaments....When it is said that this was 'before God,' the meaning is, that it was directly before or in front of the symbol of the divine presence in the most holy place. This image, in the vision of John, is transformed to heaven. The voice seemed to come from the very presence of the Deity; from the place where offerings are made to God.
 - 1) "....The meaning is, that the effect of his blowing the trumpet would be the same as if angels that had been bound should be suddenly loosed and suffered to go forth over the earth; that is, some event would occur which would be properly symbolized by such an act.
 - 2) "...The general meaning here is, that in the vicinity of the river Euphrates there were mighty powers which had been bound or held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. What we are to look for in the fulfillment is evidently this—some power that seemed to be kept back by an invisible influence as if by angels, now suddenly let loose and suffered to accomplish the purpose of desolation mentioned in the subsequent verses. It is not necessary to suppose that angels were actually employed in these restraints....
 - 3) "[Which are bound] That is, they seemed to be bound. There was something which held them, and the forces under them, in check, until they were thus commanded to go forth. In the fulfillment of this it will be necessary to look for something of the nature of a check or restraint on these forces, until they were commissioned to go forth to accomplish the work of destruction.
 - 4) [In the great river Euphrates] The well-known river of that name, commonly called, in the Scriptures, 'the great river,' and, by way of eminence, 'the river,' Ex 23:31; Isa 8:7. This river was on the east of Palestine; and the language used here naturally denotes that the power referred to under the sixth trumpet would spring up in the East, and that it would have its origin in the vicinity of that river. Those interpreters, therefore, who apply this to the invasion of Judaea by the Romans have great difficulty in explaining this—as the forces employed in the destruction of Jerusalem came from the West, and not from the East. The fair interpretation is, that there were forces in the vicinity of the Euphrates which were, up to this period, bound or restrained, but which were now suffered to spread woe and sorrow over a considerable portion of the world" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - c. If our fundamental premise is sound, the invading horses had the Roman Empire as their target. In ancient days, the enemies of Israel came from eastern nations, but entered Palestine from the north. The Great Desert lay to the east of Canaan.
 2. Verses 15-16: "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."
 - a. These four angels were loosed; they were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year to slay the third part of men. A great army of horsemen numbering 200,000,000 was seen by John. In regular formation they would be a mile wide, 85 miles long [Summers, p.159).
 - b. "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men....Each knew his appointed time. Four is the number used to denote universality in things of this world (see on Rev 4:6). The number, therefore, seems to imply that
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the power of the angels is of universal extent. The third part are destroyed; that is, a great part, though not the larger (cf. Rev 8:7, et seq.)...The symbol is, no doubt, chosen to signify power, of which horsemen or cavalry are an emblem. Were two hundred thousand thousand; or, twice myriads of myriads (cf. Jude 14-16, which is a quotation from Enoch; also Dan 7:10). The number is, of course, not to be taken literally, but as signifying an exceeding great multitude....He states this, since so vast a multitude would be innumerable" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

3. Verses 17-19: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths."
 - a. The riders had breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; the horses had heads like lions; out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. The fire, smoke and brimstone slew a third part of men. Their power to harm was in their mouths and in their tails which were like unto serpents (and had heads).
 - b. "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them....The description intensifies the terrible nature of the vision, and it is doubtful whether these details should be pressed to a particular interpretation. If they bear any meaning at all, they seem to point to the doom in wait for the wicked, whose portion is fire and brimstone (cf. Ps 11:6). And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone; proceedeth fire, etc. (Revised Version). Here, as in the preceding clause, the intention is evidently to enhance the terrible appearance of the vision....The horses, in accordance with a well-known poetic figure, are said to breathe out 'fire and smoke.' Brimstone is mentioned in addition, in order to set forth plainly the fact that their acts are directed against the wicked (cf. Gen 19:24; Job 18:15; Ps 11:6; Ezek 38:23; Isa 30:33; Luke 17:29). Lions' teeth are mentioned in the description of locusts, with the same purpose (ver. 8)....
 - 1) "By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths; by these three plagues (as in Revised Version).... 'The third part' again a large, but not the largest, part of mankind (see on Rev 8:7). The locusts were forbidden to kill (ver. 5); these horsemen are permitted to do so. Each judgment of the trumpet visions appears to increase in severity.
 - 2) "We may here see portrayed the terrible and destructive character of the results of sin. Such results are experienced to the full by the third part of men, the large class who 'repent not of their murders, nor of their sorceries,' etc. (ver. 21)" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
4. Verses 20-21: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."
 - a. Those who were not slain by these plagues repented not of their evil, but continued to worship devils and idols; nor did they repent of their murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts.
 - b. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues; the rest of mankind (Revised Version). That is, the two thirds (ver. 18)....Mankind must be taken to mean the worldly only. Of the ungodly, some are killed (the third part), the rest yet do not repent. The vision is not concerned with the fate of the righteous. Yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. 'The works of their hands' refers to idolatry, as shown by the succeeding words. This verse begins to prepare us for the seventh judgment. Men will not repent; therefore the last final judgment becomes necessary. The absurdity of idolatrous worship is frequently thus set forth by Old Testament writers (cf. Ps 115:4; 135:15; Isa 2:8; Ezek 22:1,4; Hos 13:2). See also the description in Dan 5:23 which seems to have suggested the wording of this part of the vision. It has been well remarked that in this verse mention is made of sins against God; in the following verse man's sins against his neighbours are detailed..." [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

- c. The passage does not address the state of the faithful saints—only the fate of the unrighteous is being delineated. It seems terribly strange that the wicked will not open their eyes to spiritual reality! Every accountable person can know whether his life is what it ought to be. Even those who deny the very existence of God are without excuse (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 14:1).
- 1) Romans 1:18-20: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - 2) Romans 1:22-26: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature."
 - 3) Romans 1:28-32: "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
- d. The sin described is idolatry. All kinds of evil conduct was connected with the worship of idols. It was sinful of itself, and it promoted other forms of sin. "The folly of sacrificing to idols is set forth in Revelation as John scathingly says, 'which can neither see, nor hear, nor talk.' This, too, is reminiscent of the Old Testament Scriptures where God repeatedly warned His people against idolatry, spelling out the lifeless impotence of idols and testifying to the people that all who worship such objects will become like them (Deut. 4:28; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 44:12-20; cf. Also Dan. 5:23)" (Hailey, p.238).
- 1) Deuteronomy 4:28: "And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell."
 - 2) Psalms 115:4-8: "Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them."
 - 3) Psalms 135:15-18: "The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: *so is* every one that trusteth in them."
 - 4) Isaiah 44:9-20: "They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image *that* is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they *are* of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; *yet* they shall fear, *and* they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out *his* rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and
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the rain doth nourish *it*. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, *even* his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; *and* their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten *it*: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, *Is there* not a lie in my right hand?"

- 5) Daniel 5:23: "But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."
5. The explanation, as indicated above, is found in the assaults made against Rome by enemy armies. Two other significant views:
 - a. The continuous historical view says reference is to the Turkish expansion in the 11th century.
 - b. Brother Wallace says the Roman invasion of Palestine in 70 A.D. is meant.
 - c. The Parthians were a powerful enemy of Rome, and may have been the ones who would bring the judgment upon the Empire.
 6. The Euphrates River was the ancient eastern boundary of the Jewish Empire (2 Sam. 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21). The four angels are pictured as coming from this locality. The ancient enemy of Israel in Old Testament times was Babylon, which was centered in the Euphrates River valley. John's readers would be able to see in this symbolism a picture of a powerful enemy, coming from without, bent on destruction. This invading horde was not coming against the church, but against the enemy of the church—Rome. It was coming, not entirely by its own volition, but as an instrument in God's hands to punish a wicked people who would not repent of their idolatry, murder, etc.
 - a. John used the idea of boundaries to suggest that this blow against the church's enemy would come from without, thus would be foreign forces. This brings to light the third cause of Rome's fall:
 - 1) Natural calamities.
 - 2) Internal rottenness.
 - 3) Foreign invaders. Reference is probably not to any particular invader; they came against Rome in wave after wave beginning in the first century. After the Parthian army defeated the Roman army, other nations realized Rome was not invincible. The attacks began in earnest in the second century, became more numerous in the third century, and by the fourth century the Roman army had grown weak and its soldiers undisciplined; the Empire was ripe for overthrow. The Roman soldiers could see that their earlier conquests gave wealth to the powerful people back home; after a while there would not appear to be anything important enough to fight for. The internal corruption of the people would demoralize the common soldiers. The soldiers would also indulge in the common vices which in turn would erode their discipline, fighting spirit, and physical strength.
 - b. Information about the Parthians for those who are interested in more details:
 - 1) "Parthia proper was a small territory to the Southeast of the Caspian Sea, about 300 miles long by 120 wide, a fertile though mountainous region, bordering on the desert tract of Eastern Persia.
 - a) "Not long after, the power of Rome came into contact with Armenia and Parthia. In 66 BC when, after subduing Mithridates of Pontus, Pompey came into Syria, Phraates III made an alliance with him against Armenia, but was offended by the way in which he was treated and thought of turning against his ally, but refrained for the time being. It was only a question of time when the two powers would come to blows, for Parthia had become an empire and could ill brook the intrusion of Rome into Western Asia. It was the ambition and greed of Crassus

that brought about the clash of Rome and Parthia. When he took the East as his share of the Roman world as apportioned among the triumvirs, he determined to rival Caesar in fame and wealth by subduing Parthia, and advanced across the Euphrates on his ill-fated expedition in 53 BC. The story of his defeat and death and the destruction of the army and loss of the Roman eagles is familiar to all readers of Roman history.

- b) “It revealed Parthia to the world as the formidable rival of Rome, which she continued to be for nearly 3 centuries....Antony's attempt to subdue them proved abortive, and his struggle with Octavian compelled him to relinquish the project. The Parthians were unable to take advantage of the strife in the Roman empire on account of troubles at home....Each had learned to respect the power of the other, and, although contention arose regarding the suzerainty of Armenia, peace was not seriously disturbed between them for about 130 years, or until the reign of Trajan....
- c) “The contest with Rome over Armenia was settled in the days of Nero in a manner satisfactory to both parties, so that peace was not broken for 50 years. The ambition of Trajan led him to disregard the policy inaugurated by Augustus....After the conquest of Dacia he turned his attention to the East and resolved on the invasion of Parthia....He subdued Armenia, took Upper Mesopotamia, Adiabene (Assyria), Ctesiphon, the capital, and reached the Persian Gulf, but was obliged to turn back by revolts in his rear and failed to reduce the fortress of Hatra. The conquered provinces were restored, however, by Hadrian, and the Parthians did not retaliate until the reign of Aurelius, when they overran Syria, and in 162 AD Lucius Verus was sent to punish them. In the following year he drove them back and advanced into the heart of the Parthian empire, inflicting the severest blow it had yet received. It was evident that the empire was on the decline, and the Romans did not meet with the resistance they had experienced in former times. Severus and Caracalla both made expeditions into the country, and the latter took the capital and massacred the inhabitants, but after his assassination his successor, Macrinus, fought a three days' battle with the Parthians at Nisibis in which he was worsted and was glad to conclude a peace by paying an indemnity of some 1,500,000 British pounds (217 AD)” [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Bibesoft].
- 2) “Parthia, ancient empire of Asia, in what are now Iran and Afghanistan. The Parthians were of Scythian descent, and adopted Median dress and Aryan speech. They were excellent horsemen and archers. In battle, mounted Parthians often discharged their arrows back toward the enemy while pretending to flee; this is the origin of the phrase ‘a Parthian shot.’ Parthia was subject successively to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians under Alexander the Great, and Seleucids. About 250 BC the Parthians succeeded in founding an independent kingdom that, during the 1st century BC, grew into an empire extending from the Euphrates River to the Indus River and from the Oxus (now Amu Darya) River to the Indian Ocean. The main Parthian cities were Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and Hecatompylos. After the middle of the 1st century BC Parthia was a rival of Rome, and several wars occurred between the two powers. In AD 224 Parthia was conquered by Ardasher I, king of Persia and founder of the Sassanid dynasty” (Encarta).
- 3) “Parthia, in the mind of the writer of the Acts, would designate the great empire the Parthians built up, which extended from India to the Tigris and from the Chorasmian desert to the shores of the southern ocean. Hence the prominent position of the name Parthians in the list of those present at Pentecost. Parthia was a power almost rivaling Rome—the only existing power that had tried its strength against Rome and not been defeated in the encounter. The Parthian dominion lasted for nearly five centuries, commencing in the third century before Christ. The Parthians seized Jerusalem in 40 B.C., and Rome made Herod king of Judea at that time to check the formidable westward push of the Parthian Empire” [The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
- 4) “Free Parthians amused themselves with hunting, ate and drank abundantly, and never went on foot when they could ride. They were brave warriors and honorable foes, treated prisoners decently, admitted foreigners to high office, and gave asylum to refugees; sometimes, however, they mutilated dead enemies, tortured witnesses, and corrected trifling offenses with the scourge. They practiced polygamy according to their means, veiled and secluded their women, severely punished
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the infidelity of their wives, but permitted divorce to either sex almost at will. When the Parthian general Surena led an army against Crassus he took with him 200 concubines and a thousand camels for his baggage. All in all the Parthians impress us as less civilized than the Achaemenid Persians and more honorable gentlemen than the Romans. They were tolerant of religious diversities, allowing the Greeks, Jews, and Christians among them to practice their rituals unhindered....On the death of Vologases IV (A.D. 209) his sons Vologases V and Artabanus IV fought for the throne. Artabanus won, and then defeated the Romans at Nisibis. Three centuries of war between the empires ended in a modified victory for Parthia; on the Mesopotamian plains the Roman legions were at a disadvantage against the Parthian cavalry” (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.529f).

- 5) “The Parthian Empire lasted until about A.D. 224. The Parthians built a large empire across eastern Asia Minor and southwest Asia. During the last 200 years of their rule, the Parthians had to fight the Romans in the west and the Kushans in what is now Afghanistan. Civil wars erupted in the Parthian Empire. In about A.D. 224, a Persian named Ardashir overthrew the Parthians and seized the Parthian Empire. After more than 550 years under other rulers, Persians again ruled Persia” (World Book).
- c. The material loss due to natural calamities would make the Romans sick at heart; but their spiritual corruption was the real cause of the fall of their empire. These were manifestations of God’s wrath which had the purpose of bringing about repentance, but they would not repent. The saints could take courage from these descriptions. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).
- d. “This completes the *three instruments*. Running like a thread through the entire work by Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, is the truth that three great things combined to overthrow the Roman Empire. They were partly working in John’s day. The three were natural calamity, internal rottenness, and external invasion. All these are symbolized in Revelation as instruments ready for God’s use to rescue his people. Natural calamity (flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption), internal rottenness (a long line of corrupt rulers), and external invasion (from new and old enemies) combined to overthrow what appeared to be so invincible.
 - 1) “Verses 20 and 21 indicate that such judgments as the above were judgments on the world power, not on the Christians. The Christians might suffer from them but not in judgment. They may be a part of their trial as they mix with the world during their earthly pilgrimage, but trial is not judgment.
 - 2) “The vision is given as a means of reassurance to the Christians to help them see that Rome will never triumph over Christianity. The judgments were to be sent as punitive measures on the wicked oppressors and as a call to repentance. This is indicated when we see in these verses that the rest of the men, those not injured by the plagues, refused to repent and turn from their evil: idols, murders, sorceries, thefts, and fornications. Still after the sixfold judgment they continued in their evil ways. Nothing would make them repent. Nothing is left for them except the still heavier judgments of God” (Summers, pp.159f).

REVELATION 10

The Little Book

A. This Is Another Interlude Coming Between the Sounding of the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets.

1. A similar interruption occurred between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. In each case two consolatory visions are given. Here, the first consoling vision is in chapter ten; the second is in 11:1-13. These two visions contain two symbols each: The angel standing on the earth and the sea plus John eating the little book; the measuring of the temple and the story of the two witnesses. Revelation 7 contains the consoling visions between the opening of the last two seals.
2. The purpose of the interruptions is to offer comfort and encouragement to the Christians. In the first interruption (Rev. 7), which followed the judgment scene of Revelation 6, the saints were consoled by (1) the vision in which they were sealed with the seal of God, and (2) by the heavenly scene in which those who were faithful are pictured as being in heaven before God's throne. In the latter interruption, another set of two visions is given for the purpose of consoling the suffering saints.
3. Suppose we (Christians) were living in America and our country was persecuting us like the Romans did our brethren then. God could use a corrupt system like Communism or Islam to punish America and thus bring relief to his people. Information about this upcoming punishment would be a source of encouragement to us, in order for us to successfully endure the persecution we were undergoing. We would be interested in the future welfare of ourselves, our families, and the cause of Christ. Prophetic information regarding the final outcome of the struggle would be needed for our consolation and encouragement. Just so with the case of our brethren in the first century [at that time, inspiration was still in progress and miracles were being wrought]. If these things are going to affect Rome so severely, how would it affect Christians? If the judgment indicated would finish Rome, would it also be the end of Christianity? It would not!

B. Revelation 10:1-11: The Little Book Episode

1. Verses 1-3: "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."
 - a. John saw, as this vision unfolded, another strong angel, clothed with a cloud, with a rainbow upon his head, coming down from heaven. His face is likened to the sun and his feet unto pillars of fire. But one of the most impressive parts of the scene is the little book he held open in his hand—it must have great importance. After setting his right foot on the sea and his left on the earth, he raised a great shout; then came the great voices of seven thunders.
 - b. A very impressive scene is thus introduced. The description of the angel is given for effect—it contains two similes and two hyperboles.
 - c. The importance of the message (indicated by the open book) is shown by the angel situated on the sea and land—something with an application to all mankind.
 - d. The number seven carries the imprint of perfection and completeness; the wrath depicted would be full. Thunders are used in Revelation as precursors of divine wrath.
 - 1) Revelation 8:5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - 2) Revelation 11:19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."
 - 3) Revelation 16:18: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great."
2. Verse 4: "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."
 - a. John was about to write down the things uttered by the seven thunders, but an unidentified voice from heaven told him not to write this. John had been ordered to write the things he was to see (1:11), but

- the things spoken by the thunders were not to be recorded; the specifics were not to be given; no more warnings would be offered. The thunders not only made a noise, but spoke an intelligible message.
- b. "Throughout the Apocalypse we find frequent mention of a voice, without any definite statement as to the possessor....Here it seems best to identify the 'voice from heaven' with that of Rev 1, where it is probably Christ himself (see on Rev 1:10). Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not (cf. Dan 12:4, 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end;'; also Acts 1:7, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power;'; also Rev 22:10, 'And he saith unto me. Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand'). As stated in the note on ver. 2, not all God's purposes are revealed. Here we have a positive indication that some truths are withheld. It is useless to speculate on the nature of that which is purposely concealed from us. The probable conclusions which we may deduce are well put by Alford: 'From the very character of thunder, that the utterances were of fearful import; from the place which they hold, that they relate to the Church; from the command to conceal them, first, encouragement, that God in his tender mercy to his own does not reveal all his terrors; secondly, godly fear, seeing that the arrows of his quiver are not exhausted, but besides things expressly foretold, there are more behind not revealed to us'" [The Pulpit Commentary, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
3. Verses 5-7: "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished they mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets."
 - 2) NJKV: "The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 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, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."
 - b. The mighty angel of verse 1 spoke, swearing by the Almighty that "time" should be no more but should be concluded as he declared to the prophets. Time (delay—Matt: 24:48 (ASV): "My lord **tarrieth**"). The things to come would not be delayed. The text expresses a strong affirmation that God would not delay, but would surely bring the punishment promised in the trumpet visions. The things God has promised will not be delayed. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1).
 - 1) NT:5549: "*chronizo* (khron-id'-zo); from NT:5550; to take time, i.e. linger: KJV—delay, tarry" [Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance].
 - 2) NT:5550: "*chronos* (khron'-os); of uncertain derivation; a space of time (in general, and thus properly distinguished from NT:2540, which designates a fixed or special occasion; and from NT:165, which denotes a particular period) or interval; by extension, an individual opportunity; by implication, delay" [ibid.].
 - c. The natural calamities began in earnest shortly before the end of the first century (Rev. 8); the evil effects of the internal corruption of the empire (9:1-12) would soon come to fruition; and the foreign invaders would not be delayed in bringing to bear their destruction (9:13-21). These are prophetic statements but given in apocalyptic language; no specific details are given, but the definite destruction of the church's enemies is outlined; it will be sure, definite, and final; Christians will be vindicated,
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justified and rewarded for faithfulness.

- d. What is the mystery? Who are the prophets?
- 1) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." God's kingdom would stand; the others would fall.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Before the papacy arose, the Roman Empire must first fall. When the events of the seventh trumpet were completed, the end of the Empire will have been assured.
 - 3) "Finished" [assured]—in God's mind the deed was already accomplished. Before Jericho was delivered into Israel's hands, God stated that it was already theirs: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour" (Josh. 6:2). *Finished*: "NT:5055 *teleo* (tel-eh'-o); from NT:5056; to end, ie. complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt): KJV—accomplish, make an end, expire, fill up, finish, go over, pay, perform" [Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance].
 - 4) The mystery includes information about the destruction of Rome as per Daniel 2:44-45: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."
 - 5) Hailey suggests that the "mystery was God's plan for human redemption, conceived in his mind, after the counsel of his will, and summed up in Christ (Eph. 1:9-11; 3:8-11)...This mystery was something that man could not know until it was revealed. In the gospel, Christ was being preached, 'according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all nations unto obedience of faith' (Rom. 16:25-26). This complete fulfilling of God's mystery and its revelation was about to be finished. To finish (from *teleo*) means 'to bring to an end, complete something...to carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill' (A.& G; so Thayer and Vine); hence, that purpose which the prophets looked forward to and the apostles preached was about to reach the completion of its fullness—it would not terminate, but be carried out in its entirety" (pp.245f).
4. Verses 8-10: "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

- a. The voice from heaven instructed John to take the little book; the angel told him to eat the book, which would be sweet to the taste but bitter in the belly. To eat the book means to learn and assimilate the message, thoroughly mastering its meaning. To receive the revelation was pleasant, but when he had to preach it, it was not pleasant. There is delight in being entrusted with the word of God, but it is not so delightful to preach its hard sayings. To study the Bible is pleasant, but to stand before people who need it but do not want it is not very pleasant. No preacher enjoys taking the brethren to task, exposing sin, calling for repentance.
- 1) 2 Timothy 2:1-4: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:2-5: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
- b. John would find the reception of the revelation a pleasant thing but would not enjoy it so much when he presented these dire woes before men. It can be unpleasant in consequence when the truth is presented. As John now sees the significance of the visions, what great suffering and tragedy is about to come, then he could see what an unfortunate future awaited the enemies of God!
- c. "From a close study of the entire context, it appears that the content of the book has to do with matters of sorrow and woe—this is true in Ezekiel 2:8ff. When Ezekiel had swallowed the book, he was required to utter lamentations and woes upon ancient Israel. So with this book, whatever it contained it was a message which meant sorrow for John as he delivered it. It appears, therefore, that the message was rather general: woes upon men under God's judgment for having rejected him, woes upon Christians in the hands of their enemies, woes upon the church in conflict with the great world-power Rome, woes upon Rome and her great destruction. Perhaps it is a combination of all these things since he was to prophesy to 'many peoples and nations and tongues and kings'" (Summers, pp.261f).
- d. There is a parallel usage of this figure in Ezekiel:
- 1) Ezekiel 2:1-10: "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."
 - 2) Ezekiel 3:1-3: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."
5. Verse 11: "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."
- a. Parallel translations:

- 1) ASV: "And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."
 - 2) NKJV: "And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."
- b. John is told that he must prophesy again before many people, nations, tongues, and kings. Before [*epi*]: "as to, concerning" (Berry, Thayer, p.234; cf. ASV, margin). The passage is not saying that John must go and prophesy in the presence of the people indicated; but rather that he was to prophesy again "concerning" kings, etc.
 - c. John has been prophesying about kings (but has not named any), people (but has not identified them by name), of languages (but has not specified what they are), and of nations (but has not given the name of any of them). This is the nature of apocalyptic literature.
 - d. John's work was not finished yet: he must again prophesy concerning the people indicated. Even though he has assimilated the book, his job is not over. "Again" [*palin*]: "joined to verbs of all sorts, it denotes renewal or repetition of the action" (Thayer, p. 475). [Some use this point to assert that Revelation 12-22 is a repeat in different symbols of the things symbolized in the first 11 chapters].
6. More about the little book episode from Hailey:
- a. "Some have concluded that it is the open Word of the gospel and that within it there is the sweet and the bitter of its message—both salvation and judgment. However, the sealed book of chapter five contained God's purpose and salvation, set forth in the gospel, and consequences and judgment that would follow. Also, the similarity between Ezekiel's 'roll of a book' in which were written 'lamentations, and mourning, and woe' (Ezek. 2:1), and that which John was to eat, shows that it is unlikely that this little book was the gospel.
 - b. "John's previous prophecies (chapters 1—10) had been of hope and assurance to the saints and of judgment upon the world of the wicked. To this point specific forces of evil have not been identified. Probably the fresh charge to prophesy concerning 'peoples and nations and tongues and kings' refers to the prophecies of chapter 11—22, the second section of the book. In it we shall find that judgments of strong secular powers, religious forces, and worldly seductive influences, together with the victory of God's people over all these antagonists, occupy the attention of the seer with more specific application. We believe this to be the significance of the seer's eating the little book, and of its sweetness and bitterness. It was sweet to learn that God's cause would be victorious in His saints, but it was bitter to prophesy of their suffering and of the destructive judgments which would befall the wicked world" (p.248).
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REVELATION 11

The Interlude Continues and The Seventh Angel Sounds

A. Revelation 11:1-2: The Measuring of the Temple.

1. What is to become of God's faithful people during the period of great trials and judgments? The 144,000 who were numbered and sealed in Chapter 7 are now represented as a measured temple of worshipers, separated from the world and under divine protection (Hailey). They are also described under the symbol of "holy city."
2. "Because John is told to rise and measure the temple, some writers conclude that the Jewish temple was yet standing, indicating that John wrote before its destruction, in A.D. 70. However, it must be kept in mind that this is a vision, and that in a vision an object can be seen, whether or not it actually exists. The Greek word here for temple is the sanctuary (*naos*) and not the temple (*hieron*) with its buildings, courts, and porches (cf. John 2:14). Since so much of the image in John's visions reflect the early period of Hebrew national history, it is possible that the sanctuary of the Old Testament tabernacle is before him. That sanctuary had only one court, with the altar and ark of the covenant within it; as reflected in the Book of Hebrews, the tabernacle was a type of the church" (Hailey, pp.249f).
3. Verse 1: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."
 - a. John is given a reed (a measuring rod) and told to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshipers. This reference to the temple has given rise to the view that the Jewish temple was still standing in Jerusalem, and thus that John wrote Revelation before A.D. 70. But in the symbology of Revelation, an object can be represented in a vision whether or not the item pictured actually exists. Remember Revelation 1:1: *signify* (the same word is used elsewhere):
 - 1) Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
 - 2) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." [The reference to "lifting up" denoted crucifixion].
 - 3) John 18:31-32: "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." [When the Lord spoke of being crucified, he thus implied that he would be executed by the Romans, not by the Jews, who used stoning as their means of execution].
 - 4) John 21:18-19: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." [By his statement, Christ showed Peter that he would be martyred].
 - 5) Acts 11:27-28: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." [The prophet revealed by his prophecy that a great drought and famine would befall the earth].
 - 6) Acts 21:10-11: "And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles." [Agabas, by binding his own hands and feet with Paul's belt, signified the arrest of the apostle in Jerusalem].
 - b. The Greek word for "temple" here is *naos* ("sanctuary") and not *hieron* ("temple"—John 2:14). The Jewish temple ceased to be "the temple of God" when the Jews rejected Christ: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:37-38).

- 1) The Old Testament tabernacle (and later, the temple) was a type of the New Testament church. The temple of God here is a reference to the New Testament church.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 6:16: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
 - c) Galatians 6:15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - d) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - e) Ephesians 3:21: "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - f) Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - g) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - h) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - i) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 2) The measuring was for the purpose of giving the Lord's church special care and preservation during the ongoing troubles. The symbol of measuring depicts God's full knowledge of his own people. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.** And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).
4. Verse 2: "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months."
 - a. John was told to omit measuring the outer court: the court of the Gentiles. The tabernacle had only one court (Ex. 27:9); Solomon's temple had several courts (1 Kings 6:36; 7:12; 2 Chron. 4:9; Jer. 36:10); Herod's temple had several courts, the great outer court was known as the "court of the Gentiles" because it was open to everyone. Gentiles were not allowed beyond a certain point under the penalty of death.
 - b. The temple of this vision is pictured as having a single outer court, which was not to be measured: it was to be left out and cast away from God's protection. It was left to the Gentiles (the heathen, pagans). The tabernacle had only one outer court, and is evidently the image John sees in the vision.
 - c. The Gentiles would tread the holy city under foot for 42 months. Seven is said to be the number of perfection; half of seven (3½, 42 months) would be an incomplete or indefinite number. For an indefinite period of time the Gentiles would tread under foot the holy city. The figure has changed from the temple to the holy city.
 - d. The holy city of this passage represents spiritual Jerusalem (the church). The Gentile nations (the Roman Empire) would oppress the holy city for an indefinite period of time. But God here vows to protect the church (his temple, the holy city), seeing that it would survive being trampled under the foot of the persecutor.
 - e. The 1260 days of verse 3 represents the same indefinite period of time. Forty-two months, of course,
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has 1,260 days (with each month having thirty days).

B. Revelation 11:3-13: The Two Witnesses.

1. Various views by commentators:
 - a. Futurists say that two literal men are meant who will come toward the end of time.
 - b. Historists say that the two witnesses are the Old and New Testaments, and the 1260 days are 1260 years of the dark ages from the third century to the reformation.
 - c. Bro. Wallace's preterist view is that the prophets of the Old Testament and the New Testament apostles are the 2 witnesses, and the 1260 days represent the time of the Roman siege of Jerusalem.
2. These views would offer little or no comfort and encouragement to the first century saint to whom it was initially addressed. If our contextual view is correct, Revelation was intended to be a source of comfort and encouragement to the suffering saint of that time; and that we must look to the context of that time in order to find the key to the meaning of the symbology of the book. The brethren then would have little interest in some apostasy hundreds of years in the future; what they needed and wanted was a message of hope and consolation to assist them in getting through the terrible tribulations they faced daily. The criterion in every attempt to rediscover John's message must be, What did this message mean to Christians in John's day? (Cf. Summers).
 - a. One view of this section is that it represents an assurance God is giving the church then that their work and suffering for Christ were not in vain.
 - b. The two witnesses may simply represent the militancy of the church—the saints collectively and individually doing the job Christ gave them to do.
 - c. Another view is that the two witness may be the apostles of Christ and the prophets of the New Testament era (Eph. 3:5). Another view is that the Jewish and Gentile Christians are these witnesses.
 - d. Whatever their identity, the following information regarding witnesses is significant: Two or three witnesses were required to establish a charge against someone.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 17:6: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 19:15: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."
 - 3) Matthew 18:16: "But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:19: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."
 - e. There is greater strength in two than in one; the Lord sent the disciples out by twos.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: "Two *are* better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him *that is* alone when he falleth; for *he hath* not another to help him up."
 - 2) Mark 6:7: "And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits."
 - f. These two points indicate why there were TWO witnesses.
3. Verse 3: "And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."
 - a. The two witnesses were given power from the Lord to prophesy for 1260 days, an indefinite period of time. Their work would be done in sackcloth—a term indicating suffering and sorrow. These witnesses are simply the saints of that era doing their work of preaching the gospel. Their work had to be done under trying circumstances, for there was much opposition.
 - b. Barnes provides these ideas about the two witnesses:
 - 1) The word "two" evidently denotes that the number would be small; and yet it is not necessary to confine it literally to two persons, or to two societies or communities. Perhaps the meaning is, that as, under the law, two witnesses were required, and were enough, to establish any fact (notes on John 8:17), such a number would during those times be preserved from apostasy as would be

- sufficient to keep up the evidence of truth; to testify against the prevailing abominations, errors, and corruptions; to show what was the real church, and to bear a faithful witness against the wickedness of the world. The law of Moses required that there should be two witnesses on a trial, and this, under that law, was deemed a competent number. See Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16; John 5:30-33. The essential meaning of this passage then is, that there would be "a competent number" of witnesses in the case; that is, as many as would be regarded as sufficient to establish the points concerning which they would testify, with perhaps the additional idea that the number would be small.
- 2) There is no reason for limiting it strictly to two persons, or for supposing that they would appear in pairs, two and two; nor is it necessary to suppose that it refers particularly to two people or nations. The word rendered "witnesses"—*marturi*—is that from which we have derived the word "martyr." It means properly one who bears testimony, either in a judicial sense (Matt 18:16; 26:65), or one who can in any way testify to the truth of what he has seen and known, Luke 24:48; Rom 1:9; Phil 1:8; 1 Thess 2:10; 1 Tim 6:12. Then it came to be employed in the sense in which the word "martyr" is now—to denote one who, amidst great sufferings or by his death, bears witness to the truth; that is, one who is so confident of the truth, and so upright, that he will rather lay down his life than deny the truth of what he has seen and known, Acts 22:20; Rev 2:13. In a similar sense it comes to denote one who is so thoroughly convinced on a subject that it is not susceptible of being seen and heard, or who is so attached to one that he is willing to lay down his life as the evidence of his conviction and attachment. The word, as used here, refers to those who, during this period of "forty and two months," would thus be witnesses for Christ in the world; that is, who would bear their testimony to the truth of his religion, to the doctrines which he had revealed, and to what was required of man—who would do this amidst surrounding error and corruption, and when
 - c. The Pulpit Commentary offers this view:
 - 1) "The vision is evidently founded on that in Zech 4, where it is emblematical of the restored temple [The restored temple of Ezekiel is a figurative depiction of the Lord's church, the kingdom of God—bw], which only in the preceding verse (Rev 11:2) is a type of the elect of God's Church....
 - 2) "The Apocalypse continually represents the Church of God, after the pattern of the life of Christ, in three aspects—that of conflict and degradation; that of preservation; that of triumph....
 - 3) "It is not probable that two individuals are meant; for (a) as we have shown throughout the Apocalypse, the application is invariably to principles and societies, though this may include particular applications in certain cases; (b) it is inconceivable that Moses and Elias, or any other of the saints of God, should return from Paradise to suffer as these two witnesses; (c) our Lord expressly explained the reference to the coming of Elias, and declared that he had already come; and (d) there seems no more reason for interpreting these two witnesses literally of two men, than for interpreting Sodom and Egypt in their ordinary geographical signification in ver. 8.
 4. Verse 4: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."
 - a. The two witnesses are described as two olive trees and two candlesticks (lamp stands). The olive tree furnished the oil that was burned in the lamps. Thus, these witnesses are represented as bearing light for a world in darkness.
 - b. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks. The 'two olive trees' and the 'two candlesticks' are here identical.... These are identical so far as being God's witnesses; the Church derives her stores from the Word of God, the light of the Word of God is manifested through the Church. Standing before the God of the earth; the Lord of the earth (Revised Version). The participle is masculine, though the preceding article and nouns are feminine, probably as being more in keeping with the masculine character under which the two witnesses are depicted. Perhaps he is described as the 'Lord of the earth,' since the witnesses are to prophesy before all the earth (cf. ver. 9 and Matt 24:14)" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 5. Verses 5-6: "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These 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."
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- a. These witnesses possessed power during this phase of their work. They could defend themselves with power; they could cause the rain to be stayed and turn water into blood. In the days of Elijah God held back the rain at the request of that great prophet (1 Kings 17:1; Jas 5:17-18). God caused the waters of Egypt to be turned into blood in the days of Moses (Ex. 7:20-21). Elijah called down fire from heaven to devour certain enemies (2 Kings 1:10-14). Hail accompanied with fire was one of the plagues brought against Egypt by Moses (Ex. 9:22-26); and fire consumed 250 men who joined with Korah's rebellion against Moses (Num 16:31-35).
- b. These two witnesses would possess power to prevail against their opponents. "Because ye [unfaithful Jews] speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy [Jeremiah's] mouth fire, and this people [unfaithful Jews] wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. 5:14). It is evident that these plagues and judgments given through the two witnesses were not literal, for no such things were literally done by Christians. The point is that God would make sure that their work succeeded. The power was spiritual.
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) Acts 8:1: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 5) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - 6) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- c. The persecution of the church simply increased their zeal, and caused Gentiles to be more receptive to the gospel. God was able to accomplish his aim of bringing down the Roman kingdom by his spiritual kingdom: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
6. Verses 7-8: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."
 - a. They would finish their testimony; then the beast from the bottomless pit would ascend, make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. Their dead bodies would lie unburied in the street.
 - b. The Roman Emperor is the beast; the city where the witnesses would be slain is likened unto Sodom (the epitome of evil, filth) and Egypt (the symbol of bondage); where the Lord was crucified: the authority behind the crucifixion of Christ was Rome.
 - 1) Christ was crucified at Jerusalem, but it was by the authority of Rome [through its legally appointed governor—Pilate] that he was executed.
 - 2) Some might claim that this is an obvious reference to Jerusalem, thus the city was still standing, and that the proper interpretation of Revelation is to assign its message to the destruction of Jerusalem. But we remember that the items we encounter in the book are symbolic. Jerusalem here represents something else, and is not Jerusalem itself. The identity of the city was thus described

- to prevent the enemies from knowing John was speaking of Rome.
- c. The Roman persecution of the church would appear to be on the verge of destroying it from the earth. Seemingly, their cause was destitute and hopeless—as though it were dead. The power of Rome had been manipulated to bring about the death of Christ; this same power was now being used voluntarily and even happily against the Lord’s church. There were various reasons why the might of Rome was brought against Christianity.
 - 1) Christians had used the power of the gospel and, in special cases, supernatural powers, to assault the wickedness and sin of the majority. The truth hurt—it was therefore hated and opposed.
 - 2) At the first, the Roman world viewed Christianity as merely a branch of Judaism; since Judaism was an accepted religion in the empire, so the church was allowed to exist without Roman opposition. But when the truth began to be more fully understood, the religion of Christ was not extended official recognition as an acceptable religion—being a new religion, it did not have the sanction of Roman law.
 - 3) When Rome conquered a nation, they permitted the established religions of that nation to remain intact; they did not permit the establishment of any new religion. This was the charge Paul and Silas faced in Philippi: “And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely” (Acts 16:20-23).
 - 4) Requiring the people of the empire to pay homage to Roman gods and to worship the emperor as a divine being, was the method the Romans used to identify loyal subjects; those who refused to offer this worship were considered rebels—and rebellion was quickly and ruthlessly punished. Faithful Christians could not worship an idol or a man. They were treated as traitors and enemies of the empire.
 - d. “The beast makes war with the witnesses, overcoming and killing them; but this is not done until they have finished their testimony. Although the witnesses were opposed, beaten and driven from place to place, the gospel was preached ‘in all creation under heaven’ in the apostolic age (Col. 1:23), confirmed by God through the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:19f), and written for posterity (I Peter 5:12). The beast could not thwart the advance of God’s purpose to reveal the truth; for though he killed the witnesses and sought to destroy their work, by then it was too late” (Hailey, pp.256f).
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:21-25: “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - 2) Jude 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
 - e. The enemies of the church were successful in killing the apostles of Christ. According to uninspired records, they all died violent deaths (except John). James was slain in Acts 12. The inspired prophets of the New Testament met with similar treatment. Stephen did (Acts 7). The inspired preachers filled the prophetic office, since they were God’s spokesmen. But the more the enemy persecuted the saints, even killing many of them, the gospel had an even greater impact on society.
 - 1) Colossians 1:5: “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”
 - 2) Colossians 1:23: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”
 - 3) Romans 10:13-18: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then
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shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

- f. “The ‘great city’ [in Revelation] is always Babylon, the world city, referred to ten times as ‘great’ (14:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). Neither does it represent literal Jerusalem, as some hold; it is parallel with Isaiah’s world-city” [Isaiah 24-27] (Hailey, p.257).
 - g. “Though the Church be apparently destroyed, she is not really dead, but will rise again. As our Lord, after finishing his testimony, completed his work by his death and subsequent ascension, so the time will come when the Church shall have completed all that is necessary, by offering to the world her testimony, and shall then be so completely rejected as to appear dead. Her enemies will rejoice, but their time of rejoicing is cut short (see below).
 - 1) “After three and a half days comes her vindication, and her enemies are struck with consternationThe beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them; the beast that cometh up out of the abyss. The article points to the beast which is described elsewhere in the Apocalypse (Rev 13:1; 17:8), and which is mentioned here by prolepsis [in anticipation].....The beast is Satan, perhaps manifested in the form of the persecuting world power (see on Rev 13:1)....The beast ascends out of the abyss for a brief reign upon the earth, and is ‘drunken with the blood of the saints,’ as described in Rev 17, but he ascends only to go into perdition (Rev 17:8).
 - 2) “It is well to remember that the whole vision is symbolical. The intention is to convey the idea that the Church...will experience opposition from the power of Satan, which will wax more and more formidable as time goes on, and result in the apparent triumph of the forces of evil. But the triumph will be brief....
 - 3) “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified....’The great city’ is referred to in Rev 16:19; 17:18; 18:10-19. Its signification is always the same, viz. the type of what is ungodly and of the world, and it is always consigned to punishment. Jerusalem, the type of what is holy, is never thus designated. Here we are plainly told the spiritual, that is, the symbolical nature of the designation. Sodom and Egypt are chosen as the type of what is evil (cf. Deut 32:32; Isa 1:10; Ezek 16:46; 20:7, etc.).
 - 4) “It was in this city, that is, by the influence of this world power, that the Lord was crucified. In describing the fate of the Church, John seems to have in mind the life of Christ. His witness, the opposition he encountered, his death for a brief time at the completion of his work, his resurrection and ascension, and triumph over the devil, are all here reproduced. ‘The bodies lie in the street’ symbolizes, according to Jewish custom, the most intense scorn and hatred” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
7. Verses 9-10: "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."
- a. The people of different nations (within the Roman Empire) would see their dead bodies for 3½ days—a short period of time. The period described would be the time when the enemy thought Christianity would be totally destroyed.
 - b. The reference to the four groups [people, kindreds, tongues, and nations], who would see these dead bodies, suggests that the scene depicted has a far wider range than a local city and two unburied men. It follows that the two witnesses were not two individuals, and the city was not only one city; rather, the view is much broader. The time factor would be too short, and one local site too small, for “people and kindreds and tongues and nations” to behold the dead bodies.

- c. The passage paints a powerful picture of the contempt the pagans had for the church of our Lord and his gospel. The bodies of his people would be left unburied; and the pagans, perceiving that they had triumphed over Christ, would rejoice and congratulate each other over their good fortune.
 - d. In the eyes of the enemy, Christianity appeared to be on the verge of complete destruction. Even some of the brethren might get the same idea. But the lesson of the Book of Revelation is that ultimate victory will be won by the Lord; his people will be the triumphant ones—in the final evaluation.
8. Verse 11: "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."
- a. But the witnesses revive—Christianity survived. The church could not be utterly destroyed. "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?" (Rom. 8:31; cf. Rev. 6:10).
 - b. In the second century, the church rebounded; Paganism faced its greatest loss for they saw the church endure even against painful persecution; many Pagan temples went out of business because the church had done its job (cf. Acts 19:21-41; 17:16-34). "Pliny in his epistle to Trajan (Ep. X, p.96), half a century later, spoke of *deserted temples, worship neglected, and hardly a single purchaser* found for sacrificial victims" (Burton Coffman, *Commentary on Acts*, p.374). [See below for the full letter].
 - c. Verse thirteen depicts the great blow suffered by the Pagan enemies of the church. Constantine later saw the fruitlessness of opposing the church and made it a political ally.
 - d. When Christianity began to overwhelm the pagan religions, they began to ease up in their confrontation with the church: "They gave glory to the God of heaven."



PLINY, LETTERS 10.96-97

Pliny to the Emperor Trajan:

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it

all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. *It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.*

Trajan to Pliny:

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.



9. Verses 12-13: "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." [This passage naturally divides itself into three parts]:
 - a. Verses 4-6: This depicts the period when the gospel was preached with remarkable success. This was symbolized by the two witnesses which operated by divine power. During this period of time, the apostles were empowered to work miracles; nothing seemed to be able to stand in the way of the spread of the gospel (cf. Acts; Mark 16:15-20).
 - b. Verses 7-10: This describes the period when a secular power arose which sought to crush the church and its work. This power (imperial Rome) was successful temporarily. At the time Revelation was written, the church was going through this critical stage. It appeared that the enemies would be able to crush Christianity and then rejoice over their victory. The beast (symbolizing Rome) made war against the two witnesses and put a stop to their remarkable work. These two were slain and, to heap further shame upon them, their dead bodies were left unburied in the street that the people might gape at them. The world against which the two witnesses (the church) had born testimony rejoiced over the fact that these were no longer able to afflict them with their preaching. This picture aptly fits the situation under persecution.
 - c. Verses 11-13: This pictures the period of the further progress of the gospel and thus shows that the enemy of the church had not considered the power of God which was with the church. His power caused the Roman Empire to come crashing down (eventually) and enabled the gospel to have free course in the world, unhindered by open opposition. This is shown by the resurrection of the two slain witnesses. During this indefinite period while these witnesses lay dead, there was much trouble and turmoil for the Lord's people. But after the "resurrection," even the enemies had to admit that divine power must have been behind their resurgence. Thus verse 13—many were led to accept the gospel then [i.e., many gave glory to God].

C. Revelation 11:14-19: The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

1. Verse 14: "The second woe is past; *and*, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."
 - a. The woes referred to were directed against the enemies of the church, not against the church. The first woe is identified in Revelation 9:12; the second woe was described in the verses above (the earthquake); the third is about to be described.
 - b. The period of time indicated by the 42 months apparently covers the time from Nero's persecution of

- the church to the early part of the fourth century (when the Edict of Toleration was announced, removing persecution and extending official recognition to the church); this was a period of about 200-300 years.
- c. "It should be remembered that when the woes were introduced by the cry of the eagle that it was said, 'Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth' (8:13). In response to the prayers of the saints, fire was poured out upon the earth (8:3-5), and the trumpets sounded, bringing judgments upon the earth. The judgments against the earth give assurance to the saints that evil will be defeated and truth will be victorious. If the interpretation of 10:7 and 11:1-3 is correct, the third woe does not usher in the final judgment, but signals the completion of God's mystery which was looked for and sought by the prophets. This conclusion is further supported by the word 'quickly' (*tachu*), which means 'without delay, quickly, speedily' ..." (Hailey, p.261).
2. Verse 15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."
 - a. Following this indefinite period of time (the 42 months) would be a time of golden opportunity for the church to do a great work; open persecution ended; it was free to preach the gospel without official opposition. However, as history shows, the church went into apostasy—despite many earlier warnings, including:
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
 - b. The Lord provided the opportunity for a great work to be done by the church; it was not his fault if the church did not remain faithful; many converts were made following the end of persecution and thus the Lord could describe this initial success.
 - c. "Dark days have been experienced, but Christ was victorious. In the conflict between the Christians and the world, beginning with chapter 12, there will be experienced darker days. The outcome of the struggle is announced before the beginning of the conflict is pictured; the outcome is victory for Christ" (Summers, p.166).
 - d. "The usurper of power over God's creation was now cast down, and the power of rule is in God's hand where it rightfully belongs. The victory of Christ and his witnesses accomplished the defeat of the world and its powers. This conflict will be the major theme of the next section of the prophecy. The sounding of the seventh trumpet serves as a prelude to what follows, as the opening of the seventh seal served as a prelude to the sounding of the trumpets" (Hailey, p.262).
 3. Verses 16-17: "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

- a. The 24 elders represent the redeemed from the Old Testament and the New Testament. They ascribe to God all the glory and honor he deserves.
 - b. “We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned....We, as the representatives of the church ... acknowledge thy goodness in...delivering the church from all its troubles, and having conducted it through the times of fiery persecution, thus establishing it upon the earth. The language here used is an expression of their deep interest in the church....
 - 1) “[O Lord God Almighty] Referring to God all-powerful, because it was by his omnipotent arm alone that this great work had been accomplished. Nothing else could have defended the church in its many trials; nothing else could have established it upon the earth.
 - 2) “[Which art, and wast, and art to come] The Eternal One, always the same....The reference here is to the fact that God, who had thus established his church on the earth, is unchanging. In all the revolutions which occur on the earth, he always remains the same. What he was in past times he is now; what he is now he always will be. The particular idea suggested here seems to be...that he was the same God who had early promised that it should ultimately triumph; he had carried forward his glorious purposes without modifying or abandoning them amidst all the changes that had occurred in the world; and he had thus given the assurance that he would now remain the same, and that all his purposes in regard to his church would be accomplished. The fact that God remains always unchangeably the same is the sole reason why his church is safe, or why any individual member of it is kept and saved. Compare Mal 3:6.
 - 3) “[Because thou hast taken to thee thy great power] To wit, by setting up thy kingdom over all the earth. Before that it seemed as if he had relaxed that power, or had given the power to others. Satan had reigned on the earth. Disorder, anarchy, sin, rebellion, had prevailed. It seemed as if God had let the reins of government fall from his hand. Now he came forth as if to resume the dominion over the world, and to take the scepter into his own hand, and to exert his great power in keeping the nations in subjection...” [Barnes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - c. Under Patriarchy, God had ruled among men by dealing with certain heads of families. Under the Mosaic Dispensation, he had ruled over his selected nation (Israel), through which he would send the Messiah into the world. Under the Messiah, God rules over all those throughout the world who obey the gospel of Christ. His spiritual kingdom now extends over the earth, residing in the hearts and lives of all who submit to the law of Christ and are thereby translated into the kingdom.
 - 1) Luke 17:20-21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - d. The Lord had warned the brethren in Pergamos that he would come and make war against those who would not repent (Rev. 2:16); he had promised the saints in Philadelphia that he would come quickly to aid them in their needs (Rev. 3:11); he stated his vow at the close of the book that he would come quickly (Rev. 21:7,12,20) [this last reference is the Second Coming]. “From these promises it may be concluded that His now having come is not the final coming when judgment would take place and eternal punishment and rewards be meted. The earth had been made to tremble; the things earthly had been shaken that the things which were unshakable might remain (Heb. 12:27f). The kingdom of prophecy was now a definite realization among men (Dan. 2:44; 7:13f), for at the defeat of His enemies God had taken His power and rule over the world” (Hailey, pp.262f).
 - e. Neither God nor Christ changes.
 - 1) Malachi 3:6: "For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - 3) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
4. Verse 18: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should
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be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."

- a. Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 have a bearing on this passage. The nations in their wrath tried to break asunder the bond between God and his Son by putting the Son to death. But the Lord set Christ upon his holy hill of Zion by raising him from the dead and exalting him to his own right hand (Ps. 2:3-6; Acts 4:25-26; 13:33). Heathen forces continued to set at naught God's counsel by setting their hand against his church and his truth, but again their defeat is assured. In Daniel's vision of the beast that made war against the saints and prevailed against them, the time came for judgment to be given on behalf of the saints that they might possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:22). The sounding of the seventh trumpet seems to reveal the fulfillment of both the passage of Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 (cf. Hailey).
 - 1) Psalms 2:3-6: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."
 - 2) Acts 4:25-26: "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ."
 - 3) Acts 13:33: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."
- b. God would judge the dead.
 - 1) He would condemn those who were dead in sin.
 - a) Ephesians 2:1: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins.
 - b) Ephesians 2:5: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."
 - c) Ephesians 5:14: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."
 - d) Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."
 - 2) Or he would judge (for the purpose of blessing) those who had died in the faith: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).
- c. God would give reward: to the prophets, to the saints, to those who fear his name (small and great). This is symbolic of the triumph of Christianity over the enemy. The reference of this verse is not to the end of time and the final Judgment, but to the victory of the church over the oppressions of the enemy. Christians would now have the opportunity to promote Christianity without any great opposition. This privilege is a reward to a true child of God. One who does not enjoy spreading the gospel is not a true Christian. When a Christian cannot teach God's word, he suffers. Having freedom to worship is a reward; one who does not count it thus is not a true Christian; he would not be happy in heaven.
- d. God would destroy those who destroy the earth. "Destroy" (from *diaphtherio*) means to change for the worse, to corrupt (Thayer); to lay waste, make havoc of (Vine). Compare Acts 9:21; Galatians 1:13,23; Luke 12:33; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Corinthians 4:16. The idea is not to extinguish or bring to extinction. Those who corrupt the earth would be corrupted: wasted (judged, punished).
 - 1) Luke 12:33: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth **corrupteth**."
 - 2) Acts 9:21: "But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said; Is not this he that **destroyed** them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man **perish**, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:5: "Perverse disputings of men of **corrupt** minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

- 5) Compare: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it...But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:13,23).
5. Verse 19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."
- a. The presence of God among his people is shown. He never deserts his people: not in time of persecution, or in good times.
 - b. The church is the temple of God: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). [The temple (singular) is comprised of all the Christians; the temple is the church].
 - c. The ark of the covenant in the Old Testament was assurance to Israel of God's abiding presence with them. As long as Israel remained loyal, God stayed by them. Here this same picture is presented. This verse gives the ultimate assurance. It is part of the consoling visions introduced in chapter 10. Old pagan Rome would fall; its downfall was certain; but God would be with his faithful children.
 - d. "As a comfort to his people before the conflict begins, God reveals the ark of his covenant in the temple in heaven. This symbolizes the fact that God has not forgotten his people or his covenant with them. The church will be in conflict with the world, and satanic persecution will rage, but God's covenant with his people is secure; they will be victorious. This was a very encouraging way to introduce the conflict. Modern journalism uses the same method in relating the story of some great battle. A headline assures us of the victory of our army in some battle then the action is recounted in detail. Many times it appears that the enemy has the upper hand and will win, but all the time we know that victory is ours because we have seen the headline announcing the victory. John used this method many times in Revelation—always very effectively" (Summers, pp.166f).
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Summary of the Visions of Revelation 4-11

1. Revelation 4: God is on the throne; he is powerful, majestic, and knows all; he is willing and able to stand by his people; they have no reason to be terrified even though under siege by unbelieving enemies.
2. Revelation 5: An encouraging picture is given of the Redeeming Lamb; he is worthy; he willingly and ably takes action in behalf of his people.
3. Revelation 6: The opening of the six seals:
 - a. The first seal (white horse): represents the successful spread of the gospel in the first several years of the Christian era:
 - 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - b. The second seal (red horse): represents the first great wave of persecution against the church as a result of the saints' successful work of preaching and living the gospel:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
 - c. The third seal (black horse): represents the contrived economic discrimination brought against the saints by their enemies (cf. Rev. 2:18-29):
 - 1) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 2) Revelation 13:16-17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
 - d. The fourth seal (pale horse): probably represents a partial judgment of God against the oppressors of the church. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*" (Ezek. 5:17).
 - e. The fifth seal (martyrs under the altar): represents the awful sufferings the saints were undergoing; they are pictured as crying out to God: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

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- f. The sixth seal (earthquake, etc.): heavy judgment against the enemies of the church is depicted using Old Testament pictures. This judgment against the evil ones would be a day of deliverance for his people.
4. Revelation 7: An interlude giving two consoling visions of encouragement.
 - a. The sealing of the 144,000 represents God putting his symbolic mark on those who have his approval. God is thus telling his people that they will be delivered from the awful judgment described in Revelation 6:12-17; it answers the question of Revelation 6:17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - b. The innumerable host that is depicted in heaven around the throne. This symbolically pictures the ultimate, eternal victory the faithful are promised in heaven.
 5. Revelation 8: The sounding of the first four trumpets.
 - a. This event was preceded by the silence in heaven and the assurance that God hears and answers the prayers of his saints.
 - b. The first four trumpets represent various natural calamities brought against the enemies of the church (the Roman Empire): "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 6. Revelation 9: The sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets.
 - a. The fifth trumpet: probably represents the internal corruption of Rome which God would also use in bringing about their downfall.
 - b. The sixth trumpet: the invading hordes which would bring the empire to its knees.
 7. Revelation 10-11: Another interlude giving more consoling visions.
 - a. The mighty angel with a message for all the earth.
 - b. The little book episode: a great work yet remained for John—but with bitter results.
 - c. Measuring the temple (the church) for providential protection.
 - d. The two witnesses (the church) would successfully do their work and would then be put to death (the cause would be hindered), but would be resurrected.
 8. Revelation 11:14-19: The sounding of the seventh trumpet; this is symbolic assurance given the church that God would not desert his faithful.
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REVELATION 12

The Woman and Dragon—The Spiritual War in Heaven

A. Revelation 12:1-6: The Woman and the Dragon Episode.

1. Some scholars divide the book at this point, making chapters 1-11 one unit and 12-22 another unit. Some claim that chapters 12-22 is simply a repeat of the things taught in the first eleven chapters. Ray Summers gives the following response to these points:
 - a. “It is true that the writer makes a new beginning at 12:1 but the reader was prepared for that by 10:11 where John was told that he was to prophesy many more things to many people..... The characters here are essentially the same; the conflict is the same but is presented under a different aspect; the outcome is the same as has been indicated in the beginning. It is interesting to note that from here to the end of the book the action is much faster than heretofore. In climatic sequence judgment on Rome is followed by judgment on all evil. Finally the conflict emerges into complete victory for God and the forces of righteousness” (Summers, p.169).
 - b. The struggle coming up is between the woman and her offspring in opposition to the dragon and his allies (the first beast and the second beast). These characters must be identified in order for us to understand the message. This spiritual struggle described is rooted in God’s ancient warning to Satan:
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:21-28: "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
2. Verses 1-2: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."
 - a. John saw a sign (*semeion*—a miraculous wonder): a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon as her footstool, and a crown of twelve stars on her head; she was with child and cried out in the travail of giving birth.
 - b. Whom did the woman represent? Various views that have been suggested:
 - 1) Some say that the woman represents the church. But this does not fit the pattern: this view would have the church producing Christ. The man-child brought forth is Christ as is indicated by verse five. The church did not produce Christ, but rather Christ brought the church into being.
 - 2) Some say that the woman represented the virgin Mary, who brought Jesus into the world by miraculous birth. But this view puts too much emphasis on Mary, and the description given does not fit her history: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:13-17).
 - 3) Some say the woman represents the whole Jewish nation from which Christ sprang. However, the Jewish nation rejected Christ.
 - 4) Another says that the woman represents the church and the man child represents the converts made

- by the church. But new converts are part of the church and are not a separate entity.
- c. Our view is that she represents the faithful people of the Jewish era, the remnant which remained loyal to God in Old Testament Israel. In support of this view, consider:
- 1) Micah 4:10: "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." [The nation would be given up until the time that the remnant (the daughter of Zion) had brought forth him who would be the ruler in Israel (Mic. 5:2-3)].
 - 2) Micah 5:2-3: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time *that* she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."
 - 3) Isaiah 66:7-8: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." [The prophet speaks of the birth of the man child and the new nation that would come through him. It was through this faithful remnant that the man child was born and the new spiritual nation brought forth].
 - 4) However, the woman symbolized more than just the Old Covenant remnant. After bearing the man child she came to represent all of God's people, for children are those "that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17).
 - a) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - b) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
3. Verses 3-4: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."
- a. The vision described was seen in heaven—it is depicted from heaven's point of view. The dragon, the principle character in this part of the vision, was not in heaven, but was in the vision which was being seen in heaven. There is no doubt about the identity of this individual—he is called the "Devil" (verse 9).
 - b. Colors have come to be representative of certain emotions, dispositions, and events:
 - 1) Black—grief, sorrow, wickedness.
 - 2) White—purity, victory.
 - 3) Blue—calmness, happiness.
 - 4) Red—anger, bloodshed, evil (i.e., "scarlet" woman). This symbolic dragon is pictured as red, Satan was a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).
 - c. Seven is symbolic of perfection. The seven heads of the dragon would symbolize the fullness of intelligence; the devil is a mastermind of craftiness and cunning:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 3) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
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- d. Satan has fullness of power in his realm. The word “horn” is used in the Bible to represent power and might.
- 1) Deuteronomy 33:17: "His glory *is like* the firstling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 2:10: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:4: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 5) Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - 6) Ephesians 6:13-17: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- e. He is pictured as having seven crowns (diadems) on his heads. “Diadem” came to designate the royal headdress of monarchs, ornamented with gold and jewels. The word is used here to symbolize the unholy power possessed by Satan. His ungodly influence is described by the picture of him dragging away a third of the stars.
- f. He awaited the birth of the woman’s child so that he could destroy it as soon as it was born. Satan knew from Old Testament promises that a great Personage was coming (Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Isa. 53). He did not know the details of God’s plan; he thought he was sure to defeat God by putting his Son to death on the cross; little did he realize he was helping to fulfill God’s plan. He began to try to destroy Christ through Herod the Great (Matt. 2:3,16-20); and at various other times during Christ’s ministry (Luke 4:16-30; John 8:58-59; 10:31).
- 1) Matthew 2:3: “When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.”
 - 2) Matthew 2:16-20: “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.”
 - 3) Luke 4:28-30: “And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.”
 - 4) John 8:58-59: “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”
 - 5) John 10:31: “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.”
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- g. His fighting against the church was no less severe. The church has always faced extreme danger; it will never reach a time on earth when Satan will lessen his attacks against it. His assaults take various forms: in the early years he used physical force; he currently uses counterfeit messages of manmade churches to lessen the influence of the Lord's church; and he has been successful many times by using the lusts and weaknesses of members to create trouble in the church.
 - h. The church in many localities in America is facing troubles. These include false doctrine, immorality, division, apathy, worldliness, ignorance of the Scriptures, and compromise. There is a decided lack of growth in places. Some congregations are baptizing only children of members. And many of the younger generation are weak, and not a few go into apostasy. There needs to be a great revival of knowledge, spirituality, and numerical growth. How can this be done? First, each of us must be certain we are what we ought to be. Then, we can look into our own family, and among our own circle of friends, and do what we can to impart a knowledge of the truth to them, and try to lead them to salvation by our godly influence.
4. Verses 5-6: "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days."
- a. There can be little doubt about the identity of the man child brought forth by the woman. These verses describe Christ very plainly. The woman as described in verses 1-2 represents God's faithful of the Old Testament era; in verse 6, she comes to represent God's faithful of this age (the church). When Christ was exalted to heaven to sit on God's throne, the church was scattered abroad, attacked by Satan on every hand; but God was sustaining it, and would do so for 1260 days (three and one half years—an indefinite period of time (half of the perfect/complete number seven).
 - b. This corresponds with Revelation 11, where the same time is involved—a time of intense trial and persecution. This chapter thus far has beautifully described our first century brethren in their current situation. A sweeping survey of history is given, from the coming of Christ to the end of the period of harsh tribulation. In this process, encouragement and hope are given for ultimate victory.
 - c. The one brought forth by the woman is described as *a son, a man child*; this shows that he was no weakling. He would rule with a rod of iron. The destiny of all nations and every individual is in the hands of Christ.
 - 1) Psalms 2:6-9: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
 - 2) Psalms 110:5-6: "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill *the places* with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries."
 - 3) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...."
 - d. The picture of the woman fleeing into the wilderness grows out of Bible examples:
 - 1) Moses fled into the wilderness, where God nurtured and sustained him, thus equipping him for the great mission of leading Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 4—15).
 - 2) Elijah fled into the wilderness to escape the wrath of Jezebel, coming to Sinai where he found protection and instruction (1 Kings 19).
 - 3) Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt to escape Herod's wrath (Matt. 2)
 - 4) Paul went into Arabia where was prepared further for his great work (Gal. 1).

B. Revelation 12:7-12: The Great Spiritual War.

1. A word of caution: "Let us settle firmly in our hearts, and stick to it consistently, that the Apocalypse is a book of spiritual cartoons, the pictures not in any case to be mistaken for the reality, no matter how vividly drawn. As already pointed out, the rest of this chapter, concerning the Radiant Woman, the Red Dragon, and their adventures, is clearly seen by all interpreters to be symbolic, although they do not agree on what is symbolized. Is it not, then, to introduce confusion into the interpretation to suppose that the apostle suddenly shifts from symbolism to reality when he tells of the war in heaven?" (Albertus Pieters, quoted by Hailey, p.273).
 2. The context does not allow us to interpret this vision as descriptive of some literal war in heaven which resulted in the Devil and his angels being literally cast out of heaven. Rather, the war depicted is spiritual in nature, in keeping with the general theme of the book. Satan knew about God's plan to send the Messiah and tried continually to thwart that plan to keep it from fruition.
 - a. He had his disciple Cain to kill the righteous son of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4); but God gave them another son, Seth. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). He may have thought that Seth was the promised "seed" of the woman.
 - b. He enticed the descendants of righteous Seth to intermarry with the unrighteous descendants of Cain (Gen. 6), thus to pollute the race with sin and hinder God's plan. But Noah was just and perfect (Gen. 6:8-9). All the wicked descendants of Cain and Seth were destroyed in the flood.
 - c. The descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (the sons of Noah) were mostly wicked. But Abraham was righteous and to him the promise was made: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - d. However, Sarah was barren, so it seemed that God's plan had reached a dead-end. Through the miraculous intervention of God, Sarah bore a son (Isaac).
 - e. It seemed that God played into Satan's hands when he told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22). But after proving Abraham's faith, a proper sacrifice was provided.
 - f. Then Isaac's wife Rebekah was barren, but when she finally conceived, two sons were born— Jacob and Esau. Jacob was chosen to be the line through whom the Messiah would come; Esau tried to kill Jacob, unsuccessfully.
 - g. The Egyptian Bondage and the difficulties of the wilderness wanderings were efforts (in part) by Satan to spoil God's purpose—but the Almighty prevailed.
 - h. God planned to send his Son through the lineage of David. Satan used Saul (1 Sam. 18), Athaliah (2 Kings 11), and Israel and Syria (Isa. 7:6-14) in attempts to destroy David and his seed. God saw that these attempts failed.
 - i. He tried to destroy all of the Israelites through Haman's vengeful efforts, but God brought Esther to a position of influence to intervene (Esth. 4).
 - j. When Christ was born, Herod attempted to destroy him but failed (Matt. 2).
 - k. Attempts were made on the Savior's life before he could conclude his work, but each failed. When he was crucified, Satan no doubt thought he had finally prevailed over God, but Christ arose from the dead!
 - l. Lying in the background of Revelation 12:7-12 was the foregoing struggle between God and Satan.
 3. An important struggle occurred while Christ was in the hadean realm.
 - a. "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12:29). This is a reference to the Savior's struggle with Satan: he was then casting out demons and was soon to enter Satan's very den at which time he would bind the devil. This binding took place when he overcame death.
 - b. Near the end of his earthly mission, the Lord said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). Satan had nothing on the Lord by which
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- to defeat him or to hold him in death.
- c. By his being raised from the dead, Christ “led captivity captive...” (Eph. 4:8). “*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it*” (Col. 2:15). He took a fleshly body “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). It was not possible that Christ should be held by death: “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:54-56: “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.” [Our own resurrection will be a victory over Satan].
 - 2) 1 John 3:8: “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”
 - d. Another tremendous struggle occurred when the church began its world-wide mission. Passages:
 - 1) Acts 8:1: “And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”
 - 2) Acts 8:4: “Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.”
 - 3) Acts 14:22: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”
 - 4) Acts 28:22: “But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.”
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:12: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”
 - e. The church of the first century was in a life and death struggle against the devil and his agents. The brethren to whom Revelation was addressed were on the cutting edge of this fight. **This spiritual war between the church and sin is the war being depicted by the text.** This war will continue as long as there are any faithful saints left on earth.
4. Verses 7-8: “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”
 - a. This picture symbolized the conflict between truth and error; a literal war in literal heaven is not meant; the dragon was not in heaven. “Heaven” defines the battleground as spiritual, i.e., involving spiritual matters. Michael and his angels represent the faithful saints on earth struggling against the dragon and his angels, which are representative of the devil and his henchmen (pagan Rome and its pagan religions).
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”
 - 2) Ephesians 6:10-17: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:”
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- 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." [Here, the enemy had infiltrated the church and must be opposed].
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - b. Our brethren ultimately prevailed. This victory was still in the future when John wrote, but it is so sure that John presents it as having already occurred. The victory they won resulted in the church being firmly planted on the earth, in the hearts of a very great many honest people. The powers of Satan did not prevail. The Lord won the initial battle when he arose from the dead. The saints won the next series of battles when they survived the persecutions of Judaism and Rome. Since then each generation of saints win battles as they faithfully obey the gospel, preach and defend the truth, and pass the pure gospel on to the next generation. Individuals fight battles as we personally struggle against the sinful influences that assail us.
 5. Verse 9: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
 - a. The real identity of the dragon is presented. His ability to deceive the whole world is indicated: "*And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*" (1 John 5:19). We are not without knowledge of him, nor are we without power to resist his enticements.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 2) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - b. He could not prevail in his conflict with Michael and was cast out into the earth. This is a figurative expression showing his loss of power and influence. He was using pagan forces as his instruments against Christianity. The time period involved primarily was that span of time in which Rome fought so viciously against the church. Again, the victory is presented as having already occurred since God had already decreed the final outcome. He would soon lose his primary weapon in his fight against the church—the evil power of the Pagan Roman Empire.
 - c. Daniel 2:44 predicted the ultimate demise of the Roman kings at the hands of God's spiritual kingdom. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, **but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.**"
 6. Verse 10: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."
 - a. After the triumph, a great voice in heaven rejoiced in the victory of righteousness. It is not meant that salvation, power, and the kingdom had just come; salvation through Christ, the power of the gospel, and the authority of Christ had been exercised from the beginning of the Christian age. What is meant is that these were now more widely and easily available—following the eventual overthrow of the persecuting power.
 - b. The accuser was the dragon (Satan). The name *Satan* means "adversary" and the word *devil* means "accuser" or "slanderer." He is the enemy of God's people; he slanders and makes accusations against us before God (not necessarily in the very presence of God in heaven, but in the sight of God, he makes his accusations). His slanders would not be effective with God, for the Father knows our true situation. Rather, the slanders are those made (in God's sight) against us before the world.
 - 1) Romans 3:8: "And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*."
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- c. That Satan lost much of his former power was reason for rejoicing. The persecutions our brethren faced in the early part of the Christian era at the hands of pagan Rome have not been equaled in scope since then. Also, with the victory of Christ over the devil, Satan's power has been severely curtailed: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). At one time, he could send his demons to take over men and control them against their will, but now he has power over us only to the extent that we allow him control.
- 1) Mark 9:17-18: "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not."
 - 2) Luke 9:38-39: "And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him."
7. Verse 11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."
- a. The brethren (saints) overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. They had been redeemed by that blood and stood approved before God by that blood.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - b. They never wavered in their loyalty; they did not even refuse to die for the truth.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."
 - 2) Acts 20:24: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."
 - c. They won the victory by faithfulness to the gospel and through the proclamation and defense of the truth. This is still the formula for victory:
 - 1) Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it."
 - 2) Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 3) Ephesians 6:10-17: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:2-5: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound
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doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

- 6) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Cf. Matthew 4:1-11.
- 7) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
8. Verse 12: "Therefore rejoice, *ye* heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
 - a. These words also came from the great voice of verse 10. The heavens and all created beings are called on to rejoice on account of the great victory. But then a woe is pronounced upon the earth and sea because of the devil who was cast down. Though his power has been greatly diminished and his ultimate defeat is assured, yet he maintained enough power to bring great problems upon mankind.
 - b. The inhabitants of the earth and sea probably are the citizens of the Roman Empire who would suffer immensely as a result of being instruments in the devil's hands. An extended application could be that though he lost much of his power in his struggles against Christ and the church, yet he retains enough strength to wreak havoc on the unsuspecting (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). When he is defeated in one scheme, he transfers his efforts into another channel, just as evil rulers have commonly done.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - c. He is industrious in his efforts because he knows his time is short. He knew the time he had to bring severe persecution against the church was limited; he also knows that the Judgment Day is coming, when he will be cast into the lake of fire prepared especially for him and his angels (Matt. 25:41-46; cf. Matt. 8:29).
 - d. Satan remains an extremely powerful foe, but we have a weapon with which he cannot contend—the word of God: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12; cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:10-17).

C. Revelation 12:13-17: The Dragon Persecutes the Woman.

1. This section of the chapter may simply be an expansion of verse six. Perhaps it also repeats the information of the first twelve verses, under a slightly different picture.
2. Verses 13-14: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."
 - a. There can be little doubt about the identity of the man child brought forth by the woman. These verses describe Christ very plainly. The woman as described in verses 1-2 represents God's faithful of the Old Testament era; in verse 6, she comes to represent God's faithful of this age (the church). When Christ was exalted to heaven to sit on God's throne, the church was scattered abroad, attacked by Satan on every hand; but God was sustaining it, and would do so for 1260 days (three and one half years—an indefinite period of time (half of the perfect/complete number seven). This corresponds with Revelation 11, where the same time is involved—a time of intense trial and persecution. This chapter

thus far has beautifully described our first century brethren in their current situation.

- b. It is obvious that the devil is pictured here as fighting against the church. The church is depicted as having been given an eagle's wings with which to flee from her tormentor. In Israel's flight from Egypt, God said he had borne them on eagle's wings (Ex. 19:4). In this wilderness refuge, the woman is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, which corresponds to the 1260 days of verse 6. God's providential care for his people is pictured. Compare:
 - 1) Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 32:11: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings."
 - 3) Exodus 23:20: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."
 - 4) Psalms 36:7: "How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."
 - 5) Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint."
 - 6) Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days."
 - c. "Since the man child is beyond Satan's power to attack, the dragon seeks to hurt the child by persecuting the woman who gave him birth. This further confirms the view that the woman is spiritual Zion, the sum of God's people. Satan did not carry his war to the Jewish nation, nor to the Jewish remnant that had kept faith with God under the Old Covenant, but to the new spiritual Zion, the church. To persecute (*dioko*, used only here in Revelation), means 'to run after...to pursue (in a hostile manner)...hence, to persecute' (Thayer). Jesus had forewarned his disciples of such hostile pursuit when he said, 'If they [of the world] persecuted me, they will also persecute you' (John 15:20)" (Hailey, p.278).
 - d. "The serpent is no match for the Lord, whose power has been demonstrated in the conflict revealed above; and now by that same power the Lord comes to the rescue of the woman. Interpretation of this part of the vision must be drawn from the account of ancient Israel's deliverance from Egypt. When Jehovah delivered his people from Pharaoh's threats of destruction, he said, 'I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself' (Exod. 19:4; cf. Deut. 32:11)...The Lord delivers, protects, and provides for his own; there is no point of weakness or failure on his part. The time, times, and half a time, is equivalent to the twelve hundred sixty days of verse 6....Through the wilderness is that place of withdrawal where God's people are protected and nurtured for a particular period (v.6), there is a sense in which they are ever in the wilderness, withdrawn from the world, protected and disciplined by the Lord; for we sit with him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6), and our life 'is hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3)" (ibid. pp.278f).
3. Verses 15-16: "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."
 - a. The earth is personified and offers aid to the woman by swallowing up the flood of waters which the dragon spewed forth. The earth was used in a literal sense during the wilderness experiences of Israel to swallow (in punishment) Korah and his rebels: "And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every

side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for *I have not done them* of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; *then* the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD" (Num. 16:19-30).

- b. The serpent (Satan) attacked her with a great flood of water which he spewed from his mouth. Compare Psalm 18:4, Isaiah 59:19, and Daniel 9:26—these use the symbology of a flood to depict persecution and destruction. But the flood sent against the church was swallowed up by the earth so that no harm came to the saints. God was seeing to it that his people were protected. The picture of the earth swallowing up the flood of water is incidental; it is part of the overall depiction of God's deliverance. The precise means of this protection is not delineated.
 - 1) Psalms 18:4: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid."
 - 2) Isaiah 59:19: "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."
 - 3) Daniel 9:26: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."
- c. "In verse 6 the woman was seen as she took her flight into the wilderness. She is fleeing the wrath of the dragon. She will be protected for 1,260 days or, roughly speaking, three and one-half years. The same idea is repeated in verse 14 in the symbol 'a time, times, and half a time,' or three and one-half times. Remember that in Jewish apocalyptic writings this was a number which symbolized indefiniteness, turmoil, trouble....In his efforts to destroy her, the dragon spits out a river to engulf her, but the earth swallows it up, and she is safe. The dragon is unable to destroy her..." (Summers, p.173).
4. Verse 17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - a. The dragon was very angry and made war with the remnant of the woman's seed. This remnant is described as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Christ. The reference is to faithful Christians.
 - b. John T. Hinds saw in this passage a change in the tactics of the enemy against the Lord's cause. At the first, the church as a whole was attacked by paganism. "Failing to accomplish this result, the wrath and indignation of idol worshipers against the church would reach extreme limits. Satan being repulsed in his efforts to blot out the church as an institution changed his plans of attack. Evidently his method from that time on was to persecute the individual members of the church, here referred to as the 'seed' of the woman....This war was to be waged against 'the rest' of her seed—that is, against individual followers of Christ who were trying to keep faithfully the commandments of God; those who in persecutions would not deny Christ's words; those martyred because they would not renounce their faith" (p.187).
 - c. "The dragon was furious. He had been defeated in his effort to devour the man child, who was caught up to God and his throne; and he had failed to sweep away the woman when the earth swallowed up his river of lies and she escaped into the wilderness. Incensed by these two defeats, he turned on the woman's seed to do battle with them. 'The rest of her seed' are the saints. Jesus is 'the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29), and 'is not ashamed to call them brethren' (Heb. 2:11). The rest 'that keep the commandments of God' are not Jews or followers of the Jewish law, but the faithful servants under Christ, the saints (14:12) who keep the commandments of the gospel....These are also to 'hold the testimony of Jesus,' both the truth to which Jesus bare witness (John 18:37), and their own testimony of faith in that truth, being willing to die for it if need be (20:4). These are they who now come under the destructive wrath of the dragon, but are assured of victory in Christ" (Hailey, pp.280f).
 - d. "It seems that the purpose of these symbols is to show John, and all who read and understand, the

conflicts which have raged between righteousness and wickedness through the ages, and that God has protected his people and helped them to overcome the powers of Satan. Furthermore, they are intended to show, all who understand, the advantage of being in the service of Christ and under God's protecting seal" (W.S. Thompson, p.125).

5. In the Book of Revelation, we must keep in mind that the center of God's communication is not the Jews, but Christians; it is not the Mosaic System, but the Religion of Christ that is being described. The theories of the Millennialists place the emphasis on fleshly Israel, and fail to notice the fact that the Lord's church is now the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16; cf. Rom. 2:28-29).
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REVELATION 13

The Two Beasts

A. Revelation 13:1-10: The Beast Out of the Sea.

1. Verse 1: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."
 - a. Many scholars identify this beast with the emperor, Domitian, during whose reign a beastly persecution was brought against the church. Daniel 2 foretold the establishment of God's kingdom and described the worldly power enthroned at that time (the Roman Empire). He predicted that God's kingdom would destroy this great worldly power: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:40-45).
 - b. The ten horns describe the earthly power possessed by the Roman rulers; the seven heads indicate the complete intelligence and wisdom these exalted rulers thought they possessed. The seven heads may carry the implication of survivability (cf. vs. 3), but the beast's fate was sealed—his longevity would be no more real than the mythical nine lives of a cat.
 - c. On the heads were the names of blasphemy, which show the irreverent attitude toward God the beast had. The Roman emperors, especially Domitian, took to themselves the titles and names of Deity. Under Domitian's rule, worship of the Emperor was widespread and enforced.
 - d. "Daniel 7 is probably the most helpful passage in interpreting John's use of 'the sea,' and the one upon which the vision rests....In his vision, Daniel saw the four winds of heaven as they broke forth 'upon the great sea. And the four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another' (7:2f). From the prophet's use of the word, it seems clear that the sea symbolizes the human societies or nations with their stormy upheavals, out of which the empires of earth arise. These four beasts were four great kingdoms which emerged from such upheavals. In Revelation, John refers to the sea: (1) literally, as a part of creation (5:13; 10:6; 14:7); (2) to describe the limits of the angel's voice (7:1-3); (3) symbolically, indicating God's transcendence (4:6; 15:2); and (4) to signify the whole of society known at that time (8:8f; 10:2, 8; 12:12; 13:1; 21:1)" (Hailey, p.283).
2. Verse 2: "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority" (ASV).
 - a. This description helps to show that this beast is the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Daniel's vision is parallel to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2). The first beast of Daniel was the Babylonian Empire, the second was the Medo-Persian kingdom, the third was the Macedonian, and the fourth was the Roman Empire. The power and authority this beast of Revelation had was from the dragon (Satan). It must be remembered that all authority ultimate derives from God, thus Satan empowers evil men and governments only as God permits.
 - 1) John 19:11: "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."
 - 2) Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth

the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

- 3) 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."

b. Statements from Daniel 7:

- 1) Daniel 7:1-8: "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."
 - 2) Daniel 7:9-12: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."
 - 3) Daniel 7:16-20: "I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."
 - 4) Daniel 7:21-28: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth,
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- and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”
- c. “From the description of the beast in these two verses it seems beyond question that this beast out of the sea is the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7)...This vision of Daniel is parallel to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in which there are four kingdoms, the Babylonian being the first (Dan. 2).
- 1) “These four kingdoms, symbolized by the four beasts out of the sea, are the Babylonian of Daniel’s day; the Medo-Persian kingdom, which also came into power in Daniel’s lifetime (Dan. 10:1); the Macedonian, represented by the leopard, which fell into four parts after Alexander’s death; and the Roman, signified by the terrible beast.
 - 2) “The beast of John’s vision is a synthesis, or an embodiment of Daniel’s first three, for as their dominion was taken away, ‘their lives were prolonged for a season and a time’ (Dan. 7:12); that is, each lived in spirit in the next until the climax was reached in the fourth beast.
 - 3) “The belief that John’s beast is this fourth of Daniel’s vision, therefore the Roman Empire, is further confirmed by Daniel’s description, that ‘it had ten horns,’ as does the beast in John’s vision. Here is a plain introduction of the Roman Empire as an instrument of Satan’s diabolical and blasphemous power, cruelty, and opposition to God’s kingdom.
 - 4) “In the mighty, worldwide Roman Empire was combined the tearing power of Chaldea (the lion), the crushing force of Medo-Persia (the bear), and the swift and ferocious character of Macedonia under Alexander (the leopard).
 - 5) “This beast symbolized all the anti-God opposition by force that could ever be brought against the people of God, but to John and the saints to whom he wrote it definitely personified the empire of their day” (Hailey, pp.284f).
- d. This terrible beast derived his power from the dragon (Satan). God gave the principle of civil government (Rom. 13:1-7), and when it is operated within the bounds of morality and justice, it is a great blessing to humanity. But civil government, like all other institutions and entities, can be subjugated to evil powers, and become a terrible scourge to humanity.
- e. This is what the Roman government had become—it was taken over by evil men, who received their impetus from satanic motives. Daniel reports that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:32). Many rulers abuse their power for selfish and other sinful purposes, and must finally answer to the Almighty for their misuse of the reins of government.
3. Verse 3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."
- a. One of the beast’s seven heads was mortally wounded but recovered, much to the amazement of the world. Many interpretations are offered by the commentators, but the best seems to be the one which identifies it with the death of Nero (the first emperor to persecute the church) and the resumption of persecution of the church under Domitian.
 - b. There was a current theory that Nero would rise from the dead and resume his evil reign. The death of Nero in A.D. 68 resulted in confusion and anarchy in the empire for two years. There was no official persecution of the church by the Romans from the death of Nero until 81 A.D., when it was resumed under Domitian. This is likely what is symbolized by the healing of the beast’s head; it would cause the world to be filled with awe and amazement.
4. Verse 4: "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"
- a. The unregenerated populace worshipped the dragon and the beast. The world followed the beast,

giving homage to him. When one worships the wrong being, or offers false worship, that worship is in reality being rendered to Satan.

- b. The Roman idols had never given anything in response to the adoration of the people, but now the Emperor was displaying awesome power and gave wealth, glory and influence to many of the citizens. Men are prone to over-estimate the power of their great rulers. Hitler's awesome rule seemed invincible, but God had the final word.
- c. Regarding the death of Nero:
 - 1) "Hearing that the Praetorian Guard was ready to abandon Nero for proper remuneration, the Senate proclaimed Galba emperor. Nero put some poison into a small box and, so armed, fled from his Golden House to the Servilian Gardens on the road to Ostia. He asked such officers of the Guard as were in the palace to accompany him; all refused, and one quoted to him a line of Virgil: 'Is it, then, so hard to die?' He could not believe that the omnipotence which had ruined him had suddenly ceased. He sent appeals for help to various friends, but none replied.
 - 2) "He went down to the Tiber to drown himself, but his courage failed him. Phaon, one of his freedmen, offered to conceal him in his villa on the Via Salaria; Nero grasped at the proposal, and rode through the dark four miles out from the center of Rome. He spent that night in Phaon's cellar, clad in a soiled tunic, sleepless and hungry, and trembling at every sound. Phaon's courier brought word that the Senate had declared Nero a public enemy, had ordered his arrest, and had decreed that he should be punished 'after the ancient manner.' Nero asked what this was. 'The condemned man,' he was told, 'is stripped, is fastened to a post by a fork passing through his neck, and is then beaten to death.'
 - 3) "Terrified, he tried to stab himself; but he made the mistake of testing the poniard's point first and found it disconcertingly sharp. *Qualis artifex pereo!* He mourned — 'What an artist dies in me!'
 - 4) "As a new day dawned he heard the clatter of horses: the Senate's soldiers had tracked him down. Quoting a verse of poetry—'Hark! Now strikes upon my ear the trampling of swift couriers'—he drove a dagger into his throat; his hand faltered, and his freedman Epaphroditus helped him to press the blade home.
 - 5) "He had begged his companions to keep his corpse from being mutilated, and Galba's agents granted the wish. His old nurses, and Acre his former mistress, buried him in the vaults of the Domitii (68). Many of the populace rejoiced at his death and ran about Rome with liberty caps on their heads" (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.283f).
- d. Durant gave this information regarding Domitian: "The revolt of Saturninus was the turning point in Domitian's reign, the dividing line between his better and worse selves. He had always been coldly severe; now he slipped into cruelty. He was capable of good government, but only as an autocrat; the Senate rapidly lost power under him; and his tenacious authority as censor made that body at once subservient and vengeful. Vanity, which flourishes even in the humble, had no check in Domitian's status: he filled the Capitol with statues of himself, announced the divinity of his father, brother, wife, and sisters as well as his own, organized a new order of priests, the *Flaviales*, to tend the worship of these new deities, and required officials to speak of him, in their documents, as *Dominus et Deus Naster*—'Our Lord and God.' He sat on a throne, encouraged visitors to embrace his knees, and established in his ornate palace the etiquette of an Oriental court....
 - 1) "Against this new development rebellion rose not only in the aristocracy but among the philosophers and in the religions that were flowing into Rome from the East. The Jews and the Christians refused to adore the godhead of Domitian, the Cynics decried all government, and the Stoics, though they accepted kings, were pledged to oppose despots and honor tyrannicides. In 89 Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome, in 95 he banished them from Italy. The earlier edict applied also to the astrologers, whose predictions of the Emperor's death had brought new terrors to a mind empty of faith and open to superstition. In 93 Domitian executed some Christians for refusing to offer sacrifice before his image; according to tradition these included his nephew Flavius Clemens.
 - 2) "In the last years of his reign the Emperor's fear of conspiracy became almost a madness. He lined with shining stone the walls of the porticoes under which he walked, so that he might see mirrored

in them whatever went on behind him....Like Tiberius he listened more readily to informers as he grew older; and as the *delatores* multiplied, no citizen of any prominence could feel safe from spies, even in his home....

- 3) "Domitian made the mistake of frightening his own household. In 96 he ordered the death of his secretary Epaphroditus because, twenty-seven years before, he had helped Nero to commit suicide. The other freedmen of the imperial household felt themselves threatened. To protect themselves they resolved to kill Domitian, and the Emperor's wife Domitia joined in the plot. On the night before his last he leaped from his bed in fright. When the appointed moment came, Domitia's servant struck the first blow; four others took part in the assault; and Domitian, struggling madly, met death in the forty-fifth year of his age and the fifteenth of his reign (96). When the news reached the senators they tore down and shattered all images of him in their chamber, and ordered that all statues of him, and all inscriptions mentioning his name, should be destroyed throughout the realm" (*ibid*, pp.292f).
5. Verses 5-7: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."
 - a. Four things are said to be given to this beast:
 - 1) He had a mouth to speak great things and blasphemies. Compare Daniel 7:8,20: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn *were* eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.....And of the ten horns that *were* in his head, and *of* the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even *of* that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look *was* more stout than his fellows."
 - 2) He had authority to continue for 42 months. The duration of the four parallel periods cited below is the same as in this verse.
 - a) Revelation 11:2: "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty *and* two months."
 - b) Revelation 11:3: "And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."
 - c) Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days."
 - d) Revelation 12:14: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."
 - 3) He possessed authority to make war with the saints (cf. Dan. 7:21, 25). The period of time referred to is the duration of the persecution the church of that era endured. God permitted this to continue only for a limited time.
 - a) Daniel 7:21: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."
 - b) Daniel 7:25: "And he shall speak *great* words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."
 - 4) He was given authority over every tribe, people, tongue and nation. This describes the Roman world. They considered their empire to be the civilized world; the Mediterranean Sea is so named because the Romans considered it to be "in the middle of the earth" (the earth they possessed).
 - b. "Domitian delighted in being looked upon as divine and in being so worshiped. To the Christian such homage was idolatry and an utter denial of faith in Christ. To the Romans the refusal to worship the emperor was a sign of disloyalty to the State and an act of treason. Emperor worship was forced upon

the Christians as a test of their loyalty to the State. At first Christians were called upon to perform the ceremonies of loyal service and worship to the emperor—the placing of a pinch of incense upon the altar. To refuse was disloyal; to agree was to prove that one was not a [faithful] Christian....

- 1) “As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the *‘praefectus urbi’* for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for punishing people in the various cities over a province.
 - 2) “The group with the greatest authority was the *concilia* composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and punished in various ways all who refused. Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty.
 - 3) “All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom” (Summers, pp.92f).
6. Verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
- a. The general population would worship the beast: all those whose names were not enrolled in the Lamb's book of life.
 - b. Christ, the Lamb, is said to have been slain “from the foundation of the world.” His death on the cross was planned and intended from eternity (Isa. 53).
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) Luke 22:22: "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"
 - 3) Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
 - 4) Acts 4:28: "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."
 - 5) Ephesians 3:11: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. Premillennialists, who insist that Revelation must be interpreted literally, deny that God planned for the death of Christ; they assert that he came to set up an earthly kingdom with his headquarters in Jerusalem, but that he delayed establishing the kingdom when the Jews rejected Jesus; they say that God then decided to set up the church instead, which required the death of Christ. The Bible shows consistently that the crucifixion of Christ was planned from eternity, and that the kingdom (which is the church) was set up on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
7. Verse 9: "If any man have an ear, let him hear."
- a. It is significant that this admonition is given again at this point. Perhaps it was placed here as a warning to the literalists and futurists with their sensational ideas.
 - b. Also, the responsibility is placed on the individual to hear what God says. It is not the obligation of God to give anyone directly a knowledge of his will—we must study and learn and apply it personally.
 - 1) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
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- 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Luke 8:11-15: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience."
 - 4) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - 6) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
 - 7) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
8. Verse 10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (KJV). "If any man *is* for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (ASV).
- a. The people of the world who would imprison and slay the saints would face similar fates.
 - 1) Matthew 26:52: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - b. The saints were told not to resist captivity and the sword; in having this attitude they would be showing steadfastness and faith. A Christian is required to be obedient to civil rulers, except when that obedience would put them in disobedience to the will of God; in such cases, disobedience to civil authority would incur punishment from the government—saints are gladly to accept the consequences.
 - c. If we are guided by worldly wisdom, we might decide that it is foolish to oppose the power of the civil state when it decrees that we must compromise the gospel or be persecuted [perhaps imprisoned or slain]. To the worldly mind, it might appear wise to relax our faith. By so-doing, we would spare ourselves the immediate trouble—but ultimately we will have to answer to God. The short-term victory might soon be lost, and surely lost in the Judgment. We must maintain steadfastness, trusting God to provide the ultimate victory. The Christian's faith would be tested more than once; if he gives in once, he would have to continue giving in—or else be punished.
 - d. "In revealing the beast and his great power, John had shown the beast's ability to overcome the death-stroke (v. 3), his power to make war against the saints and to overcome them (v. 7), and the worship
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that would be given to him by the world (v. 8). How shall the saints react to this power and opposition? They were not to resist the civil powers (Rom. 13:2; I Peter 2:13), but were to fight against the powers of evil with spiritual weapons (II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18). Nor were they to fear them that could destroy the body, but who had no power beyond that; they were to fear Him whose power extended beyond the body to include the soul (Luke 12:4f); for their victory would be in their faith (I John 5:4). This leads to the conclusion that John was writing of saints: if they follow the world's method of warfare by resisting the sword, they will suffer the world's consequence of such methods. Therefore, they are to accept captivity or the sword; in doing so they clearly demonstrate the patience (steadfastness) of the saints and their faith in God to give the victory in His own way" (Hailey, pp.291f).

B. Revelation 13:11-18: The Second Beast.

1. Verse 11: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."
 - a. As the dragon (ASV) stood on the sea shore, the first beast arose out of the sea (13:1); the second beast now arises out of the earth. "It could be said the one was to serve as his right hand and the other as his left" (Hailey).
 - b. This second beast [which we discussed earlier] had the outward appearance of a harmless creature: he had two horns like a lamb. The little "nubs" of horns on a lamb are more cute than harmful. But when he spake it was like the voice of a dragon—authoritative and awesome.
 - c. A lamb is symbolic of religious sacrifice, thus this beast represents some sort of religion; since this beast spoke as a dragon, he is symbolic of some powerful false religion:
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - d. The preeminent false religion of the time was paganism. There was in the first century a Roman organization in Asia which was dedicated to forcing the citizens to worship the Roman Emperor. This organization, called the *Concilia*, was very powerful, having the authority of Rome behind it.
 - e. The second beast is inferior in authority to the first, since he operates by the authority of the first beast. This second beast is likely the *concilia*.
2. Verse 12: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."
 - a. This verse lends support to the view in the above comments. The first beast is most likely representative of Domitian, the Roman Emperor; the second beast caused the people to worship the first beast. This is precisely what the *Concilia* did. Beginning with Domitian's reign, the state religion was emperor worship. The *Concilia* was charged with enforcing emperor worship throughout the empire.
 - b. Remember the comments earlier quoted from Summers:
 - 1) "As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the '*praefectus urbi*' for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for punishing people in the various cities over a province.
 - 2) "The group with the greatest authority was the *concilia* composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people

- to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and punished in various ways all who refused.
- 3) "Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty. All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom" (Summers, pp.92f).
3. Verses 13-14: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."
 - a. The second beast performed "great wonders" (signs) by which he was able to deceive many people. His wonders were "lying wonders." Compare:
 - 1) Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10: "*Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."
 - b. The purpose of the true miracles which God wrought was to confirm the messages of his spokesmen.
 - 1) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:2-4: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - c. This evil beast used false signs in order to deceive the people. His signs were not genuine, for if God allowed Satan to deceive by genuine miracles he would thereby nullify his own witness to truth. The difference between true and false signs is illustrated in Acts 8:5-13: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." Simon easily saw the difference.
 - d. Where that which is true is found, that which is counterfeit often appears. This is true of money, the Bible, Christ, the church, worship, and God.
 - e. This is the third time that mention is made of the deadly wound sustained by the first beast. This repetition indicates the importance of the fact. The first official persecution of the church by Rome occurred during Nero's reign. This persecution was halted following Nero's death in A.D. 68. It was resurrected under the reign of Domitian. This is very likely the significance of the healing of the deadly wound.
 - f. The second beast commanded that an image be made to the first beast by the people of the earth. This clearly serves to show that emperor worship is the point of the passage.
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4. Verse 15: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."
 - a. "Images were set up to make worship of the emperor easier (v. 14). This is a well-known fact in Roman history in the time of Domitian. When Trajan came to be emperor, he had many of the golden images melted and turned to better purposes. People who refused to worship the emperor Domitian were refused the privileges of buying and selling in the market places. This is reflected in verse 17. Those who did worship him received a mark upon their hand or forehead to indicate, according to the custom of some of the pagan cults, that the individual was an adherent of the particular deity" (Summers, p.175).
 - b. The second beast had power to give life (breath) to the image to cause it to speak, and cause those who would not worship the image to be put to death. The priests serving idols often used ventriloquism and smoke to deceive men into thinking the idol was alive.
 - c. The *Concilia* had power to put to death some who would not worship the emperor. Polycarp, an elder from Smyrna, was charged with being a Christian; he was given the opportunity to prove his innocence by reviling Christ; he refused and was burned to death.
 - d. "Hadrian, a skeptic open to all ideas, instructed his appointees to give the Christians the benefit of every doubt. Being more religious, Antoninus allowed more persecution. At Smyrna the populace demanded of the 'Asiarch' Philip that he enforce the law; he complied by having eleven Christians executed in the amphitheater (155). The bloodthirst of the crowd was aroused rather than assuaged; it clamored for the death of Polycarp, a saintly patriarch of eighty-six years, who was said in his youth to have known John. Roman soldiers found the old man in a suburban retreat, and brought him unresisting before the Asiarch at the games. Philip pressed him: 'Take the oath, revile Christ, and I will let you go.' Polycarp, says the most ancient of the *Acts of the Martyrs*, replied: 'For eighty-six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?' The crowd cried out that he should be burned alive" (Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.648). Polycarp was executed.
 - e. How was the beast able to give life to the image? "Was it through ventriloquism and other magical arts? Or was it the function and obligation of the commune to make the Caesar-worship live and speak the mind of the empire? This latter seems to be more plausible. The power of death for those who refused to pay homage to 'Augustus and Rome' rested in the magistrate and religious hierarchy. This put the Christian in the position where he must confess either Christ or Caesar as Lord, thus choosing between immediate death and a few added years of life before eternal death. This same spirit continued to live and find expression in the apostate churches of later years" (Hailey, p.295).
 - f. "The symbolism is most probably derived from the heathen oracles. This beast is permitted to give life, to impart spirit to the image; that is, he gives it an appearance of reality which a mere image could not possess. This is the dangerous power of self deceit. If men would face the naked truth, stripped of plausible arguments and specious resemblances, they would see that there was no reality in the ideal which they place before their minds, and their worship of which is prompted by love of the world, and the denial of God's power. Together with the attempt to deceive men into worshipping the image, is offered the alternative of death, or, should we not say, apparent death? It is only self deceit which makes men imagine that the alternative to an acceptance of the sovereignty of Satan and the world is death. No doubt many Christians in John's time were thus beguiled. They deceived themselves by imagining that they must either conform to the heathen practices required of them, or suffer death; those with clearer mental vision saw that the threatened death was in reality life" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 5. Verse 16: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."
 - a. This second beast had authority to require all to receive a mark in their forehead or on their right hand. As God had symbolically sealed his people with a mark on their foreheads, so the beast imitates this by requiring all to indicate their allegiance to him by a mark. Was the seal literally made on their hands or foreheads? Or is this another symbol? There is no reason why we should suppose this was an actual brand in the flesh of the individual, although in ancient times such is known to have been done.
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- b. "As the seal which God caused to be placed on the foreheads of his subjects was not physical but a spiritual recognition of devotion to Him, it is best to think of the mark of the beast as the stamp of paganism impressed upon the character and conduct of idolaters. The boycott of Christians and the idolatry of pagans could indeed be maintained without a literal visible sign, for the Christian's character and life caused the world to boycott him" (Hailey, p.296).
- c. The prescribed mark was intended for everyone, regardless of their status in life, economically or socially. A powerful penalty was imposed on anyone refusing the mark.
6. Verse 17: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
- a. As a further means of forcing allegiance to the first beast, no one was permitted to buy or sell unless he had the mark. This offers some confirmation to our view of the third seal: "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and *see* thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:6).
- b. Economic discrimination is a very powerful means of forcing obedience. It has been used by many evil governments through the centuries. Stalin starved millions in the Ukraine, as a means to subdue and punish.
- c. "The manner in which this was fulfilled in the early ages of the Church is sufficiently notorious. Then faithfulness to the cause of Christ frequently meant banishment from friends, kindred, and home. John himself was feeling the effect of this at the time when he wrote these words in exile at Patmos. So, at the present day, the Jews regard as an utter alien any one of their number who embraces Christianity" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
7. Verse 18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six."
- a. The verse expresses divine wisdom and could be understood. What is to be counted is the number of the beast; attention is focused on the number. It is easy to turn a name into a number, but to turn a number into a name is difficult. In ancient languages a letter was often used also as a number as in Latin: V = 5; X = 10; C = 100.
- b. One prominent interpretation of 666 is that the reference is to Nero Caesar, which in the Greek is *Neron Kaisar*. Translated into Hebrew, and letting the letters represent their numeric value, one arrives at the desired number. "From early Christian history men have been counting the name of the beast to determine his identity. One of the most frequently used theories....reduces 'Nero Caesar' to the Hebrew consonant equivalent 'Nron Ksr' and adds up the numerical equivalent for each letter" (Summers, p.175). However, the vowels are dropped and only the consonants are counted [NRON KSR]:

1) The figure reached:

LETTER	NUMBER
N	50
R	200
O	6
N	50
K	100
S	60
R	200
TOTAL	666

- 2) In the Greek language (in which John wrote) the letters add up to 1005. In the instances where John referred to a Hebrew word, he took pains to designate them as Hebrew words (Rev. 9:11; 16:16). **He made no such effort here, so there is no reason for such manipulation of the text.**
- a) Revelation 9:11: "And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon."
 - b) Revelation 16:16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."
- c. Another major theory is to equate the name of the first Latin ruler (Lateinos) with the number 666. Using the Greek letter evaluation system, it works out nicely: L (30), A (1), T (300), E (5), I (10), N (50), O (70), S (200) = 666. Those who take this view apply the number to the Latin Church. An objection to this is, of what significance would this information have for the persecuted saints of the first century? The Roman Catholic Church did not come into existence until 606 A.D.
 - d. Another interpretation, using Latin letters, gives the following based on the Latin expression, *vicarius filii dei* ("in place of the Son of God"): V (5); I (1), C (100) A (0), R (0), I (1), U (5), S (0), F (0), I (1), L (50), I (10), I (1), D (500), E (0) I (1) = 666. Where there was no numerical value to a letter, it was made to equal zero. It is claimed that the pope has a crown with jeweled letters which spell out this Latin phrase.
 - e. Ray Summers tells of a student in 1941 who worked out a system by which "Hitler" totals 666. The letter values were arbitrarily assigned. "Doubtless many people in the world at that time would have subscribed to this interesting result! Unfortunately the student had no good reason for starting his evaluation at 100 rather than some other number. So it turned out to be only another mathematical mystery" (pp.176f).
 - f. The following information is gleaned from Homer Hailey's fine commentary on Revelation: The number is "the number of the beast," apparently the first or sea-beast, for it was his image that was to be worshiped; it was not the number of an individual. When John adds, "It is the number of a man," he omits the definite article before "man," thereby indicating that he has no particular individual in mind. He is saying that the number represents that which is human; it is therefore a human number. Paul said of the gospel which he preached, "it is not after man" (Gal. 1:11), that is, it was not human in origin or substance.
 - 1) "Since the Apocalypse abounds in the symbolic use of numbers which express ideas rather than persons or literal quantities, the same principle should be followed in the interpretation of this number. Throughout the book, 'seven' expresses the idea of perfection or completeness: the seven churches, seven horns, seven eyes, seven spirits, and so forth. So six, which falls below the sacred seven, can never be seven or reach perfection; therefore, it symbolizes the imperfect, that which is human and destined to fail. It is said that to the Jews the number six was an omen or symbol of dread and doom, so when it was tripled, 666, it represented the completeness of doom and failure.
 - 2) "In these comments it has been concluded that the first beast represented the Roman Empire in its powerful opposition to the kingdom of God. It epitomized the sum of all the world's political opposition to God and righteousness for all time. It was further concluded that the second beast symbolized the pagan priesthood or commune of the emperor cult, backed by the political power of the empire; this also in turn generally represented all false religion since the fall of the Roman pagan system. It is now concluded that the number of the beast, six-six-six, stands for the complete and total failure of all human systems and efforts antagonistic to God and His Christ—all are doomed to ultimate and complete defeat and failure. This explanation is in harmony with the theme and purpose of Revelation" (pp.298f).
 - g. The number "666" is a number, not a name; it is the number of man; the number represents the character of man, and not a specific name. The definite article "the" is not found in the Greek text before the term *man*, thus no specific individual is intended. It is easy to turn a name into a number, but it not so easy to turn a number into a name.

C. A Summary of Revelation 12-13.

1. The dragon, who is identified as the devil, arrays himself against the woman and her child. He fights with

all his cunning, power, and evil.

2. The first beast, which is representative of the wicked Roman Emperor, receives his evil power and motivation from the devil. He wreaks havoc on the church, and thunders forth blasphemies against God.
 3. The second beast is representative of the Roman *Concilia*, which receives its authority from the first beast—the emperor Domitian.
 4. It appears that there can be no hope for the saints: the devil with all his power is assaulting the kingdom of God; he is using the awesome might of the great and evil Roman Empire; there is a dedicated effort by the pagan religionists to destroy the church. The enemies seem to be invincible, but John next turns from this dark scene to present a scene which shows that the forces of righteousness will ultimately be victorious.
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REVELATION 14

Righteous Judgment and Victory

A. Revelation 15:1-5: The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion.

1. Verse 1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."
 - a. The Lamb is Christ; he is pictured as standing (cf. Acts 7:56), which indicates his interest in the state of the faithful. The 144,000 are pictured with him; each of these has the name of the Father inscribed on the forehead. These are the ones who were sealed in Revelation 7. Mount Zion symbolizes God's dwelling place. The Lord is described as standing when Stephen was being slain: "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).
 - b. Zion is identified in the Old Testament with Jerusalem: "David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:4-7).
 - c. Out of Zion (Jerusalem) would go forth God's New Testament law (Acts 2):
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - d. Mount Zion (Jerusalem) is used in reference to the church: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of* Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24).
 - e. Here the term is probably used in reference to heaven (cf. Rev. 21). But some scholars apply this passage to the church. Verse 3 lends support to the former view—that Heaven is meant: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:3). The 144,000 of Revelation 7:2-8 describes the faithful saints on the earth; in this passage (14:4-5), the situation is in Heaven.
 - f. "There is no question as to the meaning of this symbol. It refers to the triumphant Christ. Following the dark and threatening scene of the last two chapters, the curtain is drawn aside to reveal the Lamb, safe on Mount Zion, with a perfect number (144,000) of his redeemed with him. These bear a mark of identity just as the adherents of the devil-emperor worship bore. The mark on their forehead is not an evil one but 'his name (the Lamb's) and the name of his Father.' This triumphant picture was one calculated to cause the hearts of the Christians to leap for joy. Their Redeemer-Lamb as their champion is marshalling a complete army of righteousness about the crest of Mount Zion" (Summers, p.180).
2. Verse 2: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps."
 - a. An unidentified voice (possibly the combined voices of the 144,000, for "they" sang a song—verse 3) was heard coming from heaven. The voice is compared to the sound of many waters, the sound of a great thunder, and the sound of harps playing. Note the word **as**. The voice had the mighty roar of

- a great waterfall, the power of thunder, and the sweet, melodious sound of harps.
- b. The source of the voice is heaven; the people identified were with Christ on Mount Zion; therefore, Mount Zion must be heaven in this scene.
 - c. John compares the sound of the voice to the sound of many waters, a great thunder, and harpers harping with their harps—a strong, melodious, and soothing sound. "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard *was* as *the voice* of harpers harping with their harps" (Rev. 14:2, ASV).
3. Verse 3: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."
 - a. "Those with the Lamb sing a song, a new victory song, the meaning of which can be known only by the redeemed with the Lamb. They are with him and victorious because they had kept themselves undefiled 'with women,' symbolic of freedom from the spiritual fornication of idol worship. 'They follow the Lamb wherever he goes'—they have been and are absolutely loyal to him, 'In their mouth was found no lie'—no denial of the supremacy of Christ. There can be no doubt about the outcome of the battle when the Lamb is thus pictured safe on Zion with a perfect number of the redeemed with him—they shall not fail; with him they are victorious" (Summers, p.180).
 - b. They sang as it were a new song. Evidently, the voice John heard (vs. 2) was singing the song mentioned in this verse. These 144,000 are not a group of special martyrs or special saints, but are representative of all the redeemed, as in chapter 7. Their ultimate victory is assured since they are pictured as being with the Lamb in heaven.
 - c. Only the 144,000 can learn the new song. There are some songs which the angels cannot properly sing: "I was sinking deep in sin," for example.
 4. Verses 4-5: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Several descriptions are given of the 144,000 in the context:
 - a. They were redeemed from the earth: thus they are not angels, but men (cf. vs. 3).
 - 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - b. They had not been defiled with women—they were virgins. This creates a major difficulty for those who try to make this number literal: if there will only be 144,000 people in heaven, then only men [or women] who have never married or committed fornication will make it. But the number is not to be taken as literal, and the virginity involved is not that of a physical nature. The 144,000 is representative of a large number and the purity is spiritual purity. Consistency does not permit the number to be literal and the virginity to be figurative. If one is literal, the other must be literal; if one is symbolic, the other must be symbolic.
 - c. They follow the Lamb—they are faithful servants: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).
 - d. These were the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb: this may mean that there would be others to be among their number, or it may simply be the way God chose to affirm his ownership of these who were redeemed. Israel was told to give to God the firstfruits of each year's harvest—that part of the crop rightfully belonged to him. All those who are redeemed rightfully belong to God.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are." [This is a reference to the church as a whole; the "ye" is plural and

- the “temple” is singular—the many individual Christians comprise the one temple].
- 2) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." [This is a reference to individual Christians].
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
- e. In their mouth was found no guile (they did not deceive; they told no lies); they are without fault (there is no blemish on their souls). They do not utter any falsehood or error. They had refused either to deny the Lordship of Christ or confess Caesar as Lord. They were without spiritual or moral blemish.
- 1) Ephesians 5:25-26: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

B. Revelation 14:6-13: The Angels' Messages and a Word of Warning from Heaven.

1. Verses 6-7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."
 - a. The first angel appeared with a message. “And I saw” introduces another phase of the vision. In the Revelation, John has seen several angels; here is yet another one, the last one being mentioned was in 11:15. This angel is said to have the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth.
 - b. This good news message [gospel] is that men are to fear God, give glory to him, and worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the fountain of waters. In the context of the first century, this was a call to turn from the worship of the emperor. Man’s first obligation is to fear and worship God, regardless of the country where he lives, regardless of external circumstances, and regardless of persecution that may ensue his obedience.
 - c. This message was also one of warning about the coming hour of God’s judgment. Is this the final Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; 7:21-23; Heb. 9:27)? Or is it one of the limited judgments such as God has often brought against men and nations (Isa. 13; Luke 19:41-46; 1 Pet. 4:12-19)? Is this judgment only against Babylon (vs. 8) or one in which all will be judged? It is probably the judgment against Babylon (the Roman Empire). The judgment is pictured by the angel’s words as having come.
 - d. Is this gospel the New Testament gospel? The gospel of Christ is to be preached to every person (Mark 16:15); it has been once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3); it has been deposited in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4:7); if an angel should preach any other gospel he is to be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). This

gospel is the gospel of Christ; the vision of the angel (“messenger”) preaching the gospel from mid-heaven to all those who dwell on the earth is symbolic of God’s messengers (his people) preaching the gospel to the whole world. Christians, not angels, are charged with the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the lost.

- 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
2. Verse 8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - a. Another angel (the second one in this series) appears announcing that Babylon has fallen. This connects with the preceding two verses and indicates the judgment named there is a judgment against “Babylon.”
 - b. Here, the judgment has been consummated. *Babylon* fell because of God’s judgment. God judged (condemned) her on account of the fact she made other nations drink of her evil. These subservient nations joined Rome in wickedness—they drank of her evil and therefore must also drink the wine of punishment. At the time the vision was seen by John, Babylon had not fallen; that fall was many years in the future. But when God decrees a matter, it is as if it has already been accomplished: “I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done” (Isa. 46:10). Years before ancient Babylon fell to the Medes, God said, “Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: wail for her” (Jer. 51:8).
 - c. It is evident from Revelation 17:5,18 that the Babylon John described is pagan Rome. The message given by the angel is God’s assurance that he will punish this great adversary and persecutor of his people. "And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH...And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:5,18). She made all nations to partake of her punishment, due to the influence she exerted on them to join her in sin.
 - d. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem or Judaism has caused all men to go into sin? Was there any time when the Jews ruled the world (as the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire ruled)? This fact discourages the view that Revelation pertains primarily to the Jewish nation and its overthrow at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.
 3. Verses 9-11: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."
 - a. The third angel gives strong warning against worshipping the beast and his image and receiving the mark of the beast. Those who do so must suffer a terrible penalty. He who worships the beast and the image (worships the emperor) will be made to drink of the wine of God’s wrath. The wine drunk by the ancients was often mixed with water and spices; but this “wine” would be undiluted with mercy.
 - b. Brimstone: “Sulphur existed in Palestine in early times and was known by most of the ancient nations as a combustible substance. In the vicinity of the Dead Sea, even at the present time, deposits of sulphur are being formed. Blanckenhorn (*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins*, 1896) believes that this formation is due to the action of bituminous matter upon gypsum, as these two substances are found associated with each other in this district. Travelers going from Jericho to the Dead Sea may pick up lumps of sulphur, which are usually incrustated with crystals of gypsum. Deut 29:23 well describes the present aspect of this region. That the inhabitants of the land had experienced the terrors of burning sulphur is very probable. Once one of these deposits took fire it would melt and run in

burning streams down the ravines spreading everywhere suffocating fumes such as come from the ordinary brimstone match. No more realistic figure could be chosen to depict terrible suffering and destruction. It is not at all unlikely that during some of the disastrous earthquakes which took place in this part of the world, the hot lava sent forth ignited not only the sulphur, but also the bitumen, and added to the horrors of the earthquake the destruction caused by burning pitch and brimstone. The figurative use of the word brimstone to denote punishment and destruction is illustrated by such passages as Deut 29:23; Job 18:15; Ps 11:6; Isa 30:33; Ezek 38:22; Luke 17:29; Rev 9:17" [James A. Patch, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft]. The use of fire and brimstone in punishment is not new. Compare:

- 1) Genesis 19:24: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."
 - 2) Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
- c. Verse eleven is graphic in its description of the judgment against the ungodly—this is the final consequence of going against God—a reference to the final Judgment; the wording seems to make this conclusion clear, especially in view of verse 13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- 1) Ezekiel 34:10: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I *am* against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."
 - 2) Matthew 18:8-9: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."
 - 3) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 4) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 5) Mark 9:42-48: "And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 6) Luke 16:23,28: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom....For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."
 - 7) Revelation 20:10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
- d. But the victorious saints will ever be before the throne: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:15).
4. Verse 12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."
 - a. Jesus promised his disciples: "In your patience ye shall win your souls" (Luke 21:19, ASV).

- 1) Luke 12:15,23: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth....The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment."
 - 2) Romans 5:3: "And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience."
 - 3) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - 4) Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
 - 5) Revelation 13:10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."
- b. The opposition of the beast which demanded that the Christians worship the emperor supplied the trial of faith which produced patience.
5. Verse 13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- a. The preceding messages of this section were delivered by angels; here a voice commands John to write an additional message. The speaker is not identified in the verse.
 - b. The first angel announced the everlasting gospel, called on men to heed its truth, and warned of judgment on those who rejected it. The second angel announced as an accomplished fact (because the outcome was so certain) the fall of Babylon (the Roman Empire). The third angel described the consequences to befall those who would worship the beast; they might extend their lives a little while, but horrible punishment awaited them.
 - c. This verse announces that, though one might lose his life for refusing to worship the beast, there was a glorious, restful life awaiting him in the beyond.
 - d. Blessedness (a state of happiness) pertains to those who die in a proper relationship with the Lord. They will be exalted into a heavenly joy. These are those of verse twelve.
 - e. The Lord adds an additional word of hope and assurance for future sufferers ("from henceforth"). The assurance includes all faithful saints in future generations. To die in Christ is not to lose one's existence.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 3) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled."
 - 4) Revelation 7:9-17: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of
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all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

- f. "Yea, saith the Spirit" identifies the message as coming from the Holy Spirit. The rest promised is from their present labors; the Lord will not forget their good works.
- 1) Matthew 25:34-40: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
- g. "Revelation 14:13 contains several exciting spiritual truths. (1) It negates the false notion of 'soul-sleeping' after death, for these who have died in the Lord are said to be 'blessed.' The Greek word is *makarios*, and it means happy (cf. Acts 26:1; Romans 14:22). The saved dead are happy, and that implies consciousness....(2) Only those who die 'in the Lord' are happy. Connect that phrase with Romans 6:3,4 and Galatians 3:27, which passages show that one enters 'into Christ' at the point of his gospel obedience in baptism. (3) The happy dead are promised rest by the testimony of the Spirit—'yea, says the Spirit'—which indicates that the Spirit is a Person (not a mere force, as suggested by some cultists)....(4) The 'works' of the righteous dead follow them, i.e., such works are acknowledged and rewarded by God....In view of this, how can it be said that 'works' play no role in the divine plan of redemption?....*Works commanded by Christ do not negate grace*" (Wayne Jackson, *Notes From the Margin of My Bible*, pp.182f).

C. Revelation 14:14-20: Judgment is Pictured as Harvesting the Earth.

1. Verses 14-16: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."
 - a. The white cloud indicates purity on the part of the Judge. Clouds often symbolize the coming of judgment:
 - 1) God would come in judgment against Egypt riding on a swift cloud: "The burden of Egypt. Behold,

- the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it" (Isa. 19:1).
- 2) He used a similar expression concerning his coming against Jerusalem: "Behold, he shall come up as clouds, and his chariots *shall be* as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled" (Jer. 4:13). [This refers to Babylon's assault against Jerusalem in 606—586 B.C.].
 - 3) Jesus would come against Jerusalem [in 70 A.D.] on the clouds of heaven: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.....Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 24:30; 26:64). This was a representative (non-literal) coming; he was present in the sense that these events were being done according to his design.
 - 4) His second coming will be with clouds:
 - a) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - b) Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
- b. In this passage, Christ is pictured as coming in judgment on a white cloud. [The Russian Communists tried to make the Lord merely a visitor from outer space; they asserted that the clouds with which he left the earth (Acts 1:9-11) were actually the smoke and vapor from a spaceship blasting off! This information appeared in the military newspaper "The Stars and Stripes" in ca 1964].
 - c. Compare this passage with Matthew 9:38: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."
2. Verses 17-19: "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast *it* into the great winepress of the wrath of God."
 - a. Other angels appear, also having sickles. Judgment is pictured. This symbol was used in the Old Testament to depict judgment: "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).
 - b. The winepress of God's justice must eventually be felt by all evil men. The symbol of the winepress as a judgment grows out of the process of crushing grapes to force out the juice. The old method of pressing the juice from the grapes was for people to walk on the fruit. "All fruit of man's rebellion and sin against Him must be trodden under foot. The vine of earth and its fruit stand in contrast to the true vine and its fruit, which is borne to the glory of God (John 15:1-8)" (Hailey, p.315).
 3. Verse 20: "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs."
 - a. The "city" here is probably spiritual Jerusalem (the church or heaven). Under Old Testament law, offenders were punished "without the gate." Those being punished were the enemies of the Lord.
 - b. The blood from this winepress extended 200 miles and up to the horses bridles. This pictures the gory completeness of Judgment. He humbled mighty Rome; and he will consummate all things in the final Judgment.
 - c. The millennialists have much trouble trying to fit this passage into their literal interpretation of Revelation. They cannot find a river that long in Palestine, and certainly cannot find one that flows with literal blood.
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REVELATION 15

The Seven Angels With Seven Bowls of Wrath

A. Revelation 15:1-2: Victory of the Faithful Symbolized.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."
 - a. *Another sign*: this is the third in the series of signs which John saw in heaven—the radiant woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3) are the earlier ones. This sign involves seven angels having the last plagues; the scene is described as great and marvelous.
 - b. *Last*—from *teleo*, meaning to finish, find consummation, reach perfection, to carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill. In the judgments about to commence, God's wrath will reach its goal. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which *is* as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *and* rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth *is* from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: *and* in keeping of them *there is* great reward. Who can understand *his* errors? cleanse thou me from secret *faults*. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19).
 - c. In earlier visions the judgment of the wicked was contrasted with the victory of the saints:
 - 1) The sealing of the saints preceded the judgments of the seven trumpets (Rev. 7; 8:3-5).
 - 2) The vision of the redeemed on Mount Zion precedes the wrathful harvest (Rev. 14).
 - 3) Here, the victory of the saints is pictured before the seven bowls of wrath are poured out (Rev. 15, 16).
2. Verse 2: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."
 - a. John saw a sea like glass mingled with fire. This is probably the same sea as the sea introduced in Revelation 4:6. In that passage, the transcendancy of God is being pictured; the sea helped describe the exalted nature of God over mankind by standing between God and man, making approach unto him seem impossible. But here the sea is described as being mingled with fire.
 - b. Does this fire represent the harsh judgment about to fall on the wicked? Does it represent the judgment about to fall on the world which, in general, would have an effect also on the saints? Or does it represent the fiery trials that the saints must endure before they can approach unto God? The latter seems more likely since those who stood on the sea were those who had obtained victory over the beast.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:7: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

- c. They had won the victory of faith. They are pictured as having the harps of God—heavenly harps, which show their right to praise God.
- d. “These victorious ones stand by (such, probably, is the force of *eipi*) the sea (see above and on Rev 4:6). The ‘harps’ are characteristic of the heavenly melodies (Rev 5:8; 14:2). This multitude has been before described in Rev 7:9. From his image; that is, from the temptation to worship the image” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft]. As we have already seen, the harps are not literal.

B. Revelation 15:3-4: The Victorious Saints Sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

1. Verse 3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - a. This is the song of victory (cf. Exod. 15). It can be sung only by the faithful. The song of Moses was the song sung after the crossing of the Red Sea. The song here will be sung by the faithful after overcoming the trials and temptations of this world.
 - b. Praise is directed toward the Almighty by these successful saints. They refer to him as “King of the saints” (margin: “nations or ages”). "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise *men* of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, *there is* none like unto thee" (Jer. 10:7).
 - 1) Jeremiah 10:7: “Who should not fear thee, O King of the nations? for to thee doth it appertain; forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their royal estate, there is none like unto thee” (ASV).
 - 2) Jeremiah 10:7: “Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due. For among all the wise men of the nations, And in all their kingdoms, There is none like You” (NKJ).
 - c. “The phrase, ‘singing the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb’ adds support to the position taken in 12:1, that the woman represents the faithful ones of the Old and New Testaments who become one in Christ. This is not to confuse the two groups, for they are clearly distinguished, but to unite them as one redeemed people. As God’s servant Moses delivered His people from an oppressive nation, so God’s Son, the Lamb, redeemed a people from spiritual bondage (cf. Heb. 3:5f). One conquered and delivered from the foe of physical bondage and tyranny; the other conquered the world and death, delivering from Satan’s power” (Hailey, p.320).
2. Verse 4: "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."
 - a. Because of his greatness, all should feel compelled to fear and glorify God.
 - 1) To “fear” him is to have reverence for God, to treat him with deference, and from this disposition to render obedience (Thayer).
 - 2) “Holy” is from *hosios*, and “signifies religiously right, holy, as opposed to unrighteous or polluted” (Vine). Compare Psalm 19.
 - b. When Christians were undergoing the harshest persecution, the pagan world would surely think they would be stamped out, but when they endured, the unbelievers would begin to think that there must be something worthwhile about Christianity.
 - c. In the final day, all will be brought into the Judgment, and will unfailingly give praise to God: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). God’s righteous ways, the verdicts which he proclaims, and judgments which he executes, will be vindicated in history and eternity.
 - d. In time, before the evil empire of Rome fell, many would obey the gospel. In eternity, all will come to see the righteousness of God’s will.

C. Revelation 15:5-8: The Seven Angels With the Seven Plagues.

1. Verses 5-6: "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (KJV). "And after these things I saw, and

the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with *precious* stone, pure *and* bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles" (ASV).

- a. The temple of the tabernacle is the Holy of Holies in heaven, which was symbolized by the most holy place in the Old Testament tabernacle. In Revelation 11:19, the temple was opened so that a glimpse of God's power and majesty might be seen; here it is opened that the seven angels might come forth.
 - b. These angels had the seven plagues with which to punish the earth. They were clothed in pure and white linen—their nature and their mission were pure and righteous. The ASV has a variation in the rendering of the passage. Ancient Greek texts vary; but the context favors the KJV rendering.
 - c. Other passages give glorious descriptions of heavenly beings:
 - 1) Matthew 28:3: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow."
 - 2) Mark 16:5: "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted."
 - 3) John 20:12: "And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."
 - 4) Acts 1:10: "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel."
 - 5) Revelation 19:8: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
 - d. "These [the seven angels] who came out bearing the seven bowls had around their breasts a golden girdle such as that worn by the glorified Christ (1:13...). These golden girdles seem not to identify their work as priestly, but to signify that they were angels of high rank, entrusted with a solemn obligation" (Hailey, p.323). Of course, the gold of this apparel is not literal.
 - e. Ancient Rome had trampled under foot the law of God and the people of God: they must pay the price as must all who do so: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 9:17).
2. Verse 7: "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - a. In Revelation 5:8, the twenty-four elders and four living creatures had bowls full of incense; here the living creature gave seven bowls of God's wrath to the angels. They are soon to empty these bowls upon the earth. Whatever the judgments represented, they are ultimately God's punishment on wicked men.
 - b. The seven seals were to reveal, the seven trumpets to warn, but the seven bowls were to execute judgment. The number of the bowls indicate the completeness of the impending punishment.
 - c. "The Greek word for bowl (*phiale*), that is, a broad shallow vessel or deep saucer, occurs only in Revelation (twelve times), and is to be distinguished from the cup (14:10), which is exclusively a drinking vessel. The bowl is similar to some of the vessels used in Old Testament sacrifices and ritual" (Hailey, p.323).
 3. Verse 8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."
 - a. The glory of God filled the tabernacle on its completion (Ex. 40:34-35); it likewise filled the temple when Solomon completed it (1 Kings 8:10-11).
 - 1) Exodus 40:34-35: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."
 - 2) 1 Kings 8:10-11: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."
 - b. While God's glory was in these two Old Testament edifices, no one could enter. In our text, none could enter the temple of the vision until the plagues were finished. "This symbolized that the wrath
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of God was filled—and there was no room for intercession during this visitation of wrath. All this affords an easy transition over to the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath” (Summers, p.185).

- c. “No intercessions can change the determinate counsel of God; but when it is fulfilled, we can then see clearly that which is now obscured” (Hailey).
 - d. The time will come when salvation from sin will not be available. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. 1:20-33).
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REVELATION 16

The Bowls Of Wrath Are Poured Out

A. Revelation 16:1: The Order is Given to the Seven Angels to Pour Out the Bowls of Wrath.

1. Before the bowls were emptied, John is shown the scene of victorious saints standing on the sea of glass, and hears them singing the song of triumph. This would give assurance and consolation to the saints on earth of their ultimate victory. With this assurance given, the time was come to give the pictures of the God's awesome judgments on the evil.
2. The pictures which are to be presented in the following verses depict swiftly executed wrath from God upon sinful man. In keeping with our original premise, that the events described in the symbols of Revelation have application primarily to the first century, the dire woes pictured here have their main fulfillment on wicked Rome. The Empire was still strong and in no apparent danger of falling, but this mighty and wicked nation was doomed. Rather than pertaining either to the end of time or events just prior to the end, the scene in this chapter deals with God's judgment against the dragon and the two beasts. But one cannot afford to be dogmatic in assigning specific meanings to these scenes.
3. There are similarities between these vials (bowls) of wrath and the trumpet plagues. They represent woes upon nature and man, and a part of their symbolism is parallel with the Egyptian plagues.
4. There are differences between the bowls and trumpets. The trumpet judgments call for repentance; the bowl judgments are the outpouring of judgment and punishment (there was no chance for repentance and therefore no hope of escape now). The trumpet judgments were partial (they affected only one-third part of their objects); but the bowl judgments are final (affecting the whole of the objects). The trumpet judgments did not affect man directly until the fifth trumpet; here man is affected directly from the first bowl.
5. After each bowl is emptied, the judgment increases until finally the imperial city is reached. The bowls are grouped in the following order: four, two, an interlude, and one [this was the same pattern in the seals and trumpets visions.
6. Verse 1: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."
 - a. An unidentified voice gives the order to the seven angels to pour out their bowls of God's wrath; they had received these bowls from one of the living creatures: "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 15:7).
 - b. "We have now the narration in full of the events of which Rev 15. has given us a summary. Out of the temple. The...shrine of God, mentioned in Rev 15:8, and which no one could enter; the voice must, therefore, be the voice of God himself. Saying to the seven angels (see on Rev 15:1). Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth; go ye and pour...." [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - c. Some commentators [Pulpit Commentary, e.g.] have concluded that, since the voice is heard coming from the sanctuary, that it is God the Father speaking. That it was a divine source is clear, but we are not told explicitly that it was the Father's voice. The authoritative directions are promptly obeyed.
 - d. "The trumpets shook the world-kings in longer process: the vials swiftly and suddenly overthrow the kingdom of the beast who invested himself with the world-kingdom. The Egyptian plagues were inflicted with but a month between them severally (Bengel, referring to Seder Olam). As Moses took ashes from an earthly furnace (Ex 9:8), so angels, as priestly ministers in the heavenly temple, take holy fire in sacred vials from the heavenly altar, to pour down (cf. Rev 8:5). The same heavenly altar which would have kindled sweet incense of prayer, bringing down blessing upon earth, by man's sin kindles the fiery descending curse. Just as the Nile, ordinarily the source of Egypt's fertility, became blood and a curse through Egypt's sin" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].

B. Revelation 16:2: The First Bowl is Poured Out Upon the Land.

1. Verse 2: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image."
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2. It did not scorch the earth as in the first trumpet, but fell upon men who had received the mark of the beast; the result of the judgment was that they now had grievous sores.
 - a. *Noisome*: this term is from *kakos*, most often translated “evil.” Thayer defines it as “troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful.” It is therefore bad or distressing.
 - b. *Sore*: this term is from *helkos*—an abscess or ulcer, a foul and angry sore (Arndt and Gringch). "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (Luke 16:21).
 - c. “Compare the phraseology of Ex 9:10. A noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. The counterpart of the sixth plague of Egypt” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - d. Only those are affected who worshipped the beast and bore his mark. “A noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. The counterpart of the sixth plague of Egypt....It is impossible to say with certainty what (if any) particular judgment upon the ungodly is intended to be signified by John in this plague” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 3. The sixth plague on Egypt is remarkably similar to this plague: "And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses" (Ex. 9:8-12).
 4. Pagan Rome had afflicted the saints severely; but now she was to suffer (Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 26:27). A similar judgment may be repeated from time to time in history, but to those John addressed, the judgment was against the Roman system of emperor worship—this is a reaping of the corruption which had been sown (Hailey, p.327).
 - a. Proverbs 16:27: "An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips *there is* as a burning fire."
 - b. Proverbs 26:27: “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.”
 - c. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- C. Revelation 16:3: The Second Bowl of Wrath is Poured on the Sea.
1. Verse 3: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*; and every living soul died in the sea."
 2. In the second trumpet judgment, a third of the sea became blood; here the entire sea was thus affected. In Revelation 13:1, the sea out of which the first beast arose was the whole of the corrupt Roman society; here as in Revelation 8:8-9, the sea symbolizes the whole evil society of man. This bowl of wrath brings into focus the utter putrefaction of a corrupted society.
 3. “Moses wrote that ‘the life of the flesh is in the blood’ (Lev. 17:11). Consequently, when life is gone, decay and rottenness set in until one returns to the dust from whence he came. This is the irrevocable judgment of God from the very beginning (Gen. 3:19). Likewise, when the spiritual quality of a society decays, like a sea of coagulated blood from dead men, it putrefies and rots, issuing a foul and obnoxious odor” (Hailey).
 - a. Compare the sinful state and ultimate punishment of Sodom, the Canaanites, Israel, Judah, Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre.
 - b. In such societies, morality declines to the lowest level; the family collapses, schools breed rebellion, business ethics decline, entertainment becomes base and violent, smut and filth become common. Consider the vulgarity of sculptures, murals, etc., in Pompeii, and in the Mayan civilization. When this
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occurs, the whole society strangles in its own blood and is suffocated by its own stench. Our society is well on the road to such an end as was suffered by many evil societies of history.

D. Revelation 16:4-7: The Third Bowl is Poured upon the Rivers and Waters.

1. Verse 4: "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."
 - a. The fresh waters became blood when the third bowl was emptied. Compare this with the third trumpet where a third of the waters were affected; here the effect was on all the waters.
 - b. Compare it also with the first Egyptian plague: "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that *was* in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river" (Ex. 7:20-25).
 - c. In the third bowl of wrath, even the underground sources of water were polluted. This symbolically portrays some awesome punishment from God upon wicked men; in the context of the first century, this wrathful penalty was to be on Rome. It is not important to try to find the exact event in history; it is important to see the overall effect of this calamity on a wicked society.
2. Verses 5-7: "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments."
 - a. An angel proclaims the righteousness of God in bringing this appropriate penalty on these evil people. God did not act unjustly in bringing about this punishment. By making them drink the blood he acted properly, for these evil men had earlier shed the blood of the saints. They had earned the penalty. Compare: "For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing [*recompense*, margin] shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and swallow down, and shall be as though they had not been" (Obadiah 15-16, ASV).
 - b. The prophets are those of the New Testament era, for the Old Testaments prophets were long since gone from earth.
 - c. Verse five proclaimed the righteousness of God in punishing the ungodly; verse seven affirms the righteousness of the judgment itself.
 - 1) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled." "How long?" is being answered in the text. God would protect and provide for his own; he would properly punish the evil.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This speaks of the final Judgment.

E. Revelation 16:8-9: The Fourth Bowl of Wrath is Poured on the Sun.

1. Verse 8: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire."

- a. The scene changes from rivers of blood to focus on the blazing sun which scorches men with its heat. Unlike the fourth trumpet, which caused the sun, moon, and stars to cease giving light, and unlike the ninth plague on Egypt, which produced three days of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23), this plague turned the sun into a source of brutal heat. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt. And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Ex. 10:21-23).
 - b. Compare Psalms 97:3: "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round aboutConfounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods." This principle of divine action was now being carried out. The sun is pictured as being an instrument of God for the punishment of wicked men in John's vision.
 - c. "The men of John's vision were as the astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators of Isaiah's day, whom Jehovah challenged to stand up and save the people; but 'the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: It shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before' (Isa. 47:13f.); it would be the scorching heat of God's wrath. And again Jehovah warned the rebellious, saying 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that girdeth yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow' (Isa. 50:11). In John's vision God is simply carrying out what he had proposed and done all along. In their effort to lead people astray these masters of deceit had even made 'fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men' (13:13); and now God responds with a scorching fiery judgment. In contrast to the condition of these, God's people who had suffered martyrdom at the hands of the heathen were where the sun should not strike upon them, nor any heat' (7:16)" (Hailey, pp.330f).
2. Verse 9: "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."
- a. When men go deeply into sin, their hearts become hardened against correction. These men would not admit their sin and repent. Rather, they went even deeper into rebellion, adding blasphemy to their spiritual crimes, and adamantly refused to give God the glory that properly belongs to him.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 3) Romans 1:21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - 4) Romans 2:4-11: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 5) Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
 - 6) Revelation 13:1: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."
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7) Revelation 13:6: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

b. "Instead of recognizing their sin and repenting toward God, men added two additional crimes to their already sin-cursed lives: they blasphemed the name of God who had power over these plagues, and withheld from him the glory that is rightfully his due—'they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks' (Rom. 1:21)....As Pharaoh had hardened his heart against God, so these also rebelled against his efforts to soften them. Even the scorching heat of God's wrath could not mellow their obstinate hearts; rather it hardened them....Their failure to repent indicates that in these plagues the final judgment has not been reached, for then is no opportunity for repentance. The final judgment is not intended to bring men to repentance, but this bowl should have. This completes the first section of the plagues involving earth, sea, inland waters, and sun" (Hailey, p.331).

3. "This is the first mention in the vials of men blaspheming. As with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the judgments of God, instead of awakening them to repentance, only serve to harden their hearts. This again occurs under the fifth and seventh vials. So also in the sixth trumpet, we are told, men repented not—a statement also made in the subsequent part of this verse. As before pointed out (Rev 13:1), the two things are identical; non repentance, continuance in the service of the dragon, is blasphemy against God; though we generally reserve the name 'blasphemy' for the open avowal of infidelity to God" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

F. Revelation 16:10-11: The Fifth Bowl is Poured on the Seat of the Beast.

1. Verses 10-11: "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."
2. This punishment was poured on the throne of the beast; the effect was to cause the kingdom of the beast to become darkened; great pain came upon the people of his kingdom so that they gnawed their tongues in agony; but in their hardness of heart, they would not repent.
3. This apparently describes a time when the emperor was losing his power; anarchy was reigning in the kingdom. They would continue to blaspheme God and would blame Christians for the trouble they were undergoing. Compare Acts 9:5: "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks."
4. The trouble the wicked faced moved from the natural realm to the moral and spiritual realm. The throne of the beast was the seat of his authority, which he received from the dragon. The Lord called on sinful church members to repent in five of the seven letters; he caused the everlasting gospel to be preached to the men of earth (14:6-7), and sent plagues upon them to bring them to repentance that they might also escape the judgment and condemnation that were forthcoming. Only the faithful Christians would escape these; the worldly ones did not repent.

G. Revelation 16:12: The Sixth Bowl is Emptied on the Euphrates River.

1. Verse 12: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."
2. The river was dried up and the way was opened for the coming of the great eastern armies upon the Empire. "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev.

9:13-21).

3. This opened the door for the invading armies to come in and take over the Empire. The reference to the Euphrates is not to be taken as a literal location but representative of a barrier or deterrent to invasion, which is now removed—its waters were dried up, allowing anyone who wished to cross easily.
4. “This river also figures in the sixth trumpet vision, and possesses the same signification in both places. It is the natural direction from which enemies arise; and it derives this signification from the fact that the enemies of the Jews often came from that direction. The next sentence leaves no doubt that this is the meaning, and supports the view taken of Rev 9:14. It is to be noticed that, though the vial is poured out upon the Euphrates, it is not with the purpose of inflicting injury on the river, but upon the men who are thus laid open to the attacks of their enemies” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].

H. Revelation 16:13-16: The Battle of Armageddon.

1. This interlude is placed in the vision between the sixth and seventh bowls, just as there were interludes in the other visions.
2. Verse 13: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."
 - a. The unclean spirits referred to issued from the mouths of the dragon, the beast (the sea beast of 13:1-8), and the false prophet (this would be the second beast, which arose from the land—Rev. 13:11).
 - b. These three unclean spirits which came forth are likened to frogs. In the plague on Egypt, frogs came in swarms (Ex. 8:1-15); but here these are only three in number. We are not told just how frogs were able to destroy Egyptians (Ps. 78:45). Frogs are thought of as unclean and loathsome; their croaking may symbolize confusion; under the Law, frogs were considered an abomination (Lev. 11:9-12).
 - 1) Psalms 78:45: "He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them."
 - 2) Leviticus 11:9-12: "These shall ye eat of all that *are* in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which *is* in the waters, they *shall be* an abomination unto you: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that *shall be* an abomination unto you."
 - c. Because of the source and number of these three *frogs*, they are very unclean. “These three spirits represent the influences of the dragon, the first beast and the second beast....These influences are spiritually unclean, and suggest the loathsome Egyptian plague of the frogs; that is to say, their likeness to frogs consists in their common quality of uncleanness. Perhaps also there is a reference to their devilish origin, in which they resembled the unclean spirits so frequently cast out by our Lord while on earth” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
3. Verse 14: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."
 - a. The three frogs are further described as spirits of demons (not devils); these worked miracles (signs); these were false signs, since neither Satan nor his helpers can do genuine miracles (Rev. 12:1; 13:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:1-12). Jesus had warned against false prophets and false signs (Matt. 7:15-20; 24:24; cf. 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 4:1). The objective of these unclean spirits was to gather the kings of the whole earth unto the battle of the great day of God. That battle is that of verse 16. John is seeing the mustering of forces here, and not the actual battle. The battle is fought in Revelation 19.
 - b. One view of the battle is that it pictures the wars in which Rome was weakened and which led to her eventual overthrow.
 - c. Others apply the battle to the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. “The verses that follow from *thirteen* to *sixteen* describe the gathering armies for the final battle in the overthrow of Jerusalem, with the spiritual overtones of the conflict between the forces of Judaism and heathenism on one side, and Christianity (the church) on the other” (Wallace, *Revelation*, p.341).

- d. The continuous historical view applies this battle to the struggle between Catholicism and the Reformers (Luther, *et al*).
- e. Another view is that the battle is one fought across the centuries between the forces of good and evil, which eventually will lead to the final victory of righteousness. "This battle is described in Rev 19:11-21....The great day is the last great judgment day. The battle referred to here, and described in Rev 19, and again in Rev 20:1-10, is apparently the battle which is being waged against God by the forces of evil all through the history of the world, from the fall of Adam until the last judgment day. This seems certain from the description given in Rev 19. and 20. How, then, can it be described as the 'battle of the great day'? Probably because on that day will occur the crisis, as it were, of the conflict; on that day will the issue be plainly determined, and the struggle terminated. Though the battle is proceeding daily, there is little to remind us of it; the very existence of, and necessity for, such warfare is sometimes forgotten in the daily round of life: at the last day will be plainly exhibited the nature of the incessant hostility between God and the devil, and the power of the latter will be manifested only to be visibly shattered and finally destroyed" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
- f. Another view is that the battle indicated will take place at the Second Coming of Christ when he will destroy his enemies (Rev. 19:15; 2 Thess. 2:8). The argument goes as follows: "In summation, our argument is arranged logically as follows: (1) The battle of Har-Magedon will occur when Christ comes to judge (Rev. 16:16; 19:11). (2) But he will judge at his Second Coming. (3) Thus, the battle of Har-Magedon will take place at his Second Coming. (1) The Har-Magedon war will take place when Jesus destroys his enemies with the breath of his mouth (Rev. 19:15; 2 Thes. 2:8). (2) But such will occur at his coming (*parousia*) (2 Thes. 2:1ff). (3) Therefore, Har-Magedon will occur—it is the punishment inflicted—at the Second Coming of the Lord. The materialistic, carnal concept of Har-Magedon is totally false, conflicting with the Bible frequently" (Jackson, ADL, pp.345f).
- g. The view held by many, which is manifestly false, is that at the end of time a great literal battle will occur in the valley of Megiddo in Palestine. This view is false, for when the Lord returns, the whole universe will be quickly destroyed and all humanity will be resurrected or changed, and brought into Judgment:
- 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:50-58: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:8-14: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as
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some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

4. Verse 15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - a. This gives a parenthetical statement; the speaker is unidentified by name, but whose identity is clear: "I come as a thief" could only refer to Christ. "In the midst of the scene of the gathering army and decisive battle, there is a parenthetical warning and exhortation to the saints not to be deceived or led astray by what is taking place. At both the beginning and the conclusion of the revelation the Lord said that He was revealing things which 'must shortly come to pass (1:1; 22:6), 'for the time is at 'hand' (1:3; 22:10). Therefore His coming in this instance is not at the end of time" (Hailey, p.335).
 - b. Also included is the third of the seven beatitudes of Revelation. The statement cautions the saints to be careful to be prepared lest they be found naked and shamed. This verse seems to place the context at the time of the second coming, however this thought is not out of place when used in connection with a limited judgment.
 - c. The saints are admonished to keep their garments—to make sure that they remain undefiled.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14-15: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - 3) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 4) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
5. Verse 16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (KJV). "And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon" (ASV).
 - a. This is one of the most abused passages in the book and is made to teach that there is to be a physical battle involving all the forces of God fighting against all the forces of Satan in the physical valley of Megiddo (a small valley which in no way could contain the forces indicated). Most Bible students understand the word *Armageddon* [*Har-Magedon*—ASV] as a reference to Megiddo. This is probably the best understanding. *Har-Magedon* means "hill" or "mountain" of Megiddo. In John's day, the tell of Megiddo was about seventy feet high, justifying his description of it as a hill or mountain (Jackson, ADL, p.343).
 - 1) Esdraelon: [God sows]—the great plain loosely identified as the Plain of Jezreel, about 89 kilometers (55 miles) north of Jerusalem....The word Esdraelon is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Jezreel. Esdraelon is a triangular plain approximately 24 by 24 by 32 kilometers (15 by 15 by 20 miles) in size, bounded along the southwest by the Carmel Mountain range and on the north by the hills of Nazareth. The Plain of Esdraelon contains rich farmland because of the soil washed down into it from the mountains of Galilee and the highlands of Samaria. It is also the only east-west valley which divides the mountain ranges of western Palestine. Esdraelon has been the scene of numerous battles. Here Deborah and Barak were victorious over Sisera (Judg 4). Here, too, the Philistines were victorious over King Saul (1 Sam 31:1-3). In this valley the Egyptians

- mortally wounded Josiah, king of Judah, when he attempted to intercept the army of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23:29)....[Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
- 2) Megiddo: On the S. edge of the Esdraelon or Jezreel plain, the frontier of Issachar and Manasseh...commanding a pass from the N. into the hill country. Joshua (Josh 12:21) defeated its king, with 30 other petty chieftains, W. of Jordan. It was assigned to Manasseh, though within Issachar's limit, but they failed to drive out the Canaanites, and could only make them tributary (Josh 17:11-13; Judg 1:27-28; 5:19). "The kings of Canaan (Jabin and Sisera his captain) fought in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo" (namely, Kishon, or else a copious stream flowing down into Kishon) with Deborah and Barak. They assembled at Taanach and by the waters of Megiddo, but the battle was fought at Mount Tabor, for they "perished at Endor" (Ps 83:10), near Tabor. Barak would never desert the heights of Tabor to march 15 miles over a boggy plain and attack Sisera strongly placed on the low hills of Taanach. Jehovah "drew unto Barak Sisera, unto the Kishon" (Judg 4:7), i.e. unto the pools and springs of the Kishon at El Mujahiyeh, the "spring head" W. of Tabor. From the high ground of Tabor Barak rushed down on the foe, who first posted themselves at the foot of the conical hill on which Endor is, and thence ventured into the open plain S.W. of Tabor. "The waters of Megiddo" are the abundant springs which flow into the nahr Jalud, from what is now the Mujedda ruin in the Jordan valley (meaning "the grazing place," "cut down by sheep") at the foot of Mount Gilboa. Thus, "the valley of Megiddo" is that which leads down from Jezreel to Bethshean....At Megiddo was stationed one of Solomon's commissariat officers (1 Kings 4:12). Solomon "built," i.e. fortified, Megiddo as a commanding military portion (1 Kings 9:15). Here Ahaziah fled from Jehu, and died here (2 Kings 9:27), in the kingdom of Samaria (2 Chron 22:9)....Here godly Josiah (which see) fell in conflict with Pharaoh Necho (2 Chron 35:22-24; Zech 12:11)....[Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database, © 1998 by Biblesoft].
 - 3) Megiddo ("place of troops"): The valley of Megiddo was a part of the Plain of Esdraelon. It figured as a battlefield, and here Barak (which see) gained a notable victory over the king of Hazor, whose commanding general was Sisera (Judg 4:15). To this place Ahaziah king of Judah fled, and there he died (2 Kings 9:27). But the chief historical interest of Megiddo is concentrated in the death of Josiah. He endeavored to stop Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, while the Egyptian was passing through the glens of Carmel into the plain of Megiddo. He was defeated, as he fled was shot by the Egyptian archers and died on the road to Jerusalem (23:29-30; 2 Chron 35:20-24; Zech 12:11). In the last passage the mourning mentioned is on account of Josiah's death. Megiddo is marked by the modern site Tell el Mutesellim. It has been extensively excavated and forms one of the most important archaeological sites of Palestine....[The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
 - 4) Megiddo—a walled city in the Carmel Mountain range where many important battles were fought in Old Testament times (see Map 3, B-2). Megiddo was situated on the main road that linked Egypt and Syria. Overlooking the Valley of Jezreel (Plain of Esdraelon), Megiddo was the most strategic city in Palestine. All major traffic through Palestine traveled past Megiddo, making it a strategic military stronghold. Megiddo is first mentioned in the Old Testament in the account of the 31 kings conquered by Joshua (Josh 12:21)....During the period of the judges, the forces of Deborah and Barak wiped out the army of Sisera "by the waters of Megiddo" (Judg 5:19).... [Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
- b. Armageddon [Har-Magedon] most likely refers to Megiddo, a valley located in Palestine where many significant battles were fought.
- 1) Barak and Deborah were victorious over Jabin at this place: "The kings came *and* fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money" (Judges 5:19).
 - 2) Gideon defeated the Midianites there (Judges 7).
 - 3) It was here that King Saul was defeated by the Philistines: "And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers" (1 Sam. 31:3).
 - 4) Ahaziah died of Jehu's arrow: "But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way
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of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there" (2 Kings 9:27).

- 5) Pharaoh-Nechu defeated Josiah: "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come* not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from *meddling with* God, who *is* with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in *one of* the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah" (2 Chron 35:20-24).
 - c. It was famous for the many battles fought there; some scholars say more battles have been fought there than in any other location on earth. It would have an emotional appeal to the ancient Jews, somewhat like the Alamo, Pearl Harbor, or the Battle of the Bulge.
 - d. John is not referring to an actual earthly location; he is not depicting a literal battle to be fought at the end of time. "The use of geographical points to emphasize spiritual truths is a common Biblical phenomenon. For instance, the Greek *Gehenna*, 'Hell,' relates to the Hebrew *ge hinnom*, which was the Valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, when the Jews became involved in idolatry, they offered their children as burnt sacrifices there (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Later, because of these horrible pagan associations, the valley became the city dump, which was constantly burning. Thus because of its connection with pain, weeping, and burning, *Gehenna* became a symbol for the final punishment of *hell*. Certainly it would be absurd to contend that on the day of judgment, the wicked will be cast into the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem! Similarly, John, in the Revelation, frequently uses *places* as symbols of *concepts*. So Zion (14:1) and Jerusalem (21:1) are symbols of God's spiritual city, the church; Babylon is symbolic of apostasy and all that is opposed to God (14:8); Egypt and Sodom (11:8) represent oppression and wickedness; and Euphrates (16:2) was symbolic of the point of origin of (spiritual) Israel's enemies, etc. And it is within such a reference frame that 'mountain of Megiddo' is used" (Jackson, ADL, pp.343f).
 - e. The Valley of Hinnom furnished the name of the place prepared for the devil and his angels. The valley of Megiddo of Old Testament renown is used in a similar fashion for the continuing battle between good and evil taking place during the Christian Age, according to the common view. This is a safe view of the battle, but it seems more in keeping with the context of the book to find the fulfillment in the overthrow of the corrupt Roman Empire (cf. Dan. 2).
 - f. Hailey sees the battle as a reference to the downfall of the Roman Empire: "In view of these battles of historical significance [i.e., those Old Testament battles identified above] we conclude that John used the word symbolically to describe a great decisive spiritual battle between the army of Satan and the forces of God, which would determine the fate of each. This battle was fought and won by the Lord in the complete defeat of the Roman Empire and paganism behind which Rome threw its total power (see 19:11-21). To look for a physical military battle between human armies to be fought in northern Palestine at some future date is completely without scriptural support and foreign to the spirit and purpose of Revelation" (Hailey, pp.336-337). This contextual view harmonizes with the information provided up to this point by the apostle; it is a safe understanding of this highly symbolic spiritual battle.
- I. Revelation 16:17-21: The Seventh Bowl is Poured into the Air.
1. Verse 17: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."
 - a. After this last bowl was emptied, a great voice out of the temple of heaven said, "It is done." This was the final installment of God's wrath. It "completes the gamut of natural elements: earth, water, fire (sun), and air. The disturbances that follow appear more severe than those before, though all are fearful and awesome" (Hailey, p.337).

- b. It is obvious that “air” is a symbol, as it is in Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This prince is Satan; he is the god of this world: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).
- c. “As the fifth bowl had been poured out on the throne of the beast, which was sorely affected, and the sixth bowl opened the way for the gathering of Satan’s forces to the great war, being called by demon spirits, it is reasonable to conclude that the seventh bowl would affect the whole sphere of Satan’s operation. Air would be an appropriate emblem of the prevailing influence or surroundings of the realm in which the wicked live, move, and breathe, being dominated by the devil. Thus the course of this world, which is itself evil, a life of trespasses and sin, ruled by the prince of its power, controlling his subjects by a spirit of rebellion and disobedience to God, is now brought under judgment” (Hailey, p.337).
- d. The plagues are completed at this point. They have graphically depicted the outpouring of God’s wrath upon sinful men, who operate in rebellion to his will. In our view, the wrath pictured is the punishment and destruction that was poured upon the cruel empire of Rome. To make a more general application to all evil would do no damage to the passage, but the context seems more likely to have application to the punishment and overthrow of Rome.
2. Verse 18: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great."
- a. Compare this with the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-19) and the opening of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:5). The opening of the seven seals concluded with thunders and voices and lightning and an earthquake; the sounding of the seven trumpets was concluded with these same four —with the additional feature of “great hail.”
- 1) Revelation 11:15-19: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."
- 2) Revelation 8:5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
- b. “And now the seven bowls of the seven plagues are brought to a conclusion with the same four elements, with an added intensity, for the earthquake is ‘a great earthquake,’ and the hail is ‘great hail’ (v. 21). The earthquake is so great, so mighty, ‘such as was not since there were men upon the earth.’ This plague is earthshaking because of what is affected: Satan’s own realm receives a devastating shock, together with the fall of Babylon and the empire over which she ruled. Since there had never been a greater realm than this present Babylon and the Roman Empire, there would never have been a greater earthquake than when it fell” (Hailey, p.338).
3. Verse 19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."
- a. If our conclusions are correct in the former cases, then this reference is also to Rome (and the empire she controlled). John saw the great earthquake and giant hailstones combine to dash Rome to pieces. “The great city” has appeared several times.
- 1) Revelation 11:8: "And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

- 2) Revelation 11:13: "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."
 - 3) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
- b. The meaning of the division of the city is unclear. Ezekiel prophesied of Jerusalem's downfall at the hands of the Babylonians: "Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, *and* smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts" (Ezek. 5:2-3).
 - c. A third part of his shorn-off hair and beard was to be burned in the midst of the city when it falls to the siege. The prophet is to burn the hair in the city as depicted on the brick (Ezek. 4:1-3), when the city is captured in his demonstration. Another third part of the hair he is to smite with a knife.
 - d. The final third part was to be scattered in the wind. The point of this demonstration is to depict graphically the fate of the people in the actual city of Jerusalem. A third of them will perish in the fire [plus famine and disease] when the city burns; a third part will be slain with the sword; a third part of them will be scattered among the pagan world. Verse twelve gives an explanatory note: "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezek. 5:12). This depicted the total destruction of the city (in 586 B.C.); this could also be the meaning of John's description of the "Babylon" [Rome and its Empire] of our present text.
 - e. This scene of our text describes the disintegration of the pagan world. "The city is called to mind before the Lord, as Cornelius's alms 'were had in remembrance before God' (Acts 10:31). God now gives to her 'the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath,' that is, the hot burning anger of his wrath" (Hailey, p.339). He had promised to give this cup to the worshippers of the beast and his image (Rev. 14:10)—he now fulfills that promise.
4. Verse 20: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."
 - a. This is similar to the picture given under the opening of the sixth seal: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Rev. 6:14). This catastrophe on "Babylon" described as the sudden removal of all of its islands and mountains. The imagery is vivid and breath-taking!
 - b. Again, Ezekiel used similar language in picturing the overthrow of the ancient city-state of Tyre: "Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broided garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at *every* moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, *that wast* inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror *to be* on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that *are* in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure" (Ezek. 26:15-18).
 - 1) The destruction of Tyre would have adverse effects on others. Their trading partners would obviously be negatively affected. The Phoenicians had jealously guarded the locations of their distant trading fields, so those places would suffer when the Phoenicians stopped coming. They ruled the sea, and were a terror to anyone who sought to compete with them. The picture given of those adversely affected by the demise of old Tyre is that of mourning. The princes of the faraway places the Tyrians traded with are depicted as coming down from the throne and mourning the loss; they would clothe themselves in mourning attire, and sit on the ground, lamenting for Tyre.
 - 2) The apostle John is showing in our text that when this great catastrophe he describes takes place, there will be no place for refuge—all hiding places will be gone. The great world power of John's revelation is the corrupt empire of Rome. We remember the terrible period of the Dark Ages which

followed the destruction of the Roman Empire! After that thousand years of darkness, did humanity began the climb back toward moral and political sanity.

5. Verse 21: "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."
 - a. These were vastly larger than ordinary hail-stones—each stone weighed a talent. Hailey reports that a talent is estimated to have been between sixty and a hundred pounds, or more precisely between ninety and ninety-six pounds. Nothing on earth could long sustain the crushing blows these stones would inflict—they would crush whatever they hit. Such a weight falling from great heights would crush all humans upon whom it fell. God is the source of these hail-stones; his purpose is divine punishment upon the unrighteous. Of course, these hailstones are figurative, symbolic of great punishment brought upon the evil people of the context.
 - b. There are many Old Testament references to the use of hail as a means of punishment.
 - 1) Exodus 9:18-26: "Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; *for upon* every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, was there no hail."
 - 2) Joshua 10:11: "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."
 - 3) Psalms 78:47: "He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost."
 - 4) Psalms 105:32: "He gave them hail for rain, *and* flaming fire in their land."
 - c. The Lord had fought for Israel at Beth-horon by sending great stones from heaven upon the Canaanites: "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, *and* were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died with hailstones than *they* whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Josh. 10:11).
 - 1) As the fleeing enemy descended from upper Bethhoron to lower Bethhoron, God sent great hailstones upon their host, which killed more than which died by the hand of the Israelite army.
 - 2) In delivering Israel from Egypt a generation earlier, God sent hailstones upon the land, killing man and beast alike (Exodus 9). In modern times, great hailstones the size of grapefruit have been documented. Even in a hailstorm which produces only small stones, tremendous damage is done. We are not told how large these hailstones were, but they were of sufficient size to kill thousands of soldiers who likely wore protective armor.
 - 3) Burton Coffman (*Commentary on Joshua*, p.110) told of a great hailstorm which hit our nation's capital in the early 1950s which rained down stones the size of grapefruit. Some of these stones were stored in freezers. Some of the larger ones were photographed, resting on the tops of four-inch wide tumblers.
 - d. "Concerning those in Jerusalem who made lies their refuge and under falsehood hid themselves, the Lord said that hail should sweep away their refuge of lies and the flood would overflow their hiding place" (Hailey, pp.339f).

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- 1) Isaiah 28:15-18: "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."
 - 2) Ezekiel 38:22: "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that *are* with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone."
- e. Here hail is used as a symbol of the destruction of God's Judgment. Instead of repenting, they blasphemed God because of the plague. Since man often is steeped in sin, God's judgments do not always bring repentance. These plagues did not complete the final judgment, for afterwards men were left who blasphemed God. The severest of divine judgments had been poured out, touching all phases of Roman society and power; only the final Judgment, which will bring all evil to a total end, could surpass in intensity judgments such as these.
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REVELATION 17

The Scarlet Woman and the Beast

A. Revelation 17:1-6: John Sees and Describes the Harlot.

1. Verse 1: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."
 - a. One of the angels, who had recently poured out a bowl of wrath, talked with John, inviting him to come see the judgment which was to be given the great harlot. The angel described her as sitting upon many waters. Verse 15 defines the meaning of the waters as symbolizing people, multitudes, nations and tongues; we are not left to wonder as to the meaning in this case. He tells us in verse 18 that the harlot represented "that great city," thus setting the picture of the chapter for us. To find the fulfillment of the symbols of this chapter, we are to look for a city which reigned over many people and kings.
 - b. It is common Old Testament terminology for a wicked city to be described as a harlot.
 - 1) Isaiah 1:21: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."
 - 2) Isaiah 47:5-15: "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: *so* that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, *I am*, and none else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two *things* shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, *and* for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, *I am*, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, *which* thou shalt not know. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from *these things* that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: *there shall not be* a coal to warm at, *nor* fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, *even* thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee."
 - 3) Nahum 3:1-4: "Woe to the bloody city! *it is* all full of lies *and* robbery; the prey departeth not; The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: *and there is* a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; *and there is* none end of *their* corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts."
 - 4) Compare:
 - a) Jeremiah 2:20: "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, *and* burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot."
 - b) Hosea 2:5: "For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give *me* my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink."
 - c) Hosea 2:12: "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These *are*

- my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them."
- d) Hosea 9:1: "Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as *other* people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor."
 - e) Hosea 13:2: "And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, *and* idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves."
- c. Ancient Babylon was situated on many waters: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, *and* the measure of thy covetousness" (Jer. 51:13). It was on the Euphrates River, and had many canals, dykes, and marshes surrounding the city, providing wealth and protection. Since the city of this chapter is called *Babylon*, the descriptions of its ancient namesake are also used.
2. Verse 2: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."
- a. The kings of the earth are the great ones who committed political, economic, and religious fornication with the harlot for the pleasures and rewards gained thereby. Not only were the kings involved, but also they that dwell on the earth. By yielding to the great city's desires, they purchased her favors.
 - b. These were all drunk with the wine of her fornication:
 - 1) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - 2) Isaiah 29:9: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink."
 - c. John says the nations were drunk, but not literally; they were intoxicated with the strong drink of lust and the wine of power, riches, and conquest. Compare: "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, *he is* a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and *is* as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.... Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to *him*, and makest *him* drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Hab. 2:5,15).
 - d. The fornication was of a spiritual nature. Idolatry predominated in Rome and its empire. As already noted, the worship of the emperor was required—a worship that was utterly corrupt by God's standards. Idolatry also promoted sinful conduct of various stripes, including religious prostitution. This "lady" was also guilty of persecuting and slaying God's people.
3. Verses 3-4: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."
- a. The angel transported John into the wilderness where he could see this great harlot. She is pictured as sitting on a scarlet colored beast which was full of names of blasphemy, and had seven heads and ten horns. Under the power of the Holy Spirit he was carried into the wilderness, as Ezekiel was: "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where *was* the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy" (Ezek. 8:3).
 - b. "Wilderness" is used in a good and a bad sense in the scriptures:
 - 1) Psalms 107:33,35: "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground....He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings."
 - 2) Isaiah 21:1: "The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; *so* it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land."
 - 3) Isaiah 50:2: "Wherefore, when I came, *was there* no man? when I called, *was there* none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because *there is*

- no water, and dieth for thirst."
- 4) Isaiah 51:3: "For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."
 - 5) Ezekiel 34:25-26: "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."
 - 6) Zephaniah 2:13: "And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, *and* dry like a wilderness."
 - 7) Malachi 1:3: "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."
- c. Therefore, a wilderness may be a place of peace and protection or it may be a place of desolation (Hailey). Because the woman in Revelation 12 is in the wilderness and now the harlot is in a wilderness, some think these two are connected—the former with the faithful church; the latter with the apostate element of the church. But the woman of chapter 12 and the harlot of chapter 17 are different:
- 1) One is pure; the other corrupt and fit for destruction.
 - 2) One belongs to God who loves her and protects her; the other belongs to the beast and kings of earth.
 - 3) One is clothed in fine linen (robes of righteousness); the other in purple and scarlet and is full of abominations (sensual, earthly splendor).
 - 4) The one is a holy mother; the other is a mother of harlots and abominations.
 - 5) The one is driven into the wilderness; the other is drunk with the martyrs' blood.
 - 6) One is protected by God; the other stands opposed to God and cannot claim his aid.
4. Verse 5: "And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."
- a. The latter part of the passage is in capital letters for emphasis; they also indicate a quotation. This is similar to the sign on the Lord's cross: "And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matt. 27:37).
 - b. The name written on her forehead announces to all the identity of the woman: she is the mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth. Remember that John is not describing an actual woman, but a city (vs.18).
 - c. The word "mystery" is used in the New Testament to describe God's scheme of redemption, which was not fully revealed until after Christ and his apostles accomplished their work (Eph. 3:1-11). Paul could call this great plan a "mystery," for it dealt with information which no one could know until it was revealed by its Author. "Mystery" in Revelation 17:5 may be part of the harlot's name, and possibly suggests that, whatever mystery may have enshrouded this woman, it is now openly exposed. Verse 7 records the angel's intention of fully revealing the mystery of the woman.
 - d. "There seemed to have been a Roman custom whereby the prostitutes in the public brothels wore a frontlet on their foreheads giving their names. These were their identification marks as prostitutes" (James Meadows, ADL, p.182).
 - e. The harlot is Babylon the Great (Rev. 14:8; 16:19), which to John's readers would have been symbolic of Rome, their great persecutor. This spiritual harlot had offspring which partook of their mother's nature. Thus, Rome itself symbolically represents the world of lust and seduction (literal and spiritual).
5. Verse 6: "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (KJV). "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder" (ASV).
- a. The harlot was drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs; this blood is what was in the golden cup she held as noted in verse 4; the blood in verse 4 is called the "abominations and filthiness of her

fornication,” meaning that in her spiritual fornication she shed the innocent blood of God’s people.

- b. In Revelation 18:24, it is reported that in her was found the blood of prophets and saints that were slain on the earth. In a figure of speech, therefore, she is described as being drunk on the blood of the saints.
- c. Tacitus (an unbelieving Roman writer) records that Christians were killed by the thousands in the most cruel ways. Rome was intoxicated with the joy of persecution and was, figuratively, drunk with the blood of the saints. In Annals 15:44, he wrote:
 - 1) “Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess.
 - 2) “And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace.
 - 3) “Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind.
 - 4) “Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car.
 - 5) “Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.”
- d. When John saw the woman, he wondered with great wonder; he was astonished at what he saw. He beheld her astride the scarlet-colored beast in the midst of the wilderness, seeing her in her true light. [*Admiration* in the KJV is rendered *wonder* in the ASV].
- e. The idea of someone being drunk on the blood of men was not new; some unknown ancient writer described the Roman emperor Tiberius with these words: “He is not thirsty for neat wine as he was thirsty then, but warm him up a tastier cup—the blood of murdered men.”

B. Revelation 17:7-17: The Explanation of the Mystery of the Woman and the Beast.

1. Verses 7-8: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - a. The amazement John felt was known to the angel; the angel asked why he wondered, and stated the intention of revealing the mystery of the woman, the beast, the heads, and the horns.
 - b. This passage and the next three verses are among the hardest in the book to interpret. “John seems now to identify the beast with the emperor, for the empire is personified in its emperor. It is the beast who authorizes the persecution of the saints on whose blood the harlot was drunk” (Hailey, p.349).
 - c. This is the same beast as that which came up from the sea (Rev. 13:3), and suffered a mortal injury to one of its seven heads. In our view, this represented the death of Nero, who died in A.D. 68. It was he who raised the first official persecution against the church by Rome. Persecution ceased until A.D.

- 81, when it was revived by Domitian. There was a theory (called the Nero *redivivus myth*) being circulated following Nero's death, that that wicked and powerful emperor would revive from death and take up where he left off. This theory was of course false.
- d. However, it appears that John is using this theory to identify to the first century saints just who he is talking about in this chapter, i.e., who is represented by the beast. This beast WAS, IS NOT, and is about to come up out of the abyss: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, *they* whose name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come" (Rev. 17:8, ASV).
 - e. Nero was on the throne; he died; he was coming back. The saints would know that Nero was dead and gone and would not return. But the one coming from the pit would be after the nature of Nero. The emperor Domitian fits the mold; indeed, his attacks against the church far surpassed those of Nero. The beast of this chapter is the same beast that arose from the sea in chapter 13—Domitian. When he would come to the throne and renew Nero's persecuting ways, the people would be amazed:
 - 1) Revelation 13:3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."
 - 2) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - f. Symbolically, Nero was revived in Domitian; they came from the same mold. The pit (the abyss) is the realm from which the smoke and locusts came (Rev. 9:1-3) and over which Satan reigns (Rev. 9:11). The beast that made war with the witnesses came from there (Rev. 11:7). This is the source of the beast described in this chapter—he got his orders from Satan. The ultimate destiny of this beast is perdition—he will go to this state of ruin. While the men of the earth would marvel at the beast's revival, the saints would not be amazed, for they would know the ultimate doom of the beast.
2. Verse 9: "And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." [The angel provides further identification of the beast].
- a. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The mind is composed of faculties to perceive and understand. One mind can communicate with another mind—using a message of words. When our mental faculties are combined with wisdom, insight into deep truths can be gained. Wisdom comes from God (Jas. 1:5), through his revelation (1 Cor. 1:6-8). By understanding God's purpose and actions set forth in the Bible, one may hope to understand what he is revealing through the angel to John here.
 - 1) James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:6-13: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even* the hidden *wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:2-5: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
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- b. The seven heads possessed by the beast are seven mountains where the harlot sat. The city of seven hills is of course Rome; it has gained fame thereby. But the seven mountains have a symbolic meaning—the next verse shows they represent seven kings: "And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18, ASV). The woman is identified in verse eighteen as a city—the city of Rome, if our reasoning is correct.
- c. Kingdoms are depicted in the Bible as beasts; Daniel pictures the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome as four great beasts which came up from the sea:
- 1) Daniel 7:3-4: "And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and *it had* three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it *was* diverse from all the beasts that *were* before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. 7:3-7). One was like a lion, another like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth was dreadful and terrible.
 - 2) The beast that John saw rise up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1ff) and the beast on which the harlot sat are the same; this beast represents Rome and its empire. John puts together in this one beast all the features of the four seen by Daniel. "For John the Roman Empire was so satanic and terrible that in itself is included all the evil terrors of the evil empires which had gone before. It was, as it were, the sum total of all evil" (Barclay, quoted by Meadows, ADL, p.185).
3. Verse 10: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."
- a. There are seven kings. The Roman emperors were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, in this order. Julius Caesar, some of the scholars say, was not an emperor; the first real emperor is said to have been Augustus. Also, there were some usurpers to the throne who came in the midst of these seven, but they were minor characters and did not last long (Galba, Otho, Vitellius). Perhaps these are the seven kings indicated. But what is meant by the next statement? "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come."
 - b. William Hendricksen thinks the kings indicated represent the pagan kingdoms which were in opposition to God: Nimrod's Babylon (Gen. 10:8-11), Assyria, Neo-Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; the seventh, he says, is the collective title for all anti-Christian governments between the fall of Rome and the empire of Antichrist, which is the eighth. Others have suggested the same theory but with different kingdoms named. The difficulty with this interpretation lies with the seventh and eighth kings. Also, *antichrist* in the Scriptures is many, not one; it is not a reference to some specific individual, but to a class—unbelievers. The term is only used by John in his epistles:
 - 1) 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."
 - 2) 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."
 - 3) 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - 4) 2 John 1:7: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."
 - c. Another view, advanced by Hailey, asserts that the symbolism of the passage would be understood by John's readers as describing Rome, but "the symbolism extends beyond this. The beast represented the total of forceful anti-Christian or anti-theistic opposition, and the harlot represented that which is lustful, enticing, and seductive—all that appeals to the flesh. The seven kings, therefore, were a symbolic number, representing all kings or kingdoms, past, present, and future that would oppose the

- kingdom of God. Each who would come would still be part of the seven” (p.351).
- d. Brother Wallace’s view is that Jerusalem is being discussed; he begins counting Roman rulers with Julius Caesar; this makes Nero (sixth in line) the emperor that **is**. This is one of the stronger arguments for the early date for the book.
 - e. Another view, the one which this study accepts, is that the Roman rulers indicated are Augustus (1st) through Titus (7th), with Domitian being number 8 (see verse 11). A difficulty with this view is to determine which five are not, which one now is, and who is the one not yet come. John is writing to hide the identity of the beast from civil authorities. If Domitian should read the Revelation, and knowing the line of the emperors, he would know that he was not the sixth. The saints would know him however by the statement of verse 11. Thus Domitian is really the one who is, but is identified vaguely in order to protect the saints from any additional persecution.
 - f. The one to come would continue only a short space.
4. Verse 11: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) “And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition” (ASV).
 - 2) “The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the Eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition” (NKJV).
 - 3) “As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction” (ESV).
 - 4) “And the beast that was and is not, even he himself is an eighth, and is of the seven, and he goes to destruction” (English Study Bible).
 - b. The beast that was and is not (if our interpretation is correct) was Domitian; he is here called the eighth. This fits the order of emperors. His ultimate destiny is perdition. Thus John’s readers would find a source of comfort and hope from these words.
 - c. Two other general views:
 - 1) The Pulpit Commentary views this as a general depiction of evil powers: “The absence of the article before...’eighth,’ shows that this is not the eighth in a successive series, in which the kings already mentioned form the first seven. The Revised Version probably gives the correct meaning, ‘is of the seven;’ that is, the beast himself consists of, and is formed by, what has been denoted by the seven kings. We have already interpreted the beast as the worldly power—Satan in his capacity of ‘prince of this world.’ We have also shown that the ‘seven kings’ describes this worldly power as it exists throughout all ages. This verse, therefore, sums up and reasserts briefly what has been already virtually intimated in the symbolism employed, viz. that the beast is the sum total of what has been described under the form of five kings, then one king, and then one king again (ver. 10). His final doom is also reasserted, ‘he goeth into perdition’ (cf. ver. 8 and Rev 19:20)” [Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - 2) Hailey also makes a more general application: “Probably the best solution to the problem is to adhere to the symbolic character of the book. Repeatedly John has used seven as the symbol for completeness or perfection, and ten for the fullness of power. The seven churches in chapter 1 were not literally seven congregations; they represented the church in its fullness....The same could be said of the seven spirits, the seven lamps, and so forth. When the book was read to the churches the members would have thought of Rome as they were told of the harlot, and of the empire when they heard of the beast on whom the harlot sat; in this their understanding would be correct. But the symbolism extends beyond this. The beast represented the total of forceful anti-Christian or anti-theistic opposition, and the harlot represented that which is lustful, enticing, and seductive—all that appeals to the flesh. The seven kings, therefore, were a symbolic number, representing all kings or kingdoms, past, present, and future that would oppose the kingdom of God. Each who would come would still be part of the seven. Although kingdoms arise out of the upheavals in the sea of society, their anti-God rulers originate in the abyss, the satanic realm. Each continues for a little while, then goes into perdition, which is the end of all who oppose God” (Hailey, pp.352f).

- d. Summers agrees with our view. The angel “explains that the beast ‘was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition.’ This is a reflection of the Nero redivivus myth. The Roman Empire is thus pictured as personified in Domitian, the reincarnation of Nero. The empire is about to suffer destruction. The heathen world wonders at the history and progress of Rome. Those who are Christian do not wonder at her because they know she is doomed. Beginning with verse 9, the angel explains that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains; Rome was built on seven hills. They are also seven kings which have formed the basis of the great empire: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Titus. There is an eighth who is to have a part in this history, but he is one of the seven already mentioned—he was and is the reincarnation of the evil, persecuting work of Nero” (Summers, p.192).
- e. “After Nero’s death in 68 A.D., a legend grew among the people that Nero was not really dead, but had gone to Parthia in the far east. The Romans believed that Nero would be resurrected in another emperor. The evil of the Roman Empire would be consummated and epitomized in this emperor. As confusing as this verse sounds to our ears, ‘unaccustomed to apocalyptic language, it may well have conveyed the following to those who first read it: Nero is one of the five emperors already past, thus he is not now a threat, yet he will rise again to torment us.’ Juvenal, the Roman satirist spoke of Rome’s being ‘enslaved to a bald-headed Nero’ (Domitian was bald). Tertullian called Domitian ‘a man of Nero’s type of cruelty’ and Eusebius repeated the same verdict” (Meadows, ADL, p.145).
- f. Summers offers the following interesting information about the time factor of Revelation:
- 1) The persecution of the Christians which is reflected in the book fits the Domitian period alone. There were several periods of persecution of a sort. Caligula (c. 41), the “mad emperor,” carried on some religious persecution; Claudius (c. 52) drove the Christians from Rome because of their conflict with the Jews; Nero (c. 64-68) carried on intense persecution in Rome for reasons already cited [to place the blame for burning Rome on Christians]; very little persecution was carried on by Vespasian (c. 69-79); Domitian (c. 81-96) is the emperor who has gone down in history as the one who bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians.
 - 2) His persecution was for the purpose of enforcing emperor worship. Strange as the ascription of divinity to an emperor may seem to our thought, the religious conceptions of the ancient Gentile world presented no obstacle to such apotheosis [i.e., to deify]. Polytheism, with its gradation of rank among the divinities, made easy the deification of men whose office, power, or achievements so far surpassed the ordinary as to appear superhuman.
 - 3) Julius Caesar boldly claimed divine honor and placed his statue among those of the gods in the temples. August forbade the offering of divine honors to himself in Rome; yet he accepted the title “Augustus,” hitherto the epithet of the gods, and in the provinces he sanctioned temples to himself in conjunction with the goddess Roma. The cult thus established continued through the following reigns, varying somewhat in the emphasis laid upon it according to the disposition of the respective emperors, but gradually becoming an essential factor in the imperial religious system.
 - 4) It is in the reign of Domitian that we reach an insistence upon emperor worship, who, because of his infamous career, failed to receive the honor of apotheosis from the Senate at his death, was strenuous in claiming divinity in his life; to his subordinates he became “*deus et dominus*.” According to Suetonius, he began his letters, “Our Lord and God commands that it should be done so and so,” and formally decreed that no one should address him otherwise, either in writing or by word of mouth. He had images of himself erected throughout the empire to make this worship more convenient....Pliny continues his discussion by stating that Domitian raised himself above all the other gods and chose for his statues the most hallowed sites in the temple and caused entire hosts of victims to be sacrificed for refusal to worship him.
 - 5) Hence, it is self-evident that, under Domitian, Christianity had to enter a struggle of life or death with the imperial power, which always claimed, even in the hands of the most discreet possessors, more than Christians could yield. A sharp collision was inevitable. The forms of punishment were many. Some were put to death, some were exiled, some were tortured into a confession of the divinity of the emperor, some had their property confiscated, some received combinations of these measures. All this is very plainly reflected in the book of Revelation.
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- 6) The major portion of this punishment fell on Asia Minor because that was the main stronghold of Christianity after A.D. 70. It is natural that since the majority of the Christians were there, the majority of the resistance to emperor worship would be there, and hence the brunt of the punishment would fall upon Asia Minor. This is reflected not only in the book of Revelation but also in other works concerning that period. Revelation was God's word of cheer to the Christians under these conditions [pp.83-85].
5. Verse 12: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."
 - a. The ten horns are ten kings; these would be representative of the lesser provinces and kingdoms under the domination of Rome.
 - b. These have no kingdom as yet; they merely receive their authority from or with the beast. Their authority was limited in time and extent; they depended on the beast (the emperor) for the power they possessed.
 - c. The power of these ten kings would be limited in time—only one hour (a relatively short time). When the beast lost his power, these ten kings would lose their power.
6. Verse 13: "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."
 - a. The beasts and his associates are of one mind—they are united in their service to the dragon (Satan). There is strength in unity, even among those who are engaged in evil.
 - b. These with one accord give their strength and efforts in support of the beast and in opposition to the Lamb. This would not continue for long, however.
 - c. Christians are to be united if they are have the strength and influence to serve effectively.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 3) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
 - 4) Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
7. Verse 14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful."
 - a. John is giving a preview of the battle and its ultimate outcome; victory is sure for the cause of Christ. In this the saints could take assurance and comfort.
 - b. The seeds of Rome's destruction had already been sown—the weaknesses in its very foundation: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:40-45).
 - c. "This is also the assurance of victory for those who have identified themselves with Christ through

their obedience and service in his kingdom....Those identified with Christ, and overcome with him, are 'called, and chosen and faithful.' This is in keeping with the teaching of our Lord, 'Many are called but few are chosen,' Matt. 20:16" (Thompson, p.183).

- 1) 1 Corinthians 1:24: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
- 2) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
- 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

C. Revelation 17:15-18: Further Identification of the Harlot.

1. Verse 15: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."
 - a. Other versions:
 - 1) ASV: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished. And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."
 - 2) NKJ: And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."
 - b. The harlot is introduced as sitting on many waters; when John saw her she was sitting on the scarlet-colored beast; the angel here explains that the many waters represent the empire and the many ethnic groups and nationalities over which Rome ruled.
 - c. A major weakness of Rome was her inability to bring her conquered people into one cohesive power. "And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (Dan. 2:42-43).
2. Verse 16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."
 - a. Those who loved the harlot would turn on her in hatred; this change would result in the destruction of the harlot. Rome had subjugated many nations, dominating and exploiting them. The time came when nations would switch their allegiance from Rome to another rising power. Finally, the western empire was cannibalized by the invaders and rebellious allies.
 - b. "Love among men or nations has often turned to hatred as intense as the affection it replaced. This change would result in the destruction of the harlot; she would be made desolate, stripped of her grandeur and wealth, her flesh eaten and consumed, and her remains destroyed by burning with fire. This is an example of evil's self-destruction. The principle of love being corrupted to lust and turning to hate, which in turn destroys, can be illustrated by nations today. As long as nations can get what they want from one another, they continue to commit economic and political fornication. But actually, nations and states hate all government, which is being destroyed by greed and lust. And so it is with individuals. First, allured by the world, they commit fornication with her. Then, realizing their delusion, they hate what they have done, but too late—they are irrevocably lost and destroyed" (Hailey, p.355).

3. Verse 17: "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."
 - a. They had been subject to the beast for a time, but God would bring about a change of attitude on their part toward the beast and harlot.
 - b. Compare:
 - 1) Judges 7:22: "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 14:20: "And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was* a very great discomfiture."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 20:23: "For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy *them*: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another."
 - c. John reports that God put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfill his will. We are not privileged to know precisely how God exerted his power in accomplishing this, nor are we told how he did similar things in certain Old Testament cases.
 - 1) He reassured the Israelites that their Canaanite enemies would not bother their families or property when the men assembled at the tabernacle three times a year: "Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:23-24). How did God keep the enemy from having the notion of launching an assault while the men were at worship? God would not permit this to happen; he does not specify how he would prevent this, but among the means was the terror God's mighty works in Israel's behalf would create in the hearts of her pagan neighbors. "And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that *were* on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard *these things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:8-11).
 - 2) "Scripture clearly reveals that throughout history God used men and nations to carry out his purpose. He could turn a nation to fighting within itself, as in the case of Midian during the time of Gideon (Judg. 7:22), and of the Philistines in the days of Saul (I Sam. 14:20). In the battle of Moab and Ammon against Mount Sier, God gave victory to King Jehoshaphat without Judah's army lifting a sword (II Chron. 20:23). God's objective in putting it in their (the kings') hearts to come to one mind was that his words of judgment against the harlot should be accomplished. Not a word failed—all came to pass" (Hailey, p.356).
 - 3) "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said" (Ex. 7:13). God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. If God did it directly by the use of his supernatural power, then the king had no choice in the matter. Therefore, he was not at fault for his refusal to let Israel go. Why, then, did God punish the man for not doing what he was powerless to do? God is infinitely impartial (Acts 10:34-35). He wills the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2:4-5) and desires that every sinner repent (2 Pet. 3:9). But he will not force any man to obey him (Rev. 22:17; Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 3:7-15; Matt. 7:21-28). Neither will he force any man to disobey his will (1 John 3:4; Jas. 1:13-17). When God gave Pharaoh a demand the king did not want to obey, he hardened his own heart so that he would not take into account the significance of the miracle he had just seen. We can say that God hardened his heart only in this sense. But the magicians contributed to this hardening when they, by their trickery, produced serpents which seemed to annul the effect of Moses' miracle. But the king hardened his own heart for it was his choice

whether to release Israel. If he did not have any choice, why did God send Moses and Aaron to make the request?

- 4) God used Assyria, Babylonia, and other pagan nations in ancient days to punish the rebellious Israelites; these alien nations did not perceive that they were being used—they thought it was all their idea. God afterwards would punish these evil nations for their wickedness.
4. Verse 18: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."
- a. This statement should remove any doubt as to the identity of the harlot (Babylon). She is described as the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth. She is not the apostate church; she is Rome, the mistress of the nations. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem could be thus described? It does not seem possible. Jerusalem and all Palestine were dominated by Rome; Jerusalem did not reign over other kingdoms—after the times of the Old Testament kings.
 - b. She symbolized the world of lust, seduction, and allurements of all that appeals to the flesh (Hailey). Two great enemies of the Lord's church are the world and false religion. Rome, with her great wealth and powerful pagan religions, sought to turn Christians from serving Christ to serving Rome.
 - c. "The ten horns of the beast represent the powers of the Empire. Her power was in her provinces, so this symbol which the angel identifies as 'ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour' must refer to the vassal kings, rulers of Rome's provinces, who receive authority from Rome and enjoy this delegated authority for a very short time—'one hour.' They have only one thought, and that is to obey the Roman Empire which is personified in Domitian. That is the reason they have been so zealous to persecute the Christians. They war with the Lamb, but the Lamb is victorious because he is 'Lord of lords, and King of kings.' The time will come when these provinces will have their part in her destruction. This was one of the greatest fears that Rome had. Everywhere in the book of Acts there are indications of Rome's fear of any kind of turmoil and unrest which might possibly turn into a revolution. The chapter closes with the statement that the woman, the harlot who met this destruction, was the great city which lorded over the kings of the earth. The first triumph pictured to the Christians is the certain doom of imperial Rome" (Summers, pp.192f).
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REVELATION 18

The Fall of the Harlot

A. Revelation 18:1-6: Babylon is Fallen.

1. Verse 1: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."
 - a. Another installment in the fall of Babylon the great is given. If our assessment of chapter 17 is correct, "Babylon" is Rome. The ancient Babylonian Empire had fallen many centuries earlier [in 539 B.C.]. God had now made ready for the overthrow of the current evil oppressive nation, the Empire of Rome.
 - b. The angel is described as possessing "great power" (authority, ASV). A single angel is exceedingly powerful (cf. Isa. 37:36-38); because they are God's messengers, they act by his authority. "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead" (Isa. 37:36-38).
 - c. This angel's glorious presence "lightened the earth," indicating his greatness and the importance of his mission.
2. Verse 2: "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."
 - a. This messenger announced with a powerful voice the coming demise of the wicked city. Compare:
 - 1) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - 2) Revelation 16:19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."
 - 3) Isaiah 21:9: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."
 - b. He does not picture the details of its fall, but shows the results: it would become a habitation of demons, the hold [the prison] of unclean spirits, and a cage of unclean birds.
 - c. About 150 years before the fall of Old Testament Babylon, her demise was described prophetically: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, *with* a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Isa. 21:9). Following its overthrow, it would not be inhabited by man but by "doleful creatures" and "owls."
 - 1) Isaiah 13:19-22: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in *their* pleasant palaces: and her time *is* near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."
 - 2) Isaiah 14:4-23: "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for

thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts."

- d. Old Testament descriptions of Babylon's literal fall are the background for this description of the fall of this later "Babylon."
 - e. A "hold" is a prison, a place of detention (Vine). Rome would become a hold for the vile creatures described in the verse. This picture is in stark contrast to the holy city (heaven) in Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
3. Verse 3: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."
 - a. The kings of the earth had committed fornication with this harlot; the merchants had grown rich through the "power of her wantonness" (ASV). The fornication was not literal, but symbolizes the unholy and vile alliance they had with pagan Rome.
 - b. Some earthly rulers, criminals, and some large companies today seek to gain riches and influence through corrupt means: illegal drug traffic, unscrupulous business practices, illegal arms, prostitution, industrial espionage, and a host of other evil or suspect practices. Mexican drug cartels are reported as becoming "filthy rich" currently [2022] with human trafficking through the huge illegal influx of aliens entering into our country. Powerful political offices are aiding and abetting this invasion. The country through those in political power are leading our nation to *national suicide*.
 - c. But God will have the final word: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17). "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering..." (Webster).
 4. Verses 4-5: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."
 - a. A call issues from heaven for God's people to separate themselves from Babylon, for them to have no fellowship with her sins, and thus receive not the plagues which she is to suffer. They were not being told to remove themselves physically from the city or empire—where could they go? But rather not to partake of her evil. Compare: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:9-10).
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- b. God has often called for his people to be separate:
- 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - 2) Genesis 19:12-17: "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring *them* out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."
 - 3) Exodus 3:20: "And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go."
 - 4) Jeremiah 51:45: "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
- c. The saints then were not to be partakers of the evils of Rome; we today are to be separated from the evils of our society: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*" (Eph. 5:11).
- d. God had been longsuffering with pagan Rome (and with other sinful people); he has often given sinful men and women time to repent (Rom. 2:4; Rev. 2:20-22; 2 Pet. 3:8-10). When there is no repentance, the sentence God has decreed is carried out.
- 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:8-10: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - 3) Revelation 2:20-22: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."
- e. God is not so far removed from earth that he does not see what goes on. He is fully aware of both the

sinful and the righteous conduct on earth.

- 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
- f. The sins of Israel "reached up unto heaven" (2 Chron. 8:9; cf. Ezra 9:6). Righteousness in a nation will bring blessings from God; when God's people are what they ought to be, they have a preserving influence on their nation (cf. Gen. 19; Matt. 5:13-16). How long our country will stand, be secure and prosperous, depends to a very great extent on us.
- 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 3) For lack of ten righteous souls, Sodom was destroyed: "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for ten's sake" (Gen. 18:32).
5. Verse 6: "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."
- a. The order is given that this spiritual Babylon be punished double. She had been responsible for much harm, especially to the saints; she is now to suffer a double penalty.
 - b. The Psalmist pictured beforehand the cry of God's people held captive by ancient Babylon:
 - 1) Psalms 137:8: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy *shall he be*, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us."
 - 2) Jeremiah 50:15: "Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it *is* the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her."
 - 3) But Babylon would have to face the consequences of her cruelty: "Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel" (Jer. 50:29).
 - c. As the ancient Babylon was to be properly and fully recompensed for its evil, so would also this figurative Babylon.
6. Verse 7: "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."
- a. This spiritual harlot had become arrogant, had glorified herself, had grown wanton, had lived luxuriously. The harlot and Babylon of this context are the same—pagan Rome.
 - 1) "This city of Rome was powerful, proud, and prosperous. Moreover, both internal and external evidence establish a connection between Babylon and Rome. W.B. West presents a powerful case for Rome as the equivalent of 'Babylon' in the Book of Revelation: 'The Babylon of the Old Testament was the Rome of the New Testament, and Rome of the New Testament was the Babylon of the Old Testament....In the *Sibylline Oracles* we have Rome identified with Babylon and the Babylon identified with Rome. So the counterpart of Old Testament Babylon was New Testament Rome. She that sitteth upon many waters refers to the prominent location of the Roman Empire, around which were the Mediterranean, the Black, the Caspian, the Aegean and other seas.' Furthermore, Revelation 17:9 refers to the seven heads as seven mountains upon which the harlot is seated" (Clarke, B.J., *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, pp.471f).

- 2) The Sibylline Books are a “number of oracular manuscripts consulted regularly by the ancient Romans and thought to have been written by the sibyl of Cumae.” The sibyls were “certain women consulted as prophetesses or oracles by the ancient Greeks and Romans.” (Webster, p.1322).
- b. Similar descriptions were given by Old Testament prophets of ancient Babylon:
 - 1) Jeremiah 50:29: "Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel."
 - 2) Jeremiah 50:33: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah *were* oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go."
 - 3) Jeremiah 50:38-39: "A drought *is* upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it *is* the land of graven images, and they are mad upon *their* idols. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell *there*, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."
- c. Pagan Rome became the prime enemy of the church in the latter part of the first century. As Babylon of old suffered, so this spiritual Babylon would suffer; she had exalted herself and thought her might would ever protect her, but she did not reckon with the Almighty! Compare:
 - 1) 2 Samuel 22:28: "And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayest bring *them* down."
 - 2) Proverbs 11:2: "*When* pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly *is* wisdom."
 - 3) Proverbs 16:18: "Pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
 - 4) Proverbs 29:23: "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."
- d. Old Babylon and others had also boasted:
 - 1) Isaiah 47:7-8: "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: *so* that thou didst not lay these *things* to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, *thou that art* given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I *am*, and none else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."
 - 2) Ezekiel 28:2: "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart *is* lifted up, and thou hast said, I *am* a God, I sit *in* the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou *art* a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God."
 - 3) Daniel 4:30-37: "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' *feathers*, and his nails like birds' *claws*. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works *are* truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."
- e. God had the final say with Babylon, he would have it with this spiritual Babylon, and he will have it

with all others who follow in their unholy steps.

7. Verse 8: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her."
 - a. Because of the foregoing complaints made against the imperial city, *therefore* these plagues would befall her. "Where affluence and gaiety once held sway these three (death, mourning, and famine) would now prevail. The end comes to the great city, followed by mourning over the death and famine from the economic collapse, for 'she shall be utterly burned with fire'—totally destroyed (17:16)" (Hailey, p.636).
 - b. This passage also contains ideas used in the Old Testament which described ancient Babylon's punishment. "But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood; in their full measure shall they come upon thee, in the multitude of thy sorceries, and the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:9, ASV).
 - c. The same God who brought ancient Babylon to her knees would do likewise to this spiritual Babylon. "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. 18:8). The punishment is as sure as the power and resolve of the Almighty.

B. Revelation 18:9-19: Babylon's Bedfellows Lament Her Fall.

1. Verses 9-10: "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."
 - a. Those who had put their trust in Rome would be filled with grief and mourning on seeing her demise. These mourners fall into three groups:
 - 1) Kings—verses 9-10.
 - 2) Merchants—verses 11-17.
 - 3) Seamen—verses 17-19.
 - b. Here the reference is to the lesser kings who followed mighty Rome. As long as Rome was powerful, they rode the crest of prosperity with her. But when Rome lost her influence, these who depended on her suffered also.
 - c. They would bewail her (*kapto*: "beat their breasts in anguish") as they watched her "burn," powerless to assist. They would stand afar off and raise up their mournful cries.
2. Verses 11-13: "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."
 - a. Ezekiel used similar language to describe the fall of Tyre (26:1—28:19). The merchants lamented the fall of spiritual Babylon; they wailed because of the lost sales. "Merchants" (*emporos*) is used in reference to wholesalers (Hailey). "Merchandise" (from *gomos*) is used in the New Testament of the cargo of a ship (Hailey). Thus, the merchants had the misfortune of having plenty of goods, but no one to buy them.
 - b. What would modern China do today if they lost their markets in America? As things seem to be going presently, America is on an economic, military and moral slide downhill. Let the saints pray for the our country's return go a higher level of godliness! Our decline is caused by corrupted morals, corrupted religions, corrupted politicians, corrupted business dealings, and misguided schools.
 - c. The goods listed in verse twelve are mostly luxury items. Purple and scarlet were the colors of royalty; in Revelation 17:4, it was what the harlot was wearing. Silk probably came from China, which suggests the far extent of Roman trade. In the days of Tiberius, two men introduced a measure in the Roman senate which "decided that vessels of solid gold should not be made for the serving of food, and that men should not disgrace themselves with silken cloth from the east" (Tacitus, as quoted by Hailey). Later, these luxuries were in great demand, and contributed to Rome's downfall. "Thyime

- wood was an aromatic wood of beautiful texture, imported from North Africa and prized for its aroma and as a resource for making fine furniture” (Hailey). Affluent Romans sometimes dissolved pearls in bowls, and drunk the mixture. [What might this have done to their renal systems?]
- d. Cinnamon was known to the Jews during the time of Moses: "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, *even* two hundred and fifty *shekels*, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*" (Ex. 30:23).
 - e. The items of verse thirteen were prized by the luxury-loving Romans.
 - 1) Fine food items were used in the great banquets and in sacrifices to the idols.
 - 2) The Roman military included horses and chariots. "Chariots" is from *rhede*, which denotes a four-wheeled wagon or carriage: they were costly. The two-wheeled vehicle of war is from *harma* (Acts 8:28-29, 38).
 - 3) Slaves (bodies) and souls of men were under their domination. Slaves were common, and were used in the ordinary work and in the arena as combatants. In 30 B.C., the estimated number of slaves in Rome is put at 400,000 (half the population), and 1,500,000 in Italy (Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.332f).
 - a) "...Though Christianity does not directly forbid slavery, which might then have incited a slave-revolt, it virtually condemns it. Popery derived its greatest gains from masses for the souls of men after death, and from indulgences purchased from the papal chancery by rich merchants in various countries, to be retailed at a profit (Mosheim, iii., 95, 96)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - b) "The traffic in slaves was common in ancient times, as it is now. We know that this traffic was carried on to a large extent in ancient Rome, the city which John probably had in his eye in this description. See Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, vol. 1, pp. 25,26. Athenaeus, as quoted by Mr. Gibbon (p. 26), says that 'he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but for ostentation, ten, and even twenty thousand slaves'" [Barnes' Notes, Biblesoft].
3. Verse 14: "And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."
 - a. The descriptions given in the context indicate the harlot was not representative of some religious organization, but of a worldly-minded people. These people had lusted after the dainty and goodly luxuries, but these were now gone; they could find them no more.
 - b. America of our present time, is infatuated with luxury, pleasure, and ease. While many struggle to keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables, with scarcely nothing left for health care, many others enjoy far more than they need. Instead of placing trust in the Almighty, far too many place their trust in the almighty dollar! A story is reported from the sinking of the Titanic that illustrates the foolhardiness of trusting in material wealth. A lady, knowing the ship was about sink, rushed back to her cabin to take what she now viewed as valuable—a sack of fruit; she left behind a treasure of jewels.
 4. Verses 15-16: "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"
 - a. The merchants, who had been made rich from their trade, would bewail Rome but would stand far off, not lifting a hand to help Rome in her death throes. They would bemoan the city which had boasted of such splendor. It seemed impregnable and indestructible; but it would fall, and with its fall, the ready market for the merchants would be gone.
 - b. "In 'one hour'—very quickly—plagues, famine, mourning, and death come to visit her, and she shall be utterly consumed. This is a picture of *her* destruction, but how about her allies? They are pictured as standing in two groups to mourn over her. Rome was built upon two things: territorial conquest and trade expansion. Thus do the two groups mourn because they go down with her" (Summers, p.194).
 5. Verses 17-18: "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!"
 - a. The shipmasters, sailors, those who trade by sea—all stood off and cried over the fall of this great city.
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The fall of Rome would have a great effect on sea trade, for it was largely through shipping that the luxuries from afar were brought.

- b. Compare with Ezekiel 27:32: "And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, *saying*, What *city is* like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?"
 - c. "First, the kings of the earth mourn because of her fall. These are her allies who, coming under her power, entered into her spiritual fornication and evil. They turn aside to weep and wail because of the sudden destruction to the great city. Second, the merchants of the earth lament over her destruction because now they have no market for their merchandise. There are about thirty articles of trade mentioned here. To create such a business the merchants have entered into the evil of the Empire. Now they fall with her. Nothing can be economically good if it is morally bad. The same fate awaits any nation guilty of the same sin. The merchants and the mariners who carry their wares stand far off, cast dust on their heads, and weep over such destruction of the city. The burning of Rome under Nero was a small matter compared to God's wrath against the entire Empire and allies. Doom comes to all. The curtain falls on the second triumph of the pageant. It is a desolate scene but one of rejoicing to the Christians as they see another indication of God's power and their certain rescue" (Summers, p.194).
 - d. The consequences of the fall of Rome was the onset of the thousand years of The Dark Ages.
6. Verse 19: "And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."
- a. Casting dust upon the head was a symbol of grief among the orientals.
 - 1) Job 2:12: "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven."
 - 2) Ezekiel 27:30: "And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes."
 - b. There is no evil in commerce and industry of themselves, for these are for the common good of us all. But the Romans had turned their wealth into a means of gratifying the lusts of the flesh. "A culture that worships commercial success will strike the sparks that ultimately will burn it to ashes" (Blackwood, quoted by Hailey, p.368).
 - c. Biblical principles apply to nations as well as to individuals.
 - 1) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 - 2) Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
 - 3) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 4) Luke 12:21: "So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - 5) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:10-17: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

C. Revelation 18:20: The Voice of Rejoicing.

1. Verse 20: "Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

2. In the midst of this visionary scene of mourning and wailing, there came a voice exhorting God's people to rejoice. This is not meant to encourage happiness over the pain and hardship the wicked had to face, but a rejoicing over the defeat of evil and victory of righteousness. In chapter 11, the wicked rejoiced over the death of the two witnesses; now things had been set right.
3. Again, the question of Revelation 6:9-10 is answered. God does things in his own way and in his own good time; but he will certainly set things right; he will bless righteousness and punish unrighteousness: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

D. Revelation 18:21-24: The Silence of the Tomb.

1. Verse 21: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."
 - a. A mighty angel cast a millstone into the sea as a visual demonstration of the fact that Babylon would surely be brought down. This scene shows that Babylon (Rome) was yet standing; it has been pictured as fallen in the preceding verses because its demise was so sure. It would fall because God had decreed it; therefore, the suffering saints could take heart: their enemy would be brought down, and the Cause for which the saints had been afflicted would be surely vindicated.
 - b. "Though on a grander scale, this scene is reminiscent of Jeremiah's instruction to Seriah to read the words of Babylon's judgment in the ears of the people, then to tie a stone to the scroll 'and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again because of the evil that I will bring upon her' (Jer. 51:61-64)" (Hailey, p.370).
 - c. The great millstone cast into the sea would sink, thus representing symbolically, the certain overthrow of Rome. "The destruction of the imperial city of John's day would be as complete as was that of the ancient Babylon in Jeremiah's time" (Hailey, *ibid.*).
 - d. The thing to be destroyed was not the city itself, but the wicked, oppressing government, and the evil being done by the people. Although the city was sacked more than once, and many of its citizens were slain, the ravaged city remains; but its governing authority, the Empire of Rome, was destroyed, to rise no more. It has been commonly described as "the eternal city" (because it has survived the ages), but that is not due to any sacredness that pertains to it; one reason it has remained, with some of its ancient ruins still visible, is to declare for all to see that God meant what he said about destroying the might and glory of the Roman Empire.
2. Verses 22-23: "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."
 - a. John emphasizes the silence and inactivity of the harlot city by showing what will not be heard or found there. These are symbolic pictures of the hardships and suffering God would bring on these evil people.
 - b. The sound of musical instruments would not be heard—these would now be silenced in imperial Rome.
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 29:25: "And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for *so was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets." [In the Old Testament, these instruments were associated with worship].
 - 2) Amos 6:5-7: "That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed." [It was associated with revelry].
 - 3) Luke 15:25: "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he

- heard music and dancing." [It was associated with joy and happiness].
- c. No craftsman of whatsoever craft would be found, indicating the fall of business and the resulting hard times.
 - d. The voice of the mill would not be heard—thus the staff of life would be affected; this suggests famine which brings harsh suffering.
 - e. The houses of spiritual Babylon would be dark and have no lighting. Tacitus wrote, "As darkness approached, all the adjacent grove and surrounding buildings resounded with song, and shone brilliantly with lights." He also wrote of how Nero burned Christians as a means of lighting his banquets.
 - f. The merrymaking of the wedding feasts would cease.
3. Verse 24: "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
- a. In this passage some reasons are given by John as to why the terrible hardships and desolation were to descend on spiritual Babylon [The Roman Empire].
 - b. Her merchants had made the accumulation of wealth and the luxuries it could provide their great goal in life. They had cast God and righteousness out of their hearts. Compare:
 - 1) Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
 - 2) Proverbs 1:20-33: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, *saying*, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."
 - c. The harlot city had used sorceries (deceptions) to cause other nations to follow her evil ways. Rome has been immersed in gratifying her own selfish ends; she spent her ill-gotten gain on lusts and luxuries. She robbed the wealth and population of other nations and wasted them for her own glory. Although Rome provided a vast network of roads and established a system of law that is imitated even today, yet in the final analysis, she brought suffering and trouble and sin upon many, and did not purify or elevate morality. She had crossed the line, and must be destroyed.
 - d. The blood of prophets and saints was found in her.
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Some Reasons Why the Babylon in Revelation is Rome and not Jerusalem

1. Babylon caused all nations to sin: “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).
2. It ruled over all kings: “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH....And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:5,18). Jerusalem and all Palestine were dominated by Rome; Jerusalem did not reign over other kingdoms.
3. Its connection with the sea: “For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!” (Rev. 18:17-18). Jerusalem was not known as a great sea-going nation.
4. It had great wealth: “The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!....And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate” (Rev. 18:15-16, 19). While Rome was enriched by sea trade, this was not a major characteristic of Jerusalem.
5. By its sorceries were all nations deceived: “And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Rev. 18:22-23). Again, this description fits Rome, not Jerusalem.
6. The seven mountains of chapter seventeen suggest Rome: “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (Rev. 17:9). The context shows that the seven heads of the beast represent seven mountains; the heads are also representative of seven kings. The seven mountains (or hills) upon which Rome is built lies in the background of Revelation.

The cumulative evidence points to Rome, and not to Jerusalem, as the “Babylon” of Revelation.

REVELATION 19

The Rejoicing Saints and Victorious Christ

A. Revelation 19:1-10: The Saints Rejoice.

1. Verses 1-2: "After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (ASV).
 - a. The first ten verses of this chapter describe the end of the harlot of chapters 17-18. The fall of Babylon was introduced in Revelation 14:8, but the overthrow does not actually occur until Revelation 18. The holy ones in heaven and earth were called on to rejoice over the fall (Rev. 18:20); this they do in the current passage. The rejoicing described stands in stark contrast to the wailing of the kings and merchants in Revelation 18:9-20.
 - b. Alleluia (Hallelujah, ASV) is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase, "Praise ye Jah" (Jehovah). The definite article "the" is given in the Greek text before "salvation," "glory," and "honor" (power, ASV). "The" gives emphasis to each of these tributes.
 - c. This is not a song of rejoicing over the evil which has befallen Rome; rather it is over the great victory truth and righteousness have won over evil. Above the weeping and wailing of the merchants, kings, and mariners, and above the noise of the demise of the wicked empire of Rome, comes the sound of rejoicing.
 - d. "For" (because, *hoti*) gives the reason for the rejoicing—God's judgments are true and righteous. The harlot was properly judged for she had corrupted the earth with her fornication. "Corrupt" (*phtheiro*) means to destroy by bringing to a state of moral decay, effected by "the lusts of deceit" (Eph. 4:22) [Hailey]. Rome did this to many. Those who obey the gospel are told: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22).
 - e. Thus, God avenged the blood of his servants who had suffered at the hand of this cruel persecutor. Again, the pleas of Revelation 6:9-10 have been heard and answered! "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they *were*, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11).
2. Verse 3: "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."
 - a. The destruction is not pictured as the ordinary burning of a captured city, for in those cases men go in and remove the charred remains. Rome's overthrow is pictured as complete and lasting.
 - b. The city of Rome (called "The Eternal City") continues today, but the corrupt Rome and its Empire have long since perished. It will not be resurrected; and the judgment against the individuals will be eternal in nature.
 - c. When the fascists took control of Italy between the two world wars, and began to exert their influence on other nations, some millennialists ranted that "the Roman Empire was about to be resurrected." They knew the Roman kings were to be on the throne when the kingdom of Daniel 2 arrived. They denied that the kingdom had come; therefore, they foolishly thought the Empire of Rome must be restored before the kingdom could be established. As any unprejudiced Bible student can know, the kingdom came exactly on schedule—nearly two thousand years ago.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the

- forgiveness of sins."
- 3) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
3. Verses 4-5: "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."
 - a. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures humbly and reverently praise God, and state their approval of the tribute given by the heavenly multitude and of the judgment poured out on the wicked.
 - b. Again, an anonymous voice speaks from the throne. The exhortation for praise and reverence to be shown to God is given to all his servants, small and great. These are his people yet on earth.
 4. Verse 6: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."
 - a. The writer keeps before our minds the fact that he is describing a vision—"as it were"—"as." The sound of the praise was likened to the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings.
 - b. God is described as "omnipotent" (*Almighty*, ASV). This term is used ten times in the New Testament. It is used once in 2 Corinthians 6:18: "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." It appears nine times in Revelation (one of the places is in the text, where the word is translated *omnipotent*):
 - 1) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - 2) Revelation 4:8: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."
 - 3) Revelation 11:17: "Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."
 - 4) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - 5) Revelation 16:7: "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments."
 - 6) Revelation 16:14: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."
 - 7) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 - 8) Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."
 - c. Despite the many and powerful foes, God is still in control of his creation. He may take his time in righting wrongs since he does so in this life through his providential, and not through miraculous, action. Centuries sometimes pass before his will is worked out. When God takes some action in human history, he must consider the effect which this move will have on other people, conditions, nations, etc., at the present time and in the future.
 - 1) Genesis 15:13-16: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.**" [The time came when the Amorites developed the fullness of lawlessness, as the following passages show].

- 2) Deuteronomy 2:24-37: "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess *it*, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations *that are* under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet; (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. From Aroer, which *is* by the brink of the river of Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us: Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, *nor* unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us."
 - 3) Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up in pride (Dan. 4:30); God told him that he would be driven from his kingdom. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word *was* in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, *saying*, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:30-32).
 5. Verse 7: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."
 - a. A third woman is introduced (the others being the radiant woman in chapter 12 and the harlot in chapter 17); this woman is called the wife of the Lamb, thus the church is meant. God's relationship with his people was sometimes described in the Old Testament as a spiritual marriage (Hos. 2; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 2:32; Ezek. 16). This same figure is used here of the relation of the church to Christ.
 - 1) Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:22-32: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
 - b. The Hebrew custom of betrothal and marriage must be understood to appreciate the real relationship. Mary was spoken of as being the "wife" of Joseph (Matt. 1:20); she was his wife "before they came together" (Matt. 1:18). He heeded the heavenly messenger and "took unto him his wife" (Matt. 1:24).
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The Hebrew custom of engagement was much more sacred and binding than in modern society; those who were engaged were considered so bound that Joseph would have had to put Mary away (obtain a divorce) in order to break the engagement.

- c. The church is not presently married to Christ; she is betrothed to him. It is a spiritual relationship which will be consummated in heaven. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). "Espoused" (from *armoxo*) means "to join, to fit together...or betroth, to give one in marriage to any one" (Thayer). In the light of Hebrew custom, the church of Christ is now espoused (or betrothed) to Christ, as Mary was betrothed to Joseph.
6. Verse 8: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
 - a. The bride is given opportunity to be arrayed in proper garments, to prepare herself for the coming wedding. The pure garments are defined by John as representing the righteousness of the saints.
 - b. Notice the distinction between the attire of the harlot and the bride: one was clothed in gaudy, sensual attire; but the bride in fine linen—clean and white (bright and pure, ASV).
 - 1) Matthew 22:12: "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:26-27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 4) Colossians 3:8-17: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye. And above all these things *put on* charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 7. Verse 9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - a. This is the fourth beatitude of Revelation. The speaker is unidentified in the verse, but probably was an angel. A state of blessedness or happiness is pronounced on those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. The call is extended by the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 10:13-16: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:9: "God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:14: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
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- Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."
- b. John introduced the fall of Babylon in Revelation 14:8, but did not describe it until chapter 18. Here the feast is spoken of as if it were presently taking place, but the description of it is not given until chapter 21.
 - c. The speaker affirms that "these are the true sayings of God." This affirmation includes not only the beatitude just named, but extends also to this whole section of the book.
8. Verse 10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- a. John was so overwhelmed with the awesome sight and/or with the person of the speaker that he fell down to worship him. This worship was rejected, for the speaker identifies himself as a fellowservant and of the brethren; thus he is not Christ or God.
 - 1) Peter refused to receive homage from Cornelius: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26).
 - 2) John was again rebuffed when he tried to worship an angel in Revelation 22:8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
 - 3) From this we learn that no man and no angel of heaven is worthy of being worshipped. What then of the "pope" and other self-styled "dignitaries" who not only accept but demand such homage?
 - b. Regarding the identity of the person John sought to worship in Revelation 19:10, Lenski suggested he might be one of the saints who had left earth and was now in heaven. However, angels and Christians are servants of God, thus can be classified as "brethren" in this connection. The speaker may simply be saying that he is a fellowservant with John and a fellowservant also of John's brethren. [Note: The New Testament teaches that we do not go directly to heaven (or hell) at death: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8)].
 - c. Worship is to be directed to God.
 - 1) Matthew 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."
 - 2) Matthew 6:9: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
 - 3) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 4) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
 - d. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy:
 - 1) "The testimony of Jesus is the life-principle of prophecy. Although it is true that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of all prophecy previous to John's, here the phrase has likely reference only to the prophecy of this book; he is its very breath of life (cf. 1:3; 22:18)" (Hailey, p.380).
 - 2) "The word 'spirit' here does not signify the Holy Spirit, but rather the inner spirit, the vital element, the life and soul—the essence of the apocalypse was the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ to his servant John by his servants, the angels" (Wallace, p.9).
 - 3) A fuller and more pointed explanation is given as follows:
 - a) First, Thayer defines *prophecy*: "...discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring

the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events....the spirit of prophecy, the divine mind, to which the prophetic faculty is due, Rev 19:10" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].

- b) Second: "Since the testimony is given by divine inspiration and the spirit of prophecy is by divine inspiration, it follows that the reference here is simply a reference to the fact that the testimony, commandments and prophecy found in this book and indeed in all of the Bible, is given by inspiration. John explained back in Revelation 1:9-11 that while he was in Patmos for his preaching and for his testimony of Jesus he was in the Spirit and received his divine commission to write his prophecy. Prophecy and testimony come from the guidance of God" (J. Noel Meredith, *ADL*, p.465).

B. Revelation 19:11-16: Vision of Christ the Conqueror.

1. Verse 11: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."
 - a. The destruction of the harlot was detailed in chapter 18; she represented decadent Rome. But the two great beasts are still at large: the one from the sea (13:1-10) and the one that came up out of the earth (13:11ff). The latter beast is also called "the false prophet" (16:13). These are defeated in the present chapter.
 - b. The Great Warrior is not specifically identified as Christ, but the description given fits only Him. He is called "faithful and true."
 - 1) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 2) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"
 - c. Christ is pictured in this vision as riding a white horse (indicating purity and victory). He rides forth to judge and make war. The enemies, as pictured in Revelation, are (1) the dragon (Satan—chapter 12), (2) the sea-beast and the land-beast (chapter 13), and the harlot (chapter 17). These are defeated in reverse order: the harlot (Rev. 18); the 2 beasts (Rev. 19:11ff); and finally Satan himself (Rev. 20).
 - d. Satan is the only personal being in the group: in our view, the first beast represents the Roman Empire, personified in Domitian, the corrupt Roman emperor who persecuted the saints; the second beast represents the corrupt religion of the empire; the harlot represents Rome, the seat of the entire corrupt government. Some extend these to a broader application: The two beasts and the harlot would symbolize anti-God power, false religion, and seductive lusts of the flesh, the instruments Satan uses in waging his war against God and his kingdom.
 - e. The scene to be described is not the second coming of Christ, but his successful war against the enemies named in the context. However, the Lord will eventually overcome every earthly foe, condemn them, and destroy death and banish Satan and all of his henchmen and all others under his control, into *Gehenna*. While this scene may not directly depict the second coming, it at least gives an indirect picture of the final destiny of all who oppose God.
2. Verse 12: "His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."
 - a. As in Revelation 1:14, Christ is pictured as having eyes as a flame of fire (cf. Rev. 2:18). This suggests his ability to look into the heart of man.
 - b. On his head were many crowns (diadems); Satan wore seven diadems and the sea-beast had ten; but Christ has many.
 - c. He had a name written that no man knew, only Christ himself. Therefore, it is folly to try to discern that name! Some scholars suggest that the name may possibly represent the close relationship which exists between the Father and the Son: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*" (Matt. 11:27).

3. Verse 13: "And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."
 - a. His clothing was blood-stained, perhaps a reference to the crucified Christ. In Revelation 14:20, the winepress was trodden outside the city and "blood came out of the winepress." In Revelation 19:15, Christ is said to tread "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 - b. In Isaiah 63:1-3, the Lord is pictured as returning from Bozrah with his garments stained with blood; he was asked, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?" He replied, "I have trodden the winepress alone....I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my raiment."
 - c. The blood-spattered clothing of Christ in Revelation 19 may be in reference to the battle of Revelation 14:20 and of that battle portrayed in this passage. "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand *and* six hundred furlongs" (Rev. 14:20).
 4. Verse 14: "And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."
 - a. He had with him heaven's armies, each warrior of which rode a white horse and was clothed as was the Leader. No statement is given whether they are armed.
 - b. The plural (armies) gives way to the singular (army) in Revelation 19:19: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."
 - c. "Furthermore, the war now to be fought is not at his final coming, for there is to be no war then; all will be over. It is the war introduced earlier, though not described (16:14-16). It seems therefore that this army is the 'called and chosen and faithful' who overcome with the king (17:14). The picture symbolizes a divine judgment and a spiritual war directed from heaven, led by a heavenly warrior-king. It is fought by a host of pure and faithful warriors, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and whose names are written there (Luke 10:20)—the faithful saints of God" (Hailey, pp.384f).
 5. Verse 15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 - a. He is again pictured as having a sharp sword coming from his mouth. He is called "The Word of God" in Revelation 19:13; the word of God is referred to as a sword in various passages of scripture (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). But this sword coming from Christ's mouth is not the gospel with which men are converted. With this sword, the conquering Christ will fight against the nations; he would rule them with a rod of iron; he would tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God. It is a sword of judgment against his enemies.
 - b. The war to be fought is to be engaged in time, not at the second coming; no fighting will be done then. The fighting being done was against the wicked oppressors the early church faced; the outcome was assured; the saints to whom John wrote could take great comfort in knowing that even though they had to endure cruel persecution and perhaps death, ultimately the Cause of Christ would succeed, and they personally would receive an eternal reward (Rev. 14:13; 22:14).
 - 1) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - c. Pagan Rome and other powerful foes might array themselves against the Lamb, but their defeat was and is a foregone conclusion!
 - d. The armies, sword, and the rod are punitive in their nature; they destroy by divine judgment, they reduce to chaff, burning, and carrying away.
 - 1) Daniel 2:35: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great
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- mountain, and filled the whole earth."
- 2) Daniel 2:40-45: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."
 - 3) Daniel 7:9-12: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."
 - e. The treading of the winepress indicates a full, and terrible judgment. Isaiah 63:1-3 and Joel 3:12-14 serve as a basis for interpretation of the winepress as a severe judgment and of the blood-sprinkled garment of the king (Hailey).
 - 1) Isaiah 63:1-3: "Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore *art thou* red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people *there was* none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."
 - 2) Joel 3:12-14: "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness *is* great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision."
 6. Verse 16: "And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
 - a. The Lord has a name known only to himself (vs. 12); he is known as "Faithful and True" (vs. 11) and "Word of God" (vs. 13); to everyone he is known as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (vs. 16) when his great power is manifested. Christ possesses authority far greater than any earthly king. Indeed, even the greatest king will bow in submission to Christ at the Judgment.
 - 1) John 19:7-11: "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one
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of us shall give account of himself to God."

- b. This title is assigned to Christ in Revelation 17:14. This name is written on his vesture and thigh for all to see; thus in the judgment vision being depicted, his identity is not hidden.
- c. "Christ now is assigned the great title, The Word of God (Rev 19:13). As the Word of God, he made the worlds. It was by rejection of the Word that sin was brought into the world. By the Word of God, salvation is offered to men. Sin and anarchy, godlessness and rebellion, are in one way or another the repudiation of the Word of God. That Word, the Eternal, Omnipotent Word, now descends from heaven to fulfill prophecy, to destroy the enemies of God, to reveal to the universe, once and forever, the folly of resisting Christ and the indisputable pre-eminence of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords (v. 16). We are now introduced to an earthly scene in which the kings of the earth take a prominent part. How strange, how tragic is this situation we now behold, in which it seems that the rulers of the whole world are united in one terrible effort to destroy the anointed of God. How contrary this is to the dreams of men, to the foolish statements of their false prophets, and to their unjustified belief that human society is ever progressing in the areas of peace, goodness, comradeship, and social welfare. We are now to see the fulfillment of Ps 2" [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1962 by Moody Press].
- d. Compare: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 2).
- e. "As in Rev 17:5, so here, there is nothing in the original to denote that this should be distinguished, as it is, by capital letters. As a conspicuous title, however, it is not improper. It means that he is, in fact, the sovereign over the kings of the earth, and that all nobles and princes are under his control—a rank that properly belongs to the Son of God....The custom here alluded to of inscribing the name or rank of distinguished individuals on their garments, so that they might be readily recognized, was not uncommon in ancient times" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].

C. Revelation 19:17-18: The Angel's Call to the Grisly Feast.

1. Verse 17: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."
 - a. "The battle now described was earlier presented as the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath. It is the same battle described as 'Armageddon' in Revelation 16:12-16, but here a vivid description is given of how the battle proceeded and of the final outcome" (Meadows, ADL, pp.188f).
 - b. In the great battle between Christianity and paganism, the victory is pictured as being a complete overthrow of the latter. The call issues from a lone angel who was standing "in the Sun"—a place of prominence and importance. He calls with loud voice for the birds which fly in mid-heaven to come and feast on the carnage left behind on the battlefield. These birds would be the carrion-eating birds.
 - c. Similar descriptions are given in Isaiah 34:6, Jeremiah 46:10, and Ezekiel 39:17-20.
 - 1) Isaiah 34:6: "The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, *and* with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."
 - 2) Jeremiah 46:10: "For this *is* the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."
 - 3) Ezekiel 39:17-20: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered

fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD."

- d. In the earlier verses of this chapter the marriage feast of the Lamb is alluded to, which stands in stark contrast to this grisly supper.
 - e. This picture describes the utter defeat of the Lord's enemies. The battle is not to be taken as literal, for Christ did not personally take up literal weapons and physically defeat Rome or any other enemy. The war and victory are spiritual. His cause lives!
2. Verse 18: "That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great."
- a. The birds are called to devour the flesh of the slain enemy (Ezek. 38-39). This picture is grisly indeed. Through the centuries, this image has often been duplicated following the countless battles that have been fought. Compare Ezekiel 39:17: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, *even* a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood."
 - b. "The supper of John's vision was comprised of (1) 'the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains' —*chiliarchs*, military leaders who were over a thousand men; (2) 'the flesh of mighty men,' the great of earth, and of horses and horsemen; and (3) 'the flesh of all men, both free and bond, the small and great.' In this war the devil recruits from every walk of life; he has some of all these of earth in his army. There are no barriers or limitations except righteousness. There is no middle ground; every one is either on one side or the other in this conflict" (Hailey, p.387).
 - c. "All men; that is, all the ungodly....The whole account indicates the widespread and complete nature of God's judgments, which none shall be able to escape" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - d. The carnage is unlimited; there will be no limit on the servings; all are invited. The victory of the Lord will be complete; the enemy will be utterly vanquished.

D. Revelation 19:19-21: The Decisive Battle and Victory of the Lamb.

1. Verse 19: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."
 - a. In the vision, John saw the battle lines being formed: the beast, the kings which supported him, and their armies are arrayed against Christ and his army. The battle is about to be joined. The call of verses 17-18 was in anticipation of the inevitable outcome.
 - b. The interpretations on this chapter of the major views of Revelation include:
 - 1) Brother Wallace sees in this passage a depiction of the overthrow of Jerusalem.
 - 2) The millennialists think this section will have a literal fulfillment in connection with the return of Christ and the establishment of an earthly kingdom. This interpretation flies in the face of many plain passages which show that the kingdom is here already (Col. 1:13) and that when the Lord returns, all earthly and material concerns will be burned up and dissolved (2 Peter 3:9-14)..
 - 3) The continuous-historical method thinks this section points to the overthrow of the Roman Catholic religion. Such interpretations rob the book of any real value to the first recipients of Revelation.
 - c. Summers gives a concise and consistent explanation:
 - 1) "This is a book thoroughly suited to the times in which it was produced. Armageddon is not a place name; it is a symbolic term for a decisive conflict. Christ is pictured as coming down from heaven, but this does not picture the second coming of Christ which we find discussed elsewhere in the

- New Testament. This scene symbolically represents his coming to the aid of the persecuted Christians with heavenly assistance in their spiritual struggles.
- 2) "If the beast is identified, as it has been in this work, with the emperor as he personified the pagan persecuting Roman Empire, there is no other explanation of this battle. It is a vivid symbolical representation of the final victory of Christ's cause and people over that pagan Empire.
 - 3) "The beast (Domitian) and the second beast (false prophet, Roman Concilia, state religion priesthood) were cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is symbolical of their destruction. Christ over-comes them; the Christians are bothered with them no more. The conflict pictured is a spiritual conflict" (p.199).
- d. In our view, the dragon is Satan; the beast is the Roman Empire (personified in the Emperor); the second beast is comprised of emperor-worship, along with those who enforced it. The kings of the passage are the various ones under the domination of Rome; these were subservient to the will of the Emperor.
 - e. "These kings aligned themselves with the beast to make war against the Lamb and his followers (17:12-14), but no battle was described. For the third time these are revealed with their armies (plural) to make war against the warrior-king and his army (singular), but again no battle; only the outcome is described. It seems clear that we have now come to the actual battle of Har-Magedon which is fought to decide who is King of Kings—Christ, or world-caesars and potentates" (Hailey, p.387).
2. Verse 20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."
 - a. The beast and the false prophet (cf. Rev. 13) were taken; these were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.
 - b. The battle of Revelation 16:16 is being described. More to the point, the outcome of the battle is described, rather than the battle itself. The fate of these two enemies is similar to that of the harlot.
 - 1) Revelation 17:16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."
 - 2) Revelation 18:8-9: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong *is* the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning."
 - 3) Revelation 18:18: "And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!"
 3. Verse 21: "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."
 - a. The rest of the enemy were slain; these are destined for torment in the lake of fire: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:9-10).
 - b. Pagan Rome was destroyed to rise no more; Daniel 7:11 was fulfilled, and in this defeat and destruction is seen the fate of all such powers that strive against God and his kingdom. "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld *even* till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).
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REVELATION 20

The Thousand Year Reign and the Final Judgment

A. The General Theory of Premillennialism.

1. The following points are generally believed by the premillennialists, although there are many variations.
 - a. They think Christ will come first in what they call “the rapture.” At this time the righteous dead will be raised and the living saints will be changed in an instant from mortal bodies into immortal bodies, and meet the Lord in the air. This part of the theory is a perversion of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." No mention is made here or elsewhere in the New Testament about the resurrected saints or Christ ever setting foot on the earth again.
 - b. They think the marriage feast of the Lamb will then occur, during which time the “Great Tribulation” will take place on earth. The “Great Tribulation” part of the theory is a perversion of Matthew 24:21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." We are told in a later verse in the passage that the items in the context would take place during the lifetime of the generation then living on the earth (the generation to which the statements were made): "Verily I say unto you, **This** generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34). This tribulation took place at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; it is not some imagined event to occur at the end of time.
 - c. After the wedding feast, premillennialists think Christ will return to earth with the resurrected and changed saints, and establish an earthly kingdom, sit on the literal throne of David, and reign from Jerusalem for a literal 1,000 years. This 1000-year-reign is what they call the Millennium. This coming of Christ is called [in their terminology] the “revelation.” They think there will be seven years between the rapture and the revelation.
 - d. Some of them think all of the Jews will be converted and returned to Palestine. This is based partly on a perverted interpretation of Romans 11:16: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”
 - 1) Coupled with the preceding verse, millennialists make this statement teach that the whole nation of Israel will be saved, evidently by a miraculous act of God. If their conversion is supernatural, then what about their free moral agency? If God converts them in such a fashion, then he shows partiality toward them, doing for them what he is unwilling to do for others. And what about all of those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the past two thousand years? And what about all those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the Old Testament days? If Christ came earlier than the time supposed by the millennialists, Jews would be saved who will not be saved (according to their suppositions). The time of the Lord's return will, therefore, determine which of the Jews will be saved! Will all the Jews who ever lived on earth be saved? If so, then God did not mean what he said to them who lived under the Mosaic Law (Deut. 28).
 - a) Deuteronomy 28:45: "Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee."
 - b) Deuteronomy 11:26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."
 - c) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 - d) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his

- commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
- 2) The gospel does not really mean what it says, if the millennial theory is true:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - b) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - c) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - d) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - 3) What, then, does the passage actually teach? First, notice the word **so** (Greek, *houtos*) in both English and Greek is an adverb of manner, and means *in this way (manner)*. In the manner or after the way Paul describes, will the Jews be saved. But what is that way? Paul has previously shown that many of the Jews were lost (Rom. 3:9,23; 9:1-3; 10:1-3, 16; 11:14,21-23). He has also set forth the only means for their salvation: the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3). The majority of the Jews had rejected the gospel, and continued in condemnation (Rom. 8:1ff; 10:1-3). Since the gospel is God's power to save both Jew and Gentile, and since he is no respecter of persons, it follows that the same conditions required of Gentiles for their salvation are also the requirements for the salvation of Jews (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; 2:38; 22:16; 10:47-48).
 - 4) The gospel is God's final message to mankind (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 4:12; Acts 4:11-12; John 14:6; Rev. 14:6; Heb. 7:17-28). If any Jews are to be saved during the Gospel Age, it will have to be by the gospel! When the Lord returns, there will not be any time or occasion or opportunity for anyone to be saved then; it will be too late for that! Therefore, if any Jew is to be saved, it will be because he obeyed the gospel of Christ in this life prior to the Lord's second advent. "Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:26-28, ASV).
 - 5) Paul's point in this verse is simple: In this manner of obeying the gospel will all Israel be saved, if they are to be saved at all. There is no other method by which they can be saved. If any of them are to be saved, it will be in the same manner by which the Gentiles were saved, and that was by obeying the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3, 13-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - 6) Far from saying that all Israel will be saved, the apostle is affirming that in the same way as all others are saved, will Jews be saved. He adds that salvation is possible because the Deliverer has come out of Zion, who will turn Israel from their ungodliness (Isa. 59:20; Psalm 14:7). The Deliverer is obviously Christ; Sion is Zion (Jerusalem); it was at Jerusalem that Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 2:9; John 1:29-34). Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22); but the blood of animals cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4); only the blood of Christ can remove the guilt of sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28).
 - 7) Alien sinners contact the benefits of Christ's blood when they are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:1-18; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 8:1-3). The Deliverer turns Israel from their ungodliness when they obey the gospel! This is the same manner by which he turns any Gentile from ungodliness. When men obey the gospel, they make a complete change from their former ways. This is an individual choice and act.
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- 8) Paul showed in Romans 11:22-23 that Israel would receive the benefits of God's goodness if they did not remain in their unbelief; in other words, if they would believe and obey Christ they would be saved. Peter said in Acts 15:11: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." The pronoun *we* refers to Jews; the pronoun *they* refers to Gentiles. Peter had just shown that Cornelius and his Gentile family were saved by the gospel of Christ; he now states that Jews can only be saved in the same way. But not all of the Gentiles will be saved; neither will all of Israel be saved.
 - e. Old Testament worship will be restored during this 1,000 year reign (according to the theory), and life on earth will be one of perfection in which the lamb and the lion will dwell in peace.
 - f. The theory further asserts that, at the end of the reign, Satan will be loosed for a little while and will make an effort to overthrow Christ and his people.
 - g. Then the Millennium will end with the resurrection of the wicked dead and the "Great White Throne Judgment." But according to the Bible, the wicked and the righteous dead will all be raised in the same moment of time: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). There will only be one literal resurrection from the dead: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).
 - h. Several resurrections are called for by the theory. Depending on the brand of millennialism, there are said to be four or more resurrections, and from two to seven judgments. The Bible teaches that there will be one resurrection (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29) and one Judgment (Heb. 9:27; Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). **The "resurrections" they claim include these:**
 - 1) The resurrection of the righteous at the rapture.
 - 2) Another for those who become believers between the rapture and revelation.
 - 3) Yet another for those who are converted and die during the millennium.
 - 4) Another for the wicked at the end of the millennium.
2. Revelation 20 is the passage upon which all of the above theory rests.
 - a. None of the other Bible writers mentions anything at all about a thousand year reign. Were it not for Revelation 20, no one would have ever thought of a reign of one thousand years in connection with Christianity. Of course, this reign is not a literal reign of Christ on the earth.
 - b. The theorists take the one thousand years as literal, but it can be shown to be a symbolic number. "Revelation is a book of symbols. It was 'signified' (Rev. 1:1) or made known in signs. Therefore, in the interpretation of this book some normal hermeneutical rules are reversed. We should take a term as figurative unless there is a reason not to do so. This is especially true in Revelation 20, where there are at least thirteen figurative nouns in the first ten verses. This is an important observation in understanding the 'thousand years'" (Gary Workman, SS Lectures, p.521).
 - c. The whole Bible has to be twisted to be made to fit their interpretation of Revelation 20.
 3. The essential parts of the theory are not even named in Revelation 20.
 - a. Nothing is said in the passage about the Second Coming of Christ.
 - b. A bodily resurrection is not mentioned.
 - c. The reign of Christ on earth is not mentioned.
 - d. The literal throne of David is not named.
 - e. Neither Jerusalem nor Palestine is mentioned.
 - f. You and I are not named: We read that "they" lived and reigned with Christ; only by interpretation can "we" be included in the "they."
 - g. The passage does not place Christ on earth.
 4. There are many things wrong with the theory of premillennialism, including the following:
 - a. It denies that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has been established. But Paul wrote that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son" (Col. 1:13). John said he was "in the kingdom" (Rev. 1:9).
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- b. It denies that Jesus was right when he said, "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Either the kingdom has come, or Jesus was wrong (for no one claims that anybody from the first century is still living on earth).
- c. It denies that the church and the kingdom are the same. But Christ used the terms "my church" and "kingdom of heaven" interchangeably in Matthew 16:17-18: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The institution he called his church in verse 18, he called the kingdom in verse 19.
- d. It denies that the church was in God's plan until the Jews rejected Christ. It was only then, according to premillennialism, that God decided to establish the church instead of an earthly kingdom. But Paul said that the church was in God's plan all along: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). Isaiah predicted that in the last days the "house of the Lord" would be established in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; cf. Luke 24:46-49). The Lord's house is the Lord's church (1 Tim. 3:15). The church (which is also the kingdom) was in God's plans from eternity, and was never a last-moment substitution.
- 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Micah 4:1-3: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - 3) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
- e. It denies the prediction of Jeremiah 22:30 by saying that Jesus, a descendant of Coniah (Matt. 1:11, 16), will indeed sit on the throne of David and rule in Judah. God said through Jeremiah that no descendant of Coniah will ever do so! "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man *that* shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). Since Jesus is now reigning as king, his kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.
- f. It denies that Christ is presently sitting on the throne as King, thus has no kingdom. But Zechariah says that Christ "shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne." He would be a priest while on his throne; but he cannot be a priest on earth (Heb. 7:14). Therefore, his throne cannot be on earth. He would rule while sitting on the throne. He is on the throne now: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:32-35). Therefore he is ruling
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(is King) on his throne now.

- 1) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For *it is* evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
- g. It denies that Jesus was right when he said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). When he said this, did God know that the kingdom would be postponed (as the theory teaches)? If God knew and yet allowed Jesus to say it was at hand, his integrity is compromised! If God did not know it would be postponed and let Christ proclaim that it was "at hand" when it was not, it denies God's omniscience. Premillennialism involves God and Christ in a misrepresentation of the truth or else charges them with not knowing the truth. [See Wallace, *God's Prophetic Word*, p.203].
- h. It denies that Christ came in the "fulness of time," for they say God had to postpone setting up the kingdom: "Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:1-5). "Millennialism either denies Galatians 4, that the first coming of Christ was the fulness or time, or else charges that after appointing the time, God failed to keep the appointment, backed by the word of his oath"(ibid., pp.377f).
- i. It denies Christ's statement that he would be "no more in the world" (John 17:11).
- 1) John 17:11: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we *are*." "In verse 5 of this prayer to the Father Jesus very plainly said that he had glorified the Father on earth, and had finished the work that God had given him to do. Because he had thus completed the divine purpose, and had finished his Father's work, he said 'I am no more in the world.' If 'no more' means *no more*, then Jesus will be no more in this world" (Wallace, *God's Prophetic Word*, p.381).
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more." To *know* someone is to have a special relationship with that person. A husband *knows* his wife, and his wife *knows* him (Gen. 4:1; Matt. 1:24-25). A Christian *knows* his God and Christ: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Tit. 1:16; cf. 2 Thess. 1:8-9; John 17:3). We *know* God and Christ in the sense that we believe in them, love them, and follow them.
 - a) Therefore, we *know* no man after the flesh; we do not follow any fleshly being or obey any fleshly source of authority. We follow the will of God and Christ. These are the ones we *know*. This is a blow against the Judaizers who sought to convince the Gentile saints to follow the Law of Moses.
 - b) These Jewish teachers claimed that the Law was still in effect and that the Gentile Christians must be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be saved. Acts 15. The books of Galatians and Hebrews destroyed this doctrine. Keeping the carnal commandments of the Old Law was no longer required (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14).
 - c) The Jewish people mistakenly believed that there were certain blessings which forevermore belonged to them because of their fleshly kinship to Abraham (Matt. 3:8-10; Rom. 2:28-29).
 - d) For about thirty-three years, Christ abode on earth in a fleshly body. He no longer is on earth and does not now live in a fleshly body. We will never see him in a fleshly body. Premillennialism claims that Christ must return to earth, live again on earth, and set up an earthly kingdom over which he will reign for a thousand years. For this to take place, it appears that

he would have to have a fleshly body again. But Paul says that "henceforth know we him no more" (that is, he will not inhabit a mortal body any more). There is no passage of Scripture which says that Christ will ever so much as set foot upon the earth again!

j. It denies the following Bible truths:

- 1) The return of Christ will end the period of probation for man: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- 2) It will be the end of the world: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).
- 3) It will be the time for the resurrection of all the dead: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).
- 4) It will be the time of the final judgment: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31-32).
- 5) It will be when Christ will deliver the kingdom back to God: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

B. Revelation 20:1-10: The Thousand Years.

1. In following the context of the past few chapters, it is clear that the main emphasis of this passage is the overthrow of Satan, not the thousand year reign. The three enemies of Christ and his church are Satan, the two beasts [these two beasts were a team], and the harlot. The overthrow of the harlot is described in chapter 18; the two beasts are defeated in chapter 19; Satan is overcome in the vision of this chapter.
2. Verses 1-3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."
 - a. Some writers identify the angel of this passage as Christ; but he does not appear anywhere else in the book as an angel. In Revelation, the angels are his servants. He is presented as the Lamb of God and the King of kings. However, the identity of the "angel" is not of primary importance. He had the key to the bottomless pit [the abyss—ASV] and a great chain with which to bind Satan. He laid hold on the devil, bound him a thousand years (with the great chain), cast him into the bottomless pit, shut him up, and set a seal upon the abyss. This angel may be the same one as in Revelation 9:1-3: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."
 - b. The key to the abyss is not a literal key, but symbolizes the authority and power to do the job at hand. The "keys of the kingdom" given the apostles (Matt. 16:18; 18:18; 19:28; Acts 2) represented the authority and power for them to deliver the gospel.
 - 1) Matthew 16:19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 3) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed

- me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
- 4) Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
 - 5) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - 6) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 7) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- c. The "bottomless pit" [the abyss] is not literal, for literally there is no such thing as a bottomless pit on earth; the ASV translates it as "abyss." This was the place the demons in the swine dreaded (Luke 8:31), but which was their appointed place. A bottomless pit on the earth would be a tunnel all the way through.
- 1) Luke 8:31: "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."
 - 3) The abyss was sealed in order to place a limit on the devil; it was not for the purpose of punishment; the penalty he must pay comes later (verse 10). The tomb of Jesus was sealed to prevent anyone from entering and taking the body (Matt. 27:66). The sealing up of Satan in the abyss was symbolic of the limitations placed on him: "that he should deceive the nations no more." The sealing and binding were to be for a thousand years.
 - 4) Christ is said to have been in the "deep" [the abyss, hades] during the time his body was in the tomb: "Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)" (Rom. 10:7). Between his death and his resurrection the Lord's body was in the tomb and his spirit was in Paradise.
- d. The great chain is certainly not a literal chain, for Satan, a spirit being, cannot be bound with a material chain. The chain is no more literal than are the key and pit.
- e. Satan is identified by four terms.
- 1) Devil—accuser, slanderer.
 - 2) Satan—adversary.
 - 3) That old serpent: in this guise he appeared to Eve (Gen. 3). This term emphasizes his subtilty: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).
 - 4) Dragon: illustrates his strength and ferocity: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).
- f. The "one thousand years" is used symbolically as are other numbers in Revelation. It represents a complete but undetermined length of time; a full period of time. Satan will be restricted for the full amount of time determined by God. "Thousand" is used in this very sense many times in the Bible.
- 1) Deuteronomy 7:9: "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." This does not mean that God will be true and merciful to the obedient only for a literal one thousand generations, but rather for all time and for every such generation.
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- 2) Job 9:3: "If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." This does not mean that on the one thousand and first try man can answer God. Compare: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness" (Job 33:23).
 - 3) Psalms 50:10: "For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle upon a thousand hills." This does not mean that God owns only the cattle on a literal one thousand hills, but that he owns them all, wherever they may be. If literal, which are the one thousand hills? Which hills are not included?
 - 4) Psalms 90:4: "For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night." *Thousand* is here used to represent God's view of time; it does not matter how much time passes, God will fulfill his threats and promises: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:8-10).
 - 5) Ecclesiastes 6:6: "Yea, though he live a thousand years twice *told*, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?"
 - 6) Ecclesiastes 7:28: "Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."
 - 7) Revelation 5:11: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."
- g. The devil is to be bound for one thousand years. He is to be restricted [bound] for a thousand years—for a long and undetermined (from our viewpoint only; God knows for how long) period of time. For this period of time he will be limited in power; for that full amount of time he will be under limitation. But this binding of Satan does not make him absolutely helpless. Jesus was bound and led away to the high priest (John 18:12-13). Though he was bound, yet he could still walk and speak.
- 1) This word [bound] is the same word in the Greek text. It is used literally in Acts 22:5 and figuratively elsewhere to describe the binding together of husband and wife.
 - a) Romans 7:2: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 7:27: "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 7:39: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."
 - 2) We tie up a dog but he still has some movement possible. The Devil is bound today but still has power to act.
 - 3) When the Lord came and for some years afterward, Satan had power to overwhelm his victims by sending evil spirits [demons] to take them over. The victim had little or no choice:
 - a) Mark 9:14-29: "And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy
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him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

- b) Luke 9:37-43: "And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God...."
- c) After the miraculous work of the first century was completed, the demons were all cast out; the devil has no power today to take over anyone as he once did; he is still "bound" in this sense.
- Matthew 12:29: "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."
 - Mark 3:27: "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."
 - Luke 10:17-18: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."
 - John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."
 - Ephesians 4:8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."
 - Colossians 2:15: "*And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."
 - Hebrews 2:14-15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
 - 1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."
- 4) During the first century and until the Roman Empire began to be weakened, paganism reigned supreme in the world. Pagans worshipped idols of all sorts; this was the preeminent religion and was followed by nearly everyone in the far-flung Roman Empire. With the great success of the gospel, paganism declined and was rejected by many. Satan had controlled the nations through false religion for a long time. And he used his power over the nations and their paganism to bring severe persecution against God's people. The back of paganism was broken when the Empire fell. Thus, Satan is "bound" also in the sense that he no longer controls the nations to the extent of bringing their full power against the church in persecution as he once did. His binding restricts him from deceiving the nations any more.
- 5) "The passage says nothing about Satan's influence over individuals. He still remains the subtle 'serpent' (II Cor. 11:3), the 'angel of light' (v. 14), and the 'roaring lion' (1 Peter 5:8). He can still devour individuals, but he is restricted from controlling nations. In what way? He cannot, while

- bound, instigate a worldwide persecution against the church. We can know that this is what the binding means because this is what Satan does as soon as he is 'loosed' (vs. 3,7). He will then 'deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth' into laying siege to 'the camp of the saints' (vs. 8-9)" (Workman, SS Lectures, p.527).
- 6) He has power over us personally today only to the extent we allow him. We have the power to resist the devil and cause him to flee from us: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas 4:7).
 - 7) He is to be loosed for a little season: his confinement in the abyss is not final; when the appointed time comes he will be loosed for a little time: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:7-8).
- h. Hailey gives this summary of some significant events in the book:
- 1) 'The holy city was to be trodden under foot 42 months (11:2). [Forty-two months times thirty days equals twelve hundred and sixty days; it is the same as three and one half years].
 - 2) The two witnesses were to prophesy under persecution for 1260 days (11:3).
 - 3) The radiant woman was to be protected in the wilderness for 1260 days (12:6,14).
 - 4) The beast with authority to persecute and blaspheme would do his unholy work for forty-two months (13:5; cf. Dan 7:25).
 - 5) This period was the same for each and was interpreted to be the period of Roman persecution. In two previous visions, God told the saints under the altar that they should rest for a little time until other saints were martyred, and after his casting down, Satan would know he had but a short time (Rev. 12:12).
 - 6) The time period (three and one half years, the little time of the martyrs, and the devil's short time) are the same and are now fulfilled. The Roman persecution as it backed paganism is at an end; the devil is cast into the abyss, no longer to deceive the nations as once he did; the saints' death for the Word of God is avenged and vindicated as they now sit upon thrones, reigning with Christ (verses 4-6). This leads to the conclusion that the thousand years symbolizes that period of victory beginning with Constantine, when Roman persecution ended, and continuing until some time before the Lord's return when Satan will be loosed from his present restraint (Hailey, p. 392).
3. Verses 4-6: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
- a. The devil was bound; the martyrs were victorious. The picture given here would provide much consolation and encouragement to the beleaguered saints to whom John wrote.
 - b. In verse 4, John saw thrones and those who sat thereon; the ones on the thrones were those who had been beheaded for the Lord's cause; they had not received the beast's mark and had not worshipped the beast.
 - 1) Judgment was given unto them: reference is probably to the vindication and vengeance which came as a result of the confinement of the devil. In Revelation 18:20, judgment was meted out against the harlot which vindicated the saints; in chapter 19, this was also said with reference to the beast and false prophet.
 - 2) To those who wish to take this passage as literal, some problems arise: only those who had been beheaded sat on the thrones. And if the 1000 years is literal, then the "reigning" and the "living" are also literal. "They lived AND reigned with Christ a thousand years." Taken literally, when the thousands years are over, they will cease to **reign** and cease to **live**! What proves too much, proves nothing at all!
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- 3) Notice that John did not see bodies on the throne, but souls. The ASV indicates that two groups were on the thrones: those souls which had been beheaded and those who had not worshipped the beast; the KJV indicates only one group: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6, ASV). The ASV may simply be describing the same people in two different ways.
 - 4) These were reigning **with** Christ. The passage does not tell where the reigning occurred. It does not say that the reign is a literal, earthly reign. **We** are not considered in this passage. However, all faithful Christians "reign in life" by Christ (Rom. 5:17). But John is seeing a vision which shows the martyred (persecuted) saints of that age in a victorious scene; this was to give the saints hope. Since they were victorious, so shall all faithful saints be victorious. To those who overcome (remain faithful even unto death—Rev. 2:10), will Christ "grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).
- c. Verses 5-6 speak of the first resurrection. This refers to the reign of the saints in verse 4, for verse six pronounces a blessing on those who take part in the first resurrection and says they shall reign with Christ a thousand years and shall be priests.
- 1) **One view of verses 1-6:** The thousand years represents the period of relative peace from the time Constantine gave Christianity a favorable standing with the government (about 325 A.D.) and continues until some time before the Lord's return; this period of relative peace for Christians will end when Satan is loosed for a "little season."
 - a) Only the martyred saints and those others who refused to worship the beast or receive his mark are included in the vision; indirectly all faithful saints are involved since we "reign in life" with Christ (Rom. 5:17). But only those who overcame (Rev. 2:11; 2:20; 3:21) are pictured on the thrones reigning with Christ. This period of peace is the first resurrection—the resurrection of the cause of Christ (it came through the persecution successfully and is victorious).
 - b) The binding of Satan is figurative; it was accomplished when the saints refused to submit to his trials, and thus overcame the persecution he hurled against them via the Roman Empire. During this time of peace, the saints will continue in some manner to be priests (as they were on earth—1 Peter 2:5,9).
 - c) In this view, these interpretations are made about the two deaths and two resurrections:
 - The first death (which is implied since there is a second death) is either physical death or the symbolic demise of Christianity under imperial persecution.
 - The second death (verse 6) is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (verse 14); those who overcome have nothing to fear from the second death.
 - The first resurrection is the resurrection of the Cause of Christ following the great persecution. In Revelation 6:9-11, the saints are under the throne, crying to God: "How long, O Lord?" In Revelation 20, they are enthroned.
 - The second resurrection (implied) is the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time.
 - 2) **Another view of verses 1-6** [Workman, Stearsman]: The one thousand years is equal to the Christian Age. The time of the thousand year reign is the same as the time when Satan is bound.
 - a) Those who reign include each faithful Christian who is dead; they reign with Christ in the spirit world in a place called Paradise; they are with Christ there, and will come with him at his second advent (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - b) Those who reign are "disembodied souls." These reigning saints overcame the trials and temptations of life (Rev. 2:26; 3:21), and have nothing to fear from the second death (which is eternal condemnation—Rev. 20:14; 2:11).
 - c) Near the end of time, Satan will be loosed for a little season, at which time he will again deceive the nations. This period is described in verses 7-11.
 - d) In the passage, there are two deaths and two resurrection.
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- The first death [implied] is physical.
 - The second death is eternal punishment in *Gehenna*.
 - The first resurrection is the New Birth.
 - The second resurrection is the general resurrection of all the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- e) The “rest of the dead” are the followers of Satan; their cause will not be resurrected until their master is loosed for the “little season” (Hailey, Summers).
4. Verses 7-10: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
- a. At the end of the thousand years, Satan is to be released from his prison. He will be allowed to deceive the nations again; he would gather his forces against the camp of the saints to fight against them; but fire would come from God to devour their enemy. Then the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night forever; his companions will be the beast and false prophet. The following are two views of this passage.
- b. **One view:**
- 1) The time of the beast’s triumph (Rev. 12:12; 13:5) was short, so the time of the devil’s release will be short in comparison to the period of victory which the saints receive (Rev. 20:3). By their faithfulness they bound Satan; when this spirit of loyal devotion to God no longer distinguishes God’s people, the devil is loosed. He relied on one great power (Rome), but now gathers his forces from the four quarters of the earth; his host is numberless in this latter situation. This is not the battle of Revelation 16:14-16. It is the same war, but a different battle.
 - 2) Gog and Magog (see Ezekiel 38-39). Some theorists assert that this has reference to a battle to be fought between the USSR and the USA in Palestine [this whole idea is bankrupt, especially now that the USSR is no more!]. But Ezekiel 38:17 identifies Gog and Magog as the enemies which God brought against Israel; Gog and Magog are symbolic of the heathen enemies of Israel from the time of the prophets to the Roman Empire. God had predicted through the prophets the coming of Gog and Magog, but did not name these enemies by that name; thus they are simply the various heathen enemies of God’s people in the ancient days.
 - 3) The battle indicated is spiritual and moral in nature, not physical. “Satan’s Gog and Magog symbolize such forces and agencies as atheism, humanism, communism, materialism, astrology, and all manner of false and perverted religions. Gog and Magog also represent such forces as anarchy (rebellion against all principles and standards of truth); corruption in government and business; immorality with its decay of the home, lack at natural affection and devotion to children; sodomy; alcoholism; and total abandonment to a base and sordid life of the flesh. Satan will use the anti-God, immoral standards and practices that he is using today, but probably to a more intense and flagrant degree. Gog and Magog do not gather around a conference table and offer themselves to the devil...but being deceived, they are drawn to him as were the kings of old” (Hailey, p. 397).
 - 4) Verse 9: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." “But as God brought Ezekiel’s Gog and Magog to an end by his judgment, so he brings this last enemy to an end. Whenever and wherever the battle and whatever be the nature of its enemies, the church can be assured that in all ages and at all times God will fight for his own and give them victory” (Hailey, p.398).
 - 5) Verse 10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The devil, man’s enemy from the beginning, now reaches his final doom. He was first cast out into the earth (12:9); then put into the abyss (20:3); now he is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, his

ultimate end (Hailey).

c. **Another view:**

- 1) Nothing is more clearly stated in this chapter than the fact that the loosing of Satan occurs after the one thousand years have ended (verse 7). No one knows how long this symbolic period will last.
- 2) The duration of the loosing will be only for a “little time” or “a little season.” In comparison to the “1000 years,” it will be brief. “Whereas the symbolic 1,000 years of the binding signifies the bulk of the time between the Lord’s first and second comings, the loosing signals the onset of a final conflict just before the end of the world” (Workman). [However, if this conflict is discernable, would not this be a “sign” of the Lord’s coming? Our Lord pointed out that there would be no sign by which we could identify the nearing of his second coming—Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32-33]. In response, it might be said that the assault against righteousness and truth would be so general and widely spread that its power might be apparent only to a discerning eye, and not by the average man of the world—and even that would not identify the time of the Lord’s Second Coming. Through the past 2000 years, sin and trouble have been common; another episode would not necessarily stand out from past cases.
 - a) Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."
 - b) Mark 13:32-33: "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."
- 3) On being loosed, Satan will be relieved from the restriction against deceiving the nations; he will marshal his forces against the church.
- 4) “Magog was one of the sons of Japheth and a grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:2); two other sons of Japheth were Meshech and Tubal (Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5). Many centuries later, Ezekiel uttered a prophecy against an enemy of Israel—a certain Gog who came from the land of Magog and was the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (Ezek. 38-39), obviously the same lineage. The apostle John was inspired to utilize the Old Testament names of Gog and Magog in an extended sense. Here they represent, not some specific nations (like Russia and China), but the wicked world in general....In no clearer way could John convey the fact that this last-ditch stand of Satan involves the whole world” (Workman, pp.207f).
- 5) The reference to the camp, the beloved city, describes the city God has prepared for his people (Heb 11:10; Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 12:22). The “beloved city” refers to the church on earth in terms of its ultimate heavenly fulfillment (cf. Rev. 3:12; 21:2).
- 6) “The reason no battle is pictured in these passages...is because the two sides fight on different planes” (Workman).
 - a) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - c) Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*."
 - d) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

C. Revelation 20:11-15: The Final Judgment.

1. Verse 11: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."
 - a. The throne depicted is that which belongs to God. A very glorious and awesome sight is presented so

that heaven and earth fled away. The Bible speaks of four different *heavens*: the eternal abode of God; the third heaven (Paradise—where the righteous dead await the resurrection in the Hadean realm); the place where the sun, moon, and stars operate; and the atmosphere where birds fly. The earth and its atmosphere, and outer space with its heavenly bodies, will cease to exist at the return of Christ.

- 1) The atmosphere where the birds fly is called *heaven*:
 - a) Genesis 1:20: “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.”
 - b) Matthew 6:26: “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”
 - 2) Outer space where the stars, the sun, and the moon are, is called *heaven*:
 - a) Genesis 1:14: “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.”
 - b) Genesis 15:5: “And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”
 - c) Genesis 17:7: “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”
 - 3) Paradise, where the blessed reside in the Hadean Realm, is called the third *heaven* (2 Cor. 12:2,4). Following the deaths of Jesus and the penitent thief, they were together in Paradise (Luke 23:43). However, after his resurrection, the Lord told Mary Magdalene that he had not yet ascended to his Father (John 20:17). During the time his body was in the tomb, he was in Paradise but he was not in heaven, where God dwells. This must be the place where Paul was in the scene he is depicting.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 12:2,4: “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven....How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”
 - b) Luke 23:43: “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”
 - c) John 20:17: “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.”
 - 4) The dwelling place of the Almighty, the eternal home of the saved, is called *heaven*:
 - a) Matthew 6:9: “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
 - b) 1 Kings 8:30: “And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.”
- b. “As the islands had vanished or disappeared from the divine presence at the pouring out of the seventh bowl (16:20), so now both earth and heaven flee from his face as he appears to judge, ‘and there was found no place for them.’ It has been abundantly foretold that heaven and earth will pass away....John sees this taking place at the coming of Christ in judgment, as the present order passes away” (Hailey, p.400).
- 1) Genesis 8:22: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."
 - 2) Psalms 102:25-27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end."
 - 3) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the

- heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”
- 5) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- c. Other passages speak of the destruction of the earth and material things:
 - 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 3) Colossians 3:1-2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."
 - 4) 1 John 2:17: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - 5) Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."
 2. Verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - a. This scene follows the resurrection of all the dead, the changing of all living men, and the destruction of the earth and universe. It is then that all shall be gathered before the great judgment throne.
 - b. Books were opened. Compare: "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:10). Daniel is describing the judgment of one of the beasts he has portrayed.
 - 1) The Lord said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50).
 - 2) The word of God will be the standard by which we shall be then judged in the last Judgment. Those who lived under the Patriarch Age will be judged according to the standard then in effect during their lifetimes; those who lived under the Law of Moses will be judged by the standard of that Law; those living on this side of the cross will be judged by the law of the gospel. Thus, "books" (plural) were opened.
 - c. The Book of Life.
 - 1) This is referred to many times in the Bible:
 - a) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - b) Psalms 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."
 - c) Isaiah 4:3: "And it shall come to pass, *that he that is left* in Zion, and *he that remaineth* in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.*"
 - d) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard *it*, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
 - e) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather
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- rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
- f) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
 - g) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - h) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - i) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - j) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- 2) It contains God's roll of the faithful who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and have continued "in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23).
- d. The dead were judged by the things written in the books according to their works.
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 3) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 4) Each destiny is precisely the same in length of time—never-ending! "And these shall go away into **everlasting** punishment: but the righteous into life **eternal**" (Matt. 25:46). The same Greek word is used for both of these English words.
 3. Verse 13: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."
 - a. Even those who were lost at sea will not be overlooked by God; all those who died at sea will be in the judgment. "Because of the Jewish emphasis on proper burial of the dead and fear of possible calamity if this was not done, some have concluded that John speaks of the literal sea. According to this view, the seer is emphasizing the fact that even the sea gives up its dead; these are not lost to God's sight" (Hailey, p.402). Hailey's view is that "sea" is a symbolic reference to the great mass of humanity—whenever and wherever they lived on earth. Since the passage speaks of the resurrection and Judgment, we take the sea to be literal—that every person who ever lived on earth will be in the Judgment, no matter where he died.
 - b. Death and hades will deliver all they have swallowed up. Not one will be absent! Not a single person will be retained in hades; death will not be able to retain its control over the dead; every dead person will be resurrected to face the Judgment. All who have died will be there; and all who are alive at the Lord's return will be there; our Lord is the Judge of all: "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts
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10:42). Death removes souls from earth and places them in hades. Death and hades are personified; they work as partners, in the view described.

- 1) 1 Corinthians 15:50-53: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
4. Verse 14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
- a. Death and hades are associated in the book of Revelation: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8). Death and hades are cast into *Gehenna*—forever banished from our lives and future.
 - b. Death is the last enemy to be overcome: "The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death" (1 Cor. 15:26).
 - c. The second death is here described as the lake of fire.
 - 1) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - d. Death is pictured in the Bible as separation.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - e. Definitions of the Greek term for Death:
 - 1) Vine: It is used in Scripture of:
 - a) The separation of the soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the material part), the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust, e. g., John 11:13; Heb 2:15; 5:7; 7:23. In Heb 9:15, the KJV, "by means of death" is inadequate; the RV, "a death having taken place" is in keeping with the subject. In Rev 13:3,12, the RV, "death-stroke" (KJV, "deadly wound") is, lit., "the stroke of death."
 - b) The separation of man from God; Adam died on the day he disobeyed God. "Death" is the opposite of life; it never denotes nonexistence. As spiritual life is "conscious existence in communion with God," so spiritual "death" is "conscious existence in separation from God."
 - 2) Thayer:
 - a) Properly, the death of the body, i. e., that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from

the body by which the life on earth is ended: John 11:4.

- b) Metaphorically, the loss of that life which alone is worthy of the name, 2 Cor 3:7.
 - c) The miserable state of the wicked dead in hell is called—now simply *thanatos*, Rom 1:32.
 - d) In the widest sense, death comprises all the miseries arising from sin, as well physical death as the loss of a life consecrated to God and blessed in him on earth [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
5. Verse 15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
- a. Those whose names are not recorded in the book of life will be cast into this same lake of fire, and shall suffer the second death—eternal separation from God.
 - b. How important it is to be a Christian!
 - c. How important it is to live according to the will of God!
 - d. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
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REVELATION 21

The Glory of the New Heaven and New Earth

A. Revelation 21:1-2: The New Heaven and Earth.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."
 - a. The Bible does not teach the sectarian doctrine of a renovated earth. It does teach that at the return of Christ, the material earth and universe will be destroyed.
 - 1) Genesis 8:22: "**While the earth remaineth**, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." [The passage clearly implies that the time will come when the earth will no longer remain].
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The Lord bluntly stated that heaven and earth will cease to exist. There are four *heavens* identified in the Scriptures:
 - a) The atmosphere where the birds fly is called *heaven* (Gen. 1:20; cf. Mt. 6:26). This will be destroyed when the Lord returns (2 Pet. 3:10-11).
 - b) Outer space where the stars, the sun, and the moon are, is called *heaven* (Gen. 1:14; 15:5; 17:7). This will also be destroyed at the Second Coming (2 Pet. 3:10-11).
 - c) Paradise, where the blessed reside in the Hadean Realm, is called the third *heaven* (2 Cor. 12:2,4). Following the deaths of Jesus and the penitent thief, they were together in Paradise (Luke 23:43). However, after his resurrection, the Lord told Mary Magdalene that he had not yet ascended to his Father (John 20:17). During the time his body was in the tomb, he was in Paradise but he was not in heaven, where God dwells. This must be the place where Paul was in the scene he is depicts (2 Cor. 12:1ff). Paradise is part of the Hadean Realm (place of the unseen dead); Hades will be emptied of all its inhabitants by the resurrection.
 - d) The dwelling place of the Almighty, the eternal home of the saved, is called *heaven* (Matt. 6:9; 1 Kings 8:30).
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:8-13: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."
 - b. The reference to the new heaven and earth in this text must be an expression describing heaven, the home of the soul. This is the meaning of the similar expression in 2 Peter 3. There are two words in the New Testament translated **new** [*kainos*].
 - 1) One is prospective and indicates that which is young as opposed to that which is old; this word is *neos*.
 - 2) The other is retrospective and points to that which is fresh, in contrast to that which is worn out. This word is *kainos*. Peter and John used this latter word to describe the "new" heaven and earth. It describes something new in quality, of a different nature from what is contrasted as old. *Kainos* is used to describe the new tongues (Mark 16:17); these languages were new to the speakers who had never before used them. *Kainos* is used to describe the "new" covenant (Matt. 26:28). It is also used to describe the "new" creature (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - c. In Matthew 9: 17, both *neos* and *kainos* are used: "Neither do men put new [*neos*] wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new [*neos*] wine into new [*kainos*] bottles, and both are preserved" (Matt. 9:17). Here the new wine is recently

made wine, yet to ferment, expand, exert pressure and break the old and dried skins used for bottles. The new skins or bottles are new in quality, not like the old skins, but fresh and pliable, able to expand and fit for the new wine. The word *kainos* [new] is used to describe the tomb in which Jesus was buried (Matt. 27:60). This tomb was not necessarily freshly hewn from rock, but was new in the sense that it had never been used as a burial place.

- d. Peter and John speak of the new heaven and earth only in the sense of a new habitation for the saved, one prepared by the Lord and wherein dwells righteousness. It is a place new in quality, one that has never before been used by man.
 - 1) When the Lord spoke of the eternal abode of the redeemed, he described it as a place to which he would go; he would have to leave the earth in order to be there (John 14:1 ff). He said he would prepare a place for us there. He left the earth (Acts 1:9-11) and ascended to heaven. Therefore, heaven will not be a renovated earth. He promised to return and to receive us in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and that we will ever be with him. Thus, our eternal home is not on earth.
 - 2) The new heaven and earth will be a place where righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). Revelation 21:27 teaches that no unrighteousness will be in heaven; Jesus stated that we are to pray that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). His will is perfectly done in heaven—righteousness characterizes all who are there; but only those who will believe and obey the gospel are righteous on earth, a definite minority in every generation.
 - 3) We now live in an abode where our feet are upon earth but our heads are in heaven, where the birds fly. We now abide in heaven and earth [the home of the material body]; the new heaven and earth is but a figurative, symbolic description of heaven, the eternal home of the soul.
- e. There was no more sea. When the first heaven and earth passed away, so also did the sea, for the sea is part of the earth. It appears that another "sea" is meant. [See comments under Rev. 4:6]. The sea in that scene [Rev. 4:6] apparently describes the infinite distance between the holy God and sinful man. It can only be crossed by overcoming the trials and tribulations with which Christians are faced in this life. Passing through this sea mingled with fire (Rev. 15:2) is the process; and when this is done, the sea is no more (Rev. 21:1)—there will be no more suffering for the Savior; the ultimate victory will have been won.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 5) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 6) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 7) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - 8) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as

though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

2. Verse 2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
 - a. The picture here gives more and closer details: it pictures heaven as the holy city (Heb 11:10; 13:14), new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
 - 1) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 - b. One view of the new heaven and earth, and the holy city, is that this refers to heaven itself (as we affirmed in the above notes). Another view held by some today is that this description is of the church, after it came through the persecutions of the early centuries. But when the church came out of the period of Roman persecution, it went almost immediately, completely into apostasy. The description given here does not fit the facts, but there is a problem with the other view as well: if the new heaven and earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, describes heaven, why is it pictured as coming down out of heaven? Answer: this is apocalyptic language which depicts things that are literally impossible; symbolic language is used.
 - c. "In a series of visions beginning in chapter twelve, the seer beheld the birth of the man child; the assault on the church by the dragon's agents; the trials of the church; the waging of the great war; the destruction of the harlot city, the beast, and false prophet; the final conflict with Satan and his destruction; the passing of the present order; the final judgment of mankind; and the punishment of the wicked. From this arrangement of the visions it is logical that the next scene in order would portray the final glory of the church as it comes to rest with God, beyond time. This appears to be the design of the revelation before us. Heaven could be no more than is revealed symbolically in this picture of perfect fellowship with God, safety, security, and abundance in the glorious city described by everything that is precious and priceless" (Hailey, p.404).
 - d. The picture presented gives us a wonderful view of heaven and the eternal life awaiting us there (Rev. 21-22).

B. Revelation 21:3-8: The Great Voice Speaks.

1. Verse 3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God."
 - a. The identity of the great voice from heaven is not identified, although the things spoken later in verse six indicate it to be the Father or the Son. But in this verse God is spoken of in the third person, indicating the speaker is not the Father. Whoever the speaker may be, what is spoken is the will of God. What is said here is truly uplifting—God is going to be with his people. There is a sense that he is with us now (2 Cor. 6:14-18), but in heaven that association will be on a more direct and personal plane.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And

- what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
- 2) Acts 2:41-47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
- b. "People" is in the plural in the Greek, emphasizing the varied earthly backgrounds of the saints.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 3) Acts 8:1,4: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
2. Verse 4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - a. This is one of the great passages of the New Testament dealing with a description of heaven and the quality of life we will enjoy there. We are given a list of five negatives following the affirmation that God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. We need not be concerned as to how God will wipe away all tears. That he is able to do so is sufficient to all those who believe God means what he says and trust him to fulfill all his promises.
 - b. **No more death:** since all who will abide there will have incorruptible, immortal, spiritual bodies, death will not have any effect. Indeed, following the Lord's return, death will be utterly abolished (1 Cor. 15:25-28; Heb. 2:14). Death is the cause of much of the sorrow that we experience here; but in the long view, it is in the best interest of mankind. Without death, the wicked would only grow more wicked, the sick would become sicker, the pain would only grow more intense—with no relief possible; and for faithful Christians, it is the doorway through which we must pass in order to obtain eternal life in heaven.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:25-28: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself

likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

c. **No more sorrow.**

- 1) There are many causes for sorrow in this life: death of a loved one; sickness; financial problems; accidents; war; separation; marital difficulties; social dilemmas.
- 2) All of these will be totally absent from heaven!

d. **No more crying.**

- 1) "No Tears In Heaven" is the scriptural title for a beautiful and encouraging hymn.

"No tears in heaven, no sorrow given, All will be glory in that land;
There'll be no sadness, all will be gladness; When we shall join that happy band.
Glory is waiting, waiting up yonder, Where we shall spend an endless day;
There with our Savior, we'll be forever, Where no more sorrow can dismay.
Some morning yonder, we'll cease to ponder, O'er things this life has brought to view;
All will be clearer, saved ones be dearer, In heav'n where all will be made new.
No tears in heaven, no tears, no tears up there; Sorrow and pain will all have flown
No tears in heaven, no tears, no tears up there; No tears in heaven will be known"

[Robert S. Arnold]

- 2) There will be nothing to cause us to cry there.

e. **No more pain.**

- 1) Many people live in constant pain in their diseased or maimed physical bodies, but in heaven we will receive perfect, spiritual bodies which will not be subject to pain.
- 2) 2 Corinthians 5:1-10: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
- 3) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
- 4) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
- 5) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

f. **The former things are passed away.**

- 1) The earthly conditions which were painful, hard, and dangerous will not be allowed in heaven: they will have passed away.
 - 2) Sin, the root cause of grief, pain, death, etc., will have been destroyed.
3. Verse 5: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."
- a. Identifying the speaker is not important in order to understand what is said. The intention of God is that all things are to be made new (from *kainos*). Heaven will be a far better place than earth, though there are many beautiful and wonderful things about our present abode. Heaven far surpasses the earth in grandeur and blessings.
 - 1) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 - b. John is instructed to record these things—for these words are faithful and true!
4. Verse 6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
- a. So sure are the promises and purposes of God that he can speak of their fulfillment, though still in the future, as being already accomplished. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:8-14).
 - b. The Lord states: *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*—this is given in reference to both the father and Son (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; Rev. 22:13,16; 1:10-18). The Bible teaches that both God and Christ are eternal, divine beings, as is also the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) Isaiah 41:4: "Who hath wrought and done *it*, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I *am* he."
 - 2) Isaiah 43:10: "Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."
 - 3) Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God."
 - 4) Revelation 1:10-18: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.... And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 5) Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."
 - c. Christ promised life-sustaining spiritual water.
 - 1) John 4:10: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee

- living water."
- 2) John 4:13-14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
 - 3) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 4) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
 - 5) "Nothing will be lacking in the complete fullness and realization of all spiritual desires of the glorified soul in heaven" (Hailey, p.408).
5. Verse 7: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."
- a. Rewards of overcoming are mentioned in each of the seven letters:
 - 1) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - 2) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 3) Revelation 2:17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*."
 - 4) Revelation 2:26: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."
 - 5) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 6) Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name."
 - 7) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - b. Christ overcame and received his reward:
 - 1) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
 - 2) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - 3) Revelation 5:5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
 - c. His reward was in heaven; our ultimate reward will be in heaven, but first we must overcome—be faithful to Christ even if our lives must be sacrificed.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - d. We will inherit all things (*these things*, ASV) if we "overcome."
 - 1) Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or

- mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."
- 2) Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"
 - 3) Ephesians 1:14: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:4: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (cf. Rev. 3:21).
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - 6) 1 Peter 3:9: "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."
 - 7) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- e. He will be our God, and we will be his child. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3). This hope is fully realized in heaven, not on earth.
6. Verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." [While those who are faithful are to receive the glorious blessings named above, the ones named in this verse are headed for an entirely different destiny].
- a. The **fearful** [*delios*: the cowardly and the timid; the word is never used in a good sense in the New Testament]. These are those who shrink back and are unwilling to pay the costs of discipleship. In these God is not pleased: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). There is no room in the Lord's army for cowards. Fearfulness is placed at the beginning of this list of unacceptable practices; virtue (courage) is placed first in the list of graces to be developed (2 Pet. 1:5). The word *delios* is used in these verses:
 - 1) Matthew 8:26: "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."
 - 2) John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
 - b. The **unbelieving** [see Luke 12:46; 1 Cor. 6:6; 2 Cor. 6:14]. This term includes those who have
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betrayed the trust committed to them (Hailey, p.409), as well as the aliens who do not believe the gospel. A Christian becomes an unbeliever when his life and conduct are contrary to the gospel.

- 1) Luke 12:46: "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:6: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
- c. The **abominable**: those who are morally or spiritually foul; a person whose life is disgusting in the Lord's sight: Compare Revelation 17:4: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). This includes anyone who does not follow God's word.
- 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- d. **Murderers**: those who take another's life willfully and maliciously. This has always been considered punishable by severe penalties—by the Lord and by man.
- 1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - 2) Exodus 21:12: "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death."
 - 3) Romans 13:4: "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil."
- e. **Fornicators** (whoremongers): those who are sexually immoral. This was a very common sin in the first century, and is becoming exceedingly prevalent in modern society. "Fornication" is the general classification for all sexual sins, including adultery, homosexuality, incest, etc. Many warnings are given regarding it in the New Testament.
- 1) Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 5:9-13: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,

- shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
- 4) 1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."
 - 5) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:3-5: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - 7) Colossians 3:5-6: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."
- f. **Sorcerers:** a sorcerer is one who uses magical arts, especially a user of drugs, potions, spells, and enchantments to bring others under his power (Vine). Astrologers and prognosticators, peddlers of various narcotics, and false teachers who claim to have miraculous powers and thereby bring the unwary under their control, are no less sorcerers than those of John's day (Hailey).
- 1) "The term sorcerer (Ex 7:11; Jer 27:9; etc.), from the Lat. *sors*, 'a lot,' 'one who throws or declares a lot,' would assign it initially the more circumscribed sphere of augural prognostication. But the term, as commonly employed, includes one who practices in the whole field of divinatory occultism. As such, it comprehends a necromancer, who may be classified as a certain type of sorcerer. Sorcery is the practice of the occult arts under the power of evil spirits, or demons, and has been common in all ages of the world's history" [New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois, © 1988].
 - 2) In commenting on "witchcraft" under Galatians 5:20, Barnes offered the following: "The apostle does not vouch for the actual existence of witchcraft; but he says that what was known as such was a proof of the corrupt nature of man [*Barnes' Calvinistic total hereditary depravement doctrine is not true; however, by the practice of sin, individuals corrupt their souls*], and was one of the fruits of it. No one can doubt it. It was a system of imposture and falsehood throughout; and nothing is a better demonstration of the depravity of the human heart than an extended and systematized attempt to impose on mankind. The word which is used here *Formica* (NT:5331), whence our word 'pharmacy,' from *farmakon*—a medicine, poison, magic potion) means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment; because in savage nations pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. It is used only in Gal 5:20; Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8. Some have supposed that it means poisoning here, a crime often practiced; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- g. **Idolaters:** these are worshippers of false gods, whether visible or invisible.
- 1) 1 Corinthians 5:11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:7: "Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat
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down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."

- 4) 1 Corinthians 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."
- 5) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." [A covetous man is labeled an idolater because he worships mammon, the god of this world: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
- h. **All liars:** those who practice deceit and falsehood. This sin can be done by speaking or by remaining silent; by deed or by intimation. The case of Ananias and his wife serves as a timeless and awesome warning against any degree of deceit (Acts 5:1-11).
- i. These shall all have their part in the lake of fire; this unending condemnation to the fiery pit is called the second death, for it is an eternal, painful separation from God.

C. Revelation 21:9-27: The Glory of the Eternal City.

1. Verses 9-10: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."
 - a. One of the seven angels, who had poured out his bowl of wrath, invited John to see the bride, the Lamb's wife. This appears to indicate that the city being described is not heaven, but the church. But it is the church in its heavenly habitation that is being considered. Verse 4 could only describe heaven; in no real sense could it refer to conditions in the church on earth because death still stalks us, tears still stain our cheeks, our hearts still ache with sorrow and loss, and pain still rakes our mortal bodies. What verse 4 describes, the remainder of the chapter also describes.
 - b. John is carried in the vision to a vantage point where he can observe and inspect the holy city, spiritual Jerusalem. Symbolic language is used throughout the picture given of heaven. One cannot literally climb a high mountain and see heaven; nor does heaven literally descend from heaven. John has already told of this city descending from God out of heaven (verses 1-2); here he is probably giving a more detailed account.
2. Verses 11-14: "Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."
 - a. While we consider his description of this spiritual city, we must keep in mind that he is using symbols to depict the beauty and majesty of heaven.
 - b. The glory of God fills the city, even as it filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), and the temple (1 Kings 8:11).
 - 1) Exodus 40:34: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."
 - 2) 1 Kings 8:11: "So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."
 - c. The flawless jasper, as clear as crystal, describes the perfect illumination of this spiritual city.
 - d. Earthly cities in ancient days depended on the strength of their walls for protection from their enemies. So heaven, pictured as a city from the ancient setting, is shown to have a great wall and twelve gates. These gates bore the names of the twelve tribes. Entrance into the city is gained by means of these gates. Also, at each entrance is posted an angel, presumably to keep the unqualified from entering. Cherubims kept Adam and Eve from re-entering Eden: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).
 - e. The wall had twelve foundation stones, and on these were the names of the twelve apostles. The gates

- bore the names of the twelve tribes; the names of the apostles were on the foundation stones; thus the Old and New Testament systems are combined in this holy city. Faithful people of the Old Testament and faithful Christians of the New Testament will be in heaven. Exactly which apostles are named on the stones is unimportant [Christ actually had thirteen apostles, including Paul].
3. Verses 15-17: "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, *according to* the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."
 - a. The angel had a golden reed with which to measure the wall. Gold befits the splendor of this spiritual city. The size of the city is impressive.
 - b. The wall was 12,000 furlongs (1,500 miles in each direction; one furlong equals one-eighth of a mile). The city was foursquare—like a cube; it was therefore 1,500 miles in width, breadth, and height.
 - c. The wall was 144 cubits—one cubit was the distance between a man's elbow and the tip of the middle finger (18-21 inches). This was the measure men used, but here an angel is using it. The wall would be about 220 feet, probably in height; the city would tower above and inside the wall.
 4. Verses 18-21: "And the building of the wall of it was *of* jasper: and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass."
 - a. The beauty of richness of the city staggers the imagination. This corresponds to the indescribable richness of the gospel and beauty of the Lord's church.
 - 1) Isaiah 64:4: "For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
 - b. Precious stones adorned the foundations of the wall. Some of these precious stones cannot be identified today. Eight of the stones were on the breastplate of the high priest: "And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, *even* four rows of stones: *the first row shall be* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: *this shall be* the first row. And the second row *shall be* an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings" (Ex. 28:17-20).
 - c. The twelve kinds of precious stones:
 - 1) Some scholars have thought that the jasper may be the diamond, the most precious of all stones. But Barnes says: "The jasper, properly, is 'an opaque, impure variety of quartz, of red, yellow, and also of some dull colors, breaking with a smooth surface. It admits of a high polish, and is used for vases, seals, snuff-boxes, etc. When the colors are in stripes or bands, it is called striped jasper' (Dana, in Webster's Dictionary). The color here is not designated, whether red or yellow. As the red was, however, the common color worn by princes, it is probable that that was the color that appeared, and that John means to say that he appeared like a prince in his royal robes" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) Sapphire is a stone having different shades of blue; it is second to the diamond in hardness. It is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - 3) Chalcedony [*kal sed' n ee*] is a green carbonate of copper found in the mines of Chalcedon, a Greek city on the Bosphorus, opposite Byzantium. "This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The stone referred to is an uncrystallized translucent variety of quartz, having a whitish color, and of a luster nearly like wax. It is found covering the sides of cavities, and is a deposit from filtrated silicious waters. When it is arranged in 'stripes,' it constitutes 'agate'; and if the stripes are horizontal, it is the 'onyx.' The modern 'carnelian' is a variety of this. The carnelian is

- of a deep flesh red, or reddishwhite color” (Barnes).
- 4) Emerald: probably the same as the emerald of our day.
 - 5) Sardonyx: a kind of onyx; valued as a cameo setting. “This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The ‘name’ is derived from ‘Sardis,’ a city in Asia Minor (notes on Rev 3:1), and [onux], a nail—so named, according to Pliny, from the resemblance of its color to the flesh and the nail. It is a silicious stone or gem, nearly allied to the onyx. The color is a reddish yellow, nearly orange (Webster, Dictionary)” [Barnes].
 - 6) Sardius: the identity is of this stone is uncertain. “This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is also derived from ‘Sardis,’ and the name was probably given to the gem because it was found there. It is a stone of a blood-red or flesh color, and is commonly known as a ‘carnelian.’ It is the same as the sardine stone mentioned in Rev 4:3” (Barnes).
 - 7) Chrysolyte: “This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is derived from *chrusos* (NT:5557), ‘gold,’ and *lithos* (NT:3037), ‘stone,’ and means ‘golden stone,’ and was applied by the ancients to all gems of a golden or yellow color, probably designating particularly the topaz of the moderns (Robinson, Lexicon). But in Webster's Dictionary it is said that its prevalent color is green. It is sometimes transparent. This is the ‘modern’ chrysolite. The ancients undoubtedly understood by the name a ‘yellow’ gem” (Barnes).
 - 8) Beryl: sea-green in color; similar to the emerald. “This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The beryl is a mineral of great hardness, and is of a green or bluish-green color. It is identical with the emerald, except in the color, the emerald having a purer and richer green color, proceeding from a trace of oxide of chrome. Prisms of beryl are sometimes found nearly two feet in diameter in the state of New Hampshire (Webster)” [Barnes].
 - 9) The last four:
 - a) Topaz: had green tints. “This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The topaz is a well-known mineral, said to be so called from ‘Topazos,’ a small island in the Arabian Gulf. It is generally of a yellowish color, and pellucid, but it is also found of greenish, bluish, or brownish shades” (Barnes).
 - b) Crysoprasus: akin to the beryl, but of a paler color. “This word *chrusoprasos* (NT:5556) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is derived from *chrusos* (NT:5557), ‘gold,’ and *prason* (NT:4237), ‘a leek,’ and denotes a precious stone of greenish golden color, like a leek; that is, ‘apple-green passing into a grass-green’ (Robinson, Lexicon). ‘It is a variety of quartz. It is commonly apple-green, and often extremely beautiful. It is translucent, or sometimes semi-transparent; its hardness little inferior to flint’ (Webster, Dictionary)” (Barnes).
 - c) Jacinth: probably a sapphire, a precious stone of transparent rich blue color. “The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is the same word as ‘hyacinth’—*huakinthos* (NT:5192)—and denotes properly the well-known flower of that name, usually of a deep purple or reddish blue. Here it denotes a gem of this color. It is a red variety of ‘zircon’” (Barnes).
 - d) Amethyst: wine-colored, purplish red stone. “This word, also, is found only in this place in the New Testament. It denotes a gem of a deep purple or violet color. The word is derived from *alpha* (NT:1), the alpha privative (‘not’), and *methuoo* (NT:3184), to be intoxicated, because this gem was supposed to be an antidote against drunkenness. It is a species of quartz, and is used in jewelry” (Barnes).
5. Verse 21: "And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass."
 - a. Each gate was made of a great pearl. Pearls were especially valued by the people of ancient times. The street of the city was of pure gold. Different ideas have been advanced regarding the number of the street (s). One street seems out of proportion for such a large city.
 - b. Each gate would have a street which would probably connect to each other. The point of emphasis is the richness of the thoroughfare.
 6. Verses 22-23: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten
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- it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof."
- a. He turns to a description of the interior of the city proper now. The entire city is one grand temple (*naos*, sanctuary.). There was no need for a special place set aside as a temple. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb constitute the temple. The glory that pertains to them fills the whole city; the inhabitants are never out of their glorious presence.
 - b. Under the Law, God's glory was represented by what the Jews called *the Shekinah*, which filled the tabernacle and temple; in the church, God's glory is represented by his Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). In heaven, the glory of God is throughout the city, so that there is no need for a material sun or lamp.
7. Verses 24-26: "And the nations of them **which are saved** shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."
- a. NKJ: "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."
 - b. People of all nations will walk in the light of this glory; and kings will bring their glory into it. There will be none to challenge the glory of God there.
 - c. All enemies had been cast into the lake of fire, so there was no need for the gates to be closed; there is no night there. Only glory and honor are in the city—all dishonor and shame are on the outside.
8. Verse 27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- a. Nothing that is defiled, polluted, or impure will be allowed in the city; no one shall enter who makes or does an abomination or lie; only those whose names were recorded in the Lamb's book of life will be there. When one sincerely obeys the gospel of Christ, the pollutions of sin are removed from the soul by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Acts 22:16). The obedient one then continues in his obedience to the Redeemer (1 John 1:7; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). In the last day, therefore, an abundant entrance will be given to that pure one into the everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:3-11)
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me **at that day**: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 5) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 6) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 7) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,
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- and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
- 8) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 9) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- b. "There the saints shall have no impure persons admitted among them. In the earthly Jerusalem there will be a mixed communion, after all the care that can be taken. Some roots of bitterness will spring up to trouble and defile Christian societies; but in the new Jerusalem there is a society perfectly pure. First, free from such as are openly profane. There are none admitted into heaven who work abominations. In the churches on earth sometimes abominable things are done, solemn ordinances profaned and prostituted to men openly vicious, for worldly ends; but no such abominations can have place in heaven. Secondly, free from hypocrites, such as make lies, say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. These will creep into the churches of Christ on earth, and may lie concealed there a long time, perhaps all their days; but they cannot intrude into the new Jerusalem, which is wholly reserved for those that are called, and chosen, and faithful, who are all written, not only in the register of the visible church, but in the Lamb's book of life" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database, © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
 - c. A master list of all the citizens of the Roman Empire was kept; it was most advantageous for one living then to be a citizen, which could be obtained by birth or by purchase. Being written in the Lamb's book of life is the ultimate need:
 - 1) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - 2) Psalms 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."
 - 3) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - 4) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 5) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - 6) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - 7) Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - 8) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life."
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- d. “The terms and phrases and words describe the whole category of the moral and spiritual corruption of heathendom. The first chapter of Romans is an inspired commentary on the depths of degradation into which the heathen world had sunken by these practices because, said Paul, ‘they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.’ But these impurities of heathenism could gain no admission or entrance into the realm of the Lamb’s Bride. The *defiled* could not enter, because the gospel removed all moral defilement. The paganistic abominations could not enter, for the gospel separated from all heathen idolatry. The deceivers who by making *a lie* had seduced the inhabitants of the earth into emperor-worship could not enter, for the gospel destroyed the doctrines of antichrist. Wherefore, only *they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life*—whose names were entered into the registry of the New Jerusalem by ‘doing his commandments’ could ‘enter in through the gates into the city’” (Foy. Wallace, *The Book of Revelation*, p.446).
- e. Alien sinners cannot go directly into heaven; they must all pass through the Lord’s kingdom (his church). The entrance requirements into the church removes all guilt; as the Christian then walks in the light of the gospel (1 John 1:7), he obtains the continual cleansing offered by the blood of Christ. At the last day, therefore, he will be invited to enter heaven, and enjoy the pleasures provided there by the benevolent God of Heaven. No one who is defiled by sin will be permitted to enter.
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What Must One Do To Be Saved?

The Alien Sinner Must:	
Learn the truth	John 8:31-32; Rom. 10:17
Believe in Christ	John 8:24
Repent of his sins	Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10
Confess his faith in Christ	Rom. 10:9-10
Be baptized into Christ	Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4
The Child of God Must:	
Study the Word of God	2 Tim. 2:15
Grow spiritually	1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18
Worship regularly	Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:23-31
Live right in this present world	Titus 2:11-12
Be faithful unto death	Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22
The Erring Child of God Must:	
Repent and confess sins	Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-10
Pray for forgiveness	Acts 8:22; James 5:16

REVELATION 22

The Last Words Of Revelation

A. Revelation 22:1-5: Further Descriptions of New Jerusalem.

1. Verse 1: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."
 - a. There is a close relationship between the first five verses of this chapter and chapter twenty-one. In these verses, John is looking at another aspect of the heavenly scene. The descriptions of heaven, what few there are in the Bible, depict it as pure, new, pleasant, beautiful, and unending. John sees here a pure river flowing with the water of life; it issues from the throne; it is clear as crystal. The picture is of constant purity and beauty.
 - b. For a similar scene, see Ezekiel 47:1-12: "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house *stood toward* the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south *side* of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters *were* to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters *were* to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; *and it was* a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen *this*? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river *were* very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: *which being* brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, *that* every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, *that* the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a *place* to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."
 - c. This is the first occurrence of the phrase "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The Kingdom belongs to both the Father and the Son: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).
 - d. This symbolic stream of life-giving water flows from the fountainhead of life—God. This water is not stagnant, but is alive (moving). "The allusion here is doubtless to the first Eden, where a river watered the garden (Gen 2:10, seq.), and as this is a description of Eden recovered, or Paradise regained, it was natural to introduce a river of water also, yet in such a way as to accord with the general description of that future abode of the redeemed. It does not spring up, therefore, from the ground, but flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. Perhaps, also, the writer had in his eye the description in Ezek 47:1-12, where a stream issues from under the temple, and is parted in different directions" (Barnes, *ibid.*).
 - e. "The chapter comprises the remainder of the description of the 'New Jerusalem'—the blessed abode of the saints (Rev 22:1-5), and then (Rev 22:6-21) the conclusion or epilogue of the whole book. It is difficult to conceive what induced the author of the division of the New Testament into chapters, to separate the first five verses of this chapter from the preceding chapter. A new chapter should have commenced at Rev 22:6; for the remainder properly comprises the conclusion of the whole book....In

the New Jerusalem; the happy abode of the redeemed" (Barnes, *ibid.*).

2. Verse 2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations." "In the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve *manner of* fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (ASV).
 - a. It is difficult to visualize the scene being described; perhaps the tree is in the middle of the street and is so broad that its limbs overhang both sides of the river, which is alongside the street. The "Tree of Life" is mentioned in Genesis 2:9 and 3:22, and refers to a certain life-sustaining tree planted in Eden.
 - 1) Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."
 - 2) Genesis 3:22: "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."
 - b. Adam and Eve, by their sin, lost the tree of life for us all. But that which they lost is fully regained in Heaven. This heavenly tree of life bears twelve crops each year; there will be no shortages.
3. Verse 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."
 - a. When sin entered the human race, a curse was placed on the serpent and upon the ground.
 - 1) Genesis 3:14: "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."
 - 2) Genesis 3:17: "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life."
 - b. A curse was placed indirectly on Adam and Eve: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:16-19).
 - c. A later curse was pronounced upon Cain when he slew Abel: "And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand" (Gen. 4:11).
 - d. Other curses were given in Genesis 12:3, 27:29, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, and 28:15-68.
 - 1) Genesis 12:3: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - 2) Genesis 27:29: "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 27:15-26: "Cursed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth *it* in *a* secret *place*. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be*

- he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."
- e. The curse of the Law was removed when Christ died on the cross: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). The curse of the law was in the fact that it identified sin but was unable to remove its guilt.
 - 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - 4) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - f. We will be under no curse in Heaven. The curse of sin's guilt is removed from those in Christ in this life.
 - 1) Zechariah 14:11: "And *men* shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:8-13: "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new *covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old *is* ready to vanish away."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:22-24: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."
 - g. God's servants serve him imperfectly in this life, but in Heaven perfect service will be possible. The nature of this service we shall render in heaven is not revealed.
4. Verse 4: "And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads."
 - a. No man has seen the face of God, but we have ever desired that privilege. This will be possible in Heaven.
 - 1) John 5:37: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."
 - 2) John 14:6-9: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the
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Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

- 3) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 4) 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."
 - 5) 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
- b. The name of God will be symbolically inscribed on our foreheads.
- 1) Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name."
 - 2) Compare:
 - a) Revelation 7:3: "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."
 - b) Revelation 14:1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."
5. Verse 5: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."
- a. There will be no need of any natural or artificial light, but the glorious presence of deity will fully illuminate Heaven: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).
 - b. "John repeats what was said earlier, that there is no need for lamp or sun....The thought has developed from walking in the midst of the light (21:24), to serving in the light (22:3), and now, to reigning in that light. The reign is now extended from the thousand years with him during this age (see 20:4), to a reign 'for ever and ever,' ages without end. These reigned with him upon the earth (5:10) and in life (Rom. 5:17); but this reign is one that is not limited by time. It shall not cease. Here is further evidence that Revelation 21:1—22:5 refers to the eternal glory, and not to the present age" (Hailey, p.424).
 - c. The reign in which we shall take part is not limited by time, but will be eternal.

B. Revelation 22:6-9: The Angel and John.

1. Verse 6: "And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."
 - a. The angel, who had been identified as one of the seven angels in Revelation 21:9, and had shown John the awesome heavenly scene just described, again addresses the apostle. The information provided to John is affirmed to be faithful and true.
 - b. There are many teachings and assertions of men which are neither faithful nor true.
 - 1) Joseph Smith wrote in 1832 that a temple would be built in Independence, Missouri, "in this generation." It was never done (*Doctrines and Covenants*, 84:25; 57:1-3; 101:17,20,70-74). [See *ADL Lectures*, pp.230-237].
 - 2) Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the modern-day "Jehovah's Witness" movement, asserted that "the exact date of our Lord's return" would be in 1874. He was wrong, but despite what he called "the 1874 disappointment," he argued that Christ did return but was invisible; he claimed that Christ would become visible in 1914 at which time all earthly "governments will be dissolved." He died in 1916 and thus lived to be disappointed a second time (*Studies in the Scriptures*, III, 129,306; VII, 53, 11, 98-101) [*ADL, ibid.*].
 - 3) Russell's successor, J.F. (Judge) Rutherford, claimed that in 1925 we would see "the return of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, pp.88-90).

- 4) Another of Russell's successor, Nathan Homer Knorr, said the end of all earthly governments was to be in the fall of 1975, September 5. In 1974 he complimented those Jehovah's Witnesses who sold "their homes and property" to spend the short time remaining "before the wicked world's end" in evangelizing. This third debacle resulted in a 27 percent drop in membership among these so-called "witnesses." [ADL, 1984, p.231].
- c. But God's word is faithful and true. In every instance in which sufficient evidence exists to verify or disprove some statement in the Bible, the Bible has always been faithful and true in its report. Prior to 1884, Ur of Chaldees was known only by biblical references; today, baked yellow mud bricks have been found with the name of Ur inscribed thereon, and the city itself has been found and excavated. Before "1898 critics disbelieved that there was a king in Babylon called Belshazzar, for historians gave the name of another king reigning at Babylon at the same time. But archaeology has raised Belshazzar from non-existence, finding he reigned with his father. Daniel's words are 'faithful and true'" (Hugo McCord, ADL, p.233).
- d. The events and situations described in Revelation are again said to be in the near future to that time. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1). In a short time, the events of the book would begin to take place. This did not mean that the end of the world was then at hand.
2. Verse 7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
- a. These words are spoken from the viewpoint of Christ: he will come swiftly. The Bible elsewhere describes the coming of Christ as being sudden, unannounced, as a thief in the night.
- 1) Matthew 24:36-39: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - 2) Matthew 24:42-44: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."
 - 3) Mark 13:32-37: "But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. *For the Son of man is* as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- b. A blessing is announced for those who keep the sayings of this book. Obedience is blessed and disobedience is punished. This is the sixth of the seven beatitudes of Revelation:
- 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time *is* at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead

- which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
3. Verses 8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
- a. When John had seen and heard these things, he was so overwhelmed that he fell down before the angel who showed him these things. This was a natural reaction, but should not have been done. The angel reproved him for trying to offer this worship. The angel identified himself as a fellow-servant with John of the God of Heaven. He was not worthy of being worshipped. He instructed John to direct his worship to God.
 - b. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." There are many who seek the adoration and praise of man. The word "reverend" means "worthy of reverence; deserving to be revered." The term is used only once the Bible, and that is in reference to God: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend *is* his name" (Ps. 111:9).
 - c. A strong warning is given, to those who would follow the Lord, against exalting themselves above their brethren: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:8-11).
- C. Revelation 22:10-21: The Last Words of Jesus.
1. Verse 10: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."
 - a. It is difficult to identify the speaker in every instance in this chapter; in some verses the identity is clearly Christ; in others it appears to be the angel; but in each case the will of the Lord is being expressed. What any inspired messenger said, or wrote in the Bible, is from God.
 - b. Seal not up the sayings. A "sealed" book is one beyond human comprehension (cf. Rev. 5:1-5). John was told to seal up the things uttered by the voice of the seven thunders (Rev. 10:4), so we cannot learn what was said there.
 - c. Daniel was told to shut up the vision he had seen and words he had heard, for they pertained to the end of Israelite history.
 - 1) Daniel 8:26: "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days."
 - 2) Daniel 10:14: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision *is* for *many* days."
 - 3) Daniel 12:4: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."
 - 4) Daniel 12:9: "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end."
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- 5) 2 Corinthians 12:2-4: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
 - 6) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice" (ASV).
 - d. But John is told not to seal up these matters, "For the time is at hand." The main events of Revelation, therefore, were not in the far distant future, but lay in the immediate future for our brethren of the first century.
 - e. With the exception of those visions clearly depicting conditions and events which are to be after time is no more, the visions beginning in chapter four were "shortly" to come to pass.
2. Verses 11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
- a. The speaker of verse ten continues. Society is divided into two groups: the holy and the unholy; the righteous and the unrighteous; the saved and the lost. In John 3, these distinctions are placed on the two divisions of humanity: believers and unbelievers (vs. 18); those who love light or darkness (vs. 19); those who do truth and those who do evil (verses 20-21). Each individual chooses the group to which he belongs. His actions grow out of the basic character he develops; the type character one develops is determined by the information he learns and believes. There is no standing still in spiritual status.
 - 1) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart *is* not with thee."
 - 3) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - 4) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - b. In eternity, the kind of character one possesses will be the same kind of character which he had developed in this life. "They that have done good" will be raised up to eternal life in Heaven—where no evil taints the scene. "They that have done evil" will be raised up to eternal condemnation.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - c. The practice of spiritual crimes will not be done in eternity, but the guilt acquired in our lives here will carry over into eternity—unless it is removed by the blood of Christ prior to our departure from this world. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - d. But outside the gates of glory will be the dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and deceivers: "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15). Such they were while in this life, and such will they ever be in eternity! Those found to be filthy in the Judgment, were filthy in this life, and will remain filthy throughout eternity. He that is found righteous and holy in the Judgment, was such in life, and will remain thus in eternity. The kind of person we each become here on earth, will be our true status
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in eternity. Only the pure in heart will ever see God in peace.

- 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- e. How very important it is for us to learn the Bible, obey the gospel, worship scripturally, study regularly, avoid every form and appearance of evil, keep ourselves pure, be filled with love for God and man, and thus become a new creation in Christ!
- 1) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
- f. The Lord again announces the suddenness of his return; there will be no time for anyone to make preparations when the Son of God appears. His appearance, the resurrection of the dead, and the changing of the living, will be done in a flash of time.
- 1) Matthew 24:36-42: "But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:50-58: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one
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- another with these words."
- 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:10-14: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."
- g. The condition we are in at death or at the return of Christ is all-important! We will be rewarded according to what our work shall have been. There will be no exceptions made!
3. Verse 13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."
 - a. The speaker is identified by the description given—this could not be said of any angel.
 - 1) Revelation 1:11: "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."
 - 2) Revelation 1:18: "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - b. The same statements are made about the Father and the Son:
 - 1) Isaiah 41:14: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, *and* ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."
 - 2) Isaiah 43:10: "Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."
 - 3) Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I *am* the first, and I *am* the last; and beside me *there is* no God."
 - 4) Isaiah 48:12: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I *am* he; I *am* the first, I also *am* the last."
 - 5) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - 6) Revelation 1:17: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."
 - 7) Revelation 2:8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."
 - 8) Revelation 21:6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
 - c. "Although God the Father has claimed all three of these qualities for himself, it is evident that in this instance (Rev. 22:13) it is Jesus who speaks. He is hereby identifying himself with the Father in completeness of godhood, in eternal being, and in divine authority" (Hailey, p.429).
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not
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- any thing made that was made."
- 3) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - 4) Colossians 2:9: "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 5) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
4. Verse 14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- a. This is the seventh beatitude. The importance of obedience to the gospel is stressed. In Revelation 21:27 we are told that only those who are pure will enter heaven; all have sinned (Rom. 3:23).
 - 1) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 2) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - b. We are cleansed by the blood of Christ.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 2) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - c. We reach the blood of Christ when we obey the gospel (Rom. 6:1-18).
 - 1) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - d. In this condition of faithful obedience, we are purified, kept pure (1 John 1:7), and are given the right to enter into heaven and partake of the tree of life! Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10.
5. Verse 15: "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."
- a. A strong contrast is given between the pure saints and the outcasts. "Dogs" is a term used to describe the immoral, the prostitutes and homosexuals: "There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God" (Deut. 23:17-18, ASV). This term is equivalent to "the abominable" in Revelation 21:8 and the "filthy" ones of Revelation 22:11.
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- b. The "all liars" of Revelation 21:8 is broadened to include "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Everyone lives by that which he loves: one who loves truth will follow truth; one who loves falsehood, will follow the same; one who loves the pleasures of sin will pursue a life of indulgence: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).
6. Verse 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star."
- a. Christ is the direct spokesman here. He affirms that he is the source of the information given to the churches. He uses his human name and affirms he is the root and offspring of David. "As the root and offspring of David he fulfills the ancient hope of Israel that a descendant of David would rule on the throne of David (II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1,10 [cf. Rom. 15:12]; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24-25.) Furthermore, the phrase indicates that he is the beginning and the end, the total fulfillment of all that God promised through the prophets. In him is realized the ideal and ultimate purpose of God" (Hailey, p.431).
- 1) 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."
 - 2) Psalms 132:11: "The LORD hath sworn *in* truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."
 - 3) Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
 - 4) Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Cf. Romans 15:12: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."
 - 5) Isaiah 53:2: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."
 - 6) Jeremiah 23:5: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."
 - 7) Ezekiel 34:24: "And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken *it*."
 - 8) Ezekiel 37:24-25: "And David my servant *shall be* king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, *even* they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David *shall be* their prince for ever."
- b. The brethren in Thyatira were promised the morning star (Rev. 2:28); a prophet declared that a star would arise out of Jacob (Num. 24:17); Jesus now claims that he is the bright and morning star and the offspring of David.
- 1) Numbers 24:17: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."
 - 2) Revelation 2:28: "And I will give him the morning star."
7. Verse 17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that
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is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." **This is the great invitation.**

a. The Holy Spirit invites.

- 1) Compare: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." What the Spirit said to them was what he directed John to write.
- 2) He guided the inspired men to deliver God's word in errantly; he guided the inspired writers to inscribe it error-free; he speaks and invites today through that inspired word: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

b. The bride (the Lord's church) invites. It does so through preaching and teaching the word.

- 1) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
- 2) Acts 8:1,4: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
- 3) Colossians 1:5-6: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth."
- 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

c. He that heareth invites. Those individuals who hear and heed the word themselves, encourage others to obey; these urge the gospel invitation upon those who need it: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;** but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

d. Whosoever will—may take of the water of life freely. The gospel is offered to every person without charge; it is made available to every sinner (not to a selected few).

- 1) Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."
- 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
- 3) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
- 4) 2 Corinthians 6:2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation."
- 5) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
- 6) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

8. Verses 18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
- a. This book is to be accepted as inspired Scripture. It has God's stamp upon it (vs. 16); it has the stamp of Christ's approval upon it (vs. 10); it bears the stamp of the John's approval (vs. 8).
 - 1) Revelation 22:6: "And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."
 - 2) Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star."
 - 3) Revelation 22:8: "And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things."
 - b. A very strong warning is issued not to tamper with its contents in any way.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 4:1: "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:32: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."
 - 3) Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
 - 4) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 5) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 6) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - 7) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - c. What is said here (if intended primarily for the book of Revelation) is applicable to every other part of the Bible. Is the Book of Revelation more sacred and inviolate than the other books of the Bible? Certainly not! This stern warning makes the task of preaching and teaching the Bible a very serious work, and one which must not be entered into with haste or thoughtlessness: "Be not many *of you* teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (Jas. 3:1, ASV).
 - d. No wonder we are told to "rightly divide the word of truth" or "to handle aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).
9. Verses 20-21: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen."
- a. The Author of Revelation affirms again the sudden coming he is planning; we do not know when it will be—we are admonished to be prepared!
 - b. He promised to come in swift retribution in the scenes described in Revelation 2:5,16: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent....Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." This was a symbolic coming.
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- c. He promised to come quickly in response to the needs of his people: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). This was a symbolic coming.
- d. He will come literally and personally in the last day. John adds his readiness for the Lord to return. A promise is given to all who "love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8)
- e. John's pronouncement of grace upon the saints is given in the final verse. "This is a fitting benediction pronounced upon the saints of God, who were facing the vicissitudes, hardships, and suffering persecution. The grace of the Lord Jesus involves his gracious favor and constant good will, which provides for every need in every hour. Only one word remains to be said: Amen—be it so" (Hailey, pp.433f)

D. Concluding Remarks.

1. "As the vision fades from our view and the last word spoken echoes in our souls, our hearts are wrapped in awe at the majestic sight and sounds which we have beheld and to which we have listened. Surely our faith in God and His Christ has been strengthened, our hope for victory and heaven made more precious, our love for the spiritual and eternal made to abound beyond all previous measure, our will given a permanent determination to succeed, and our whole aim and goal of life become more fixed...We continue to share with those early Christians the pressures of political power and intrigue, the subtlety of false religious appeal through human wisdom, philosophy, and tradition, and the seduction of the world of lust. Also we share with them the strength, power, and help that comes from our heavenly Father through faith in the blood of the Lamb. And we shall share with them the eternal reward of victory and an inheritance in God's celestial city as the bride of the Lamb" (Hailey, p.434).
 2. Revelation 22:20 "voices a final promise of the Lord's purpose to come quickly to the aid of his persecuted people. In acceptance of the promise and in the attitude of patience and trust, John bows his head with his audience to whisper the reverent prayer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Who can read this book [Revelation] which breathes the atmosphere of victorious faith and courageous trust in God, with the unfailing assurance in the fulfillment of his purpose and the victory of the Christ of the cross and the empty tomb, without shouting with the people of the book—'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing, and dominion, forever and ever'" (Summers, p.218).
 3. "This message is peculiarly relevant today—the call to choose the eternal rather than the temporal; to resist temptation, to refuse to compromise with pagan secularism, to place the claim of conscience above all demands against it; to cherish the confidence of ultimate victory for the kingdom of God, not only in the reign of Domitian but also in every other chaotic period of world history, including the twentieth century" (Summers, p.93).
 4. "As the brutalities multiplied, the sympathy of the pagan population was stirred; the opinion of good citizens found courage to express itself against the most ferocious oppression in Roman history. Once the people had urged the state to destroy Christianity; now the people stood aloof from the government, and many pagans risked death to hide or protect Christians until the storm should pass. In 311 Galerius, suffering from a mortal illness, convinced of failure, and implored by his wife to make his peace with the undefeated God of the Christians, promulgated an edict of toleration, recognizing Christianity as a lawful religion and asking the prayers of the Christians in return for 'our most gentle clemency.' The Diocletian persecution [303 A.D.] was the greatest test and triumph of the Church. It weakened Christianity for a time through the natural defection of adherents who had joined it, or grown up, during a half century of unmolested prosperity. But soon the defaulters were...pleading for readmission to the fold. Accounts of the loyalty of martyrs who had died, or of 'confessors' who had suffered, for the faith were circulated from community to community; and these *Acta Martyrum*...played a historic role in awakening or confirming Christian belief. 'The blood of martyrs,' said Tertullian, 'is seed.' There is no greater drama in human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned or oppressed by a succession of emperors, bearing all trials with a fierce tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has known. **Caesar and Christ had met in the arena, and Christ had won**" (Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, p.652).
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Summary of the Visions of Revelation 4-22

1. Revelation 4: God is on the throne; he is powerful, majestic, and knows all; he is willing and able to stand by his people; they have no reason to be terrified even though under siege by unbelieving enemies.
2. Revelation 5: An encouraging picture is given of the Redeeming Lamb; he is worthy; he willingly and ably takes action in behalf of his people.
3. Revelation 6: The opening of the six seals:
 - a. The first seal (white horse): represents the successful spread of the gospel in the first several years of the Christian era:
 - 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - b. The second seal (red horse): represents the first great wave of persecution against the church as a result of the saints' successful work of preaching and living the gospel:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
 - c. The third seal (black horse): represents the contrived economic discrimination brought against the saints by their enemies (cf. Rev. 2:18-29):
 - 1) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 2) Revelation 13:16-17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
 - d. The fourth seal (pale horse): probably represents a partial judgment of God against the oppressors of the church. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*" (Ezek. 5:17).
 - e. The fifth seal (martyrs under the altar): represents the awful sufferings the saints were undergoing; they are pictured as crying out to God: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy

- and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).
- f. The sixth seal (earthquake, etc.): heavy judgment against the enemies of the church is depicted using Old Testament pictures. This judgment against the evil ones would be a day of deliverance for his people.
4. Revelation 7: An interlude giving two consoling visions of encouragement.
 - a. The sealing of the 144,000 represents God putting his symbolic mark on those who have his approval. God is thus telling his people that they will be delivered from the awful judgment described in Revelation 6:12-17; it answers the question of Revelation 6:17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - b. The innumerable host that is depicted in heaven around the throne. This symbolically pictures the ultimate, eternal victory the faithful are promised in heaven.
 5. Revelation 8-9: The sounding of the first six trumpets.
 - a. This event was preceded by the silence in heaven and the assurance that God hears and answers the prayers of his saints.
 - b. The first four trumpets represent various natural calamities brought against the enemies of the church (the Roman Empire): "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, **but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms**, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 - c. The fifth trumpet: probably represents the internal corruption of Rome which God would also use in bringing about their downfall.
 - d. The sixth trumpet: the invading hordes which would bring the empire to its knees.
 6. Revelation 10-11: Another interlude giving more consoling visions.
 - a. The mighty angel with a message for all the earth.
 - b. The little book episode: a great work yet remained for John—but with bitter results.
 - c. Measuring the temple (the church) for providential protection.
 - d. The two witnesses (the church: Jews and Gentiles) would successfully do their work and would then be put to death (the cause would be hindered), but would be resurrected.
 - e. The sounding of the seventh trumpet; this is symbolic assurance given the church that God would not desert his faithful.
 7. Revelation 12-13.
 - a. The dragon, who is identified as the devil, arrays himself against the woman and her child. He fights with all his cunning, power, and evil.
 - b. The first beast, which is representative of the wicked Roman Emperor, receives his evil power and motivation from the devil. He wreaks havoc on the church and hurls blasphemies against God.
 - c. The second beast is representative of the Roman *Concilia*, which receives its authority from the first beast—the emperor Domitian.
 - d. It appears that there can be no hope for the saints: the devil with all his power is assaulting the kingdom of God; he is using the awesome might of the great and evil Roman Empire; there is a dedicated effort by the pagan religionists to destroy the church. The enemies seem to be invincible, but John next turns from this dark scene to present a scene which shows that the forces of righteousness will ultimately be victorious.
 8. Revelation 14-20: This section shows God's wrath against his enemies.
 - a. Chapter 14 tells of the 144,000, who represent the faithful; the messenger with the everlasting gospel is shown.
 - b. Chapters 15-16 gives details about the seven angels who had seven bowls of God's wrath which they poured upon the earth.
 - 1) These bowls of wrath depict God's punishment against the enemies of his people, specifically against various features and parts of the corrupt Roman Empire.
 - 2) Chapter 16 also tells about the battle of Armageddon, which is placed between the pouring out of
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- the sixth and seventh bowls of wrath. This symbolic battle depicts the struggle of the Lord's church and the Roman Empire. Some think it describes the spiritual battle between God's saints and their enemies through the centuries.
- c. Chapter 17 describes the harlot [the scarlet woman] and the beast. The harlot is Babylon [evil Rome]; the beast represents Domitian, the cruelest enemy to this time that the church had faced.
 - d. Chapter 18 details the fall of the harlot [Rome and its empire].
 - e. Chapter 19 reports on the rejoicing saints and the victorious Christ.
 - f. Chapter 20 tells of the thousand year reign and the final Judgment.
9. Revelation 21-22: This concluding section shows the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people.
- a. A symbolic picture of heaven is given in chapter 21:1—22:6.
 - b. The return of Christ who will dispense just rewards to his faithful followers and deliver punishment to his enemies.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Revelation

Introduction	Page 1
Chapter 1	Page 20
Chapter 2	Page 38
Chapter 3	Page 57
Chapter 4	Page 77
Chapter 5	Page 84
Chapter 6	Page 93
Chapter 7	Page 103
Chapter 8	Page 116
Chapter 9	Page 125
Chapter 10	Page 136
Chapter 11	Page 142
Chapter 12	Page 158
Chapter 13	Page 171
Chapter 14	Page 185
Chapter 15	Page 194
Chapter 16	Page 198
Chapter 17	Page 213
Chapter 18	Page 226
Rome and Babylon	Page 237
Chapter 19	Page 238
Chapter 20	Page 250
Chapter 21	Page 270
What Do To Be Saved?	Page 287
Chapter 22	Page 288
Summary of Revelation	Page 304
Bibliography	Page 307

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION

A. Introduction.

1. The Book of Revelation is considered by many to be so dark and mysterious that they are hesitant about trying to discover its secrets.
 - a. "Man may fathom many of the mysteries of the physical world, coming to an almost complete understanding of them, at least to the point that he loses his sense of awe in their presence. But in contrast, although we can grasp something of Revelation's meaning and use for us, we never cease to stand in amazement and wonder at its mysteries which continue to challenge us" (Hailey, p.).
 - b. We should not be afraid to study it, however one should be extremely cautious about the conclusions he reaches. The sensationalists and other false teachers have abused this book to the extent that its real message is obscured amid their speculations and perversions.
 - c. The book has, therefore, been neglected, misunderstood, and terribly twisted, but this should not cause us to be fearful of examining its challenging contents.
 2. Even though we may not be able in errantly to determine the precise significance of every symbol in the book, nevertheless we ought to make the attempt. There are, to say the least, many valuable spiritual lessons to be learned from Revelation. These include the following:
 - a. The great truths of Chapter 1.
 - b. The information contained in the letters to the seven congregations of the Lord's people in Asia, recorded in Chapters 2-3.
 - c. The seven beatitudes of Revelation:
 - 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - d. The description of the Judgment in Chapter 20.
 - e. The description of heaven in Chapters 21-22.
 - f. The great truths of Chapter 22.
 3. The Book was written to be understood by the saints.
 - a. The Holy Spirit inspired it and preserved it. If it is utterly incomprehensible, why was it given and preserved for us?
 - b. Because Revelation is different from the other books of the New Testament does not warrant its neglect; we should try to learn its message.
 4. It complements and completes the Bible (Jackie Stearsman).
 - a. Genesis details the beginning of heaven and earth (1:1); Revelation tells of the consummation of heaven and earth (21:1).
 - 1) Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
 - 2) Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."
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- b. Genesis tells of the entrance of sin and its curse into the world (3:1-19); Revelation speaks of the end of the same (21:27; 22:3).
 - 1) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - 2) Revelation 22:3: "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."
 - c. Genesis reveals the commencement of Satan's activities (3:1-7); Revelation foretells the doom of Satan and his work.
 - d. Genesis tells of the taking away of the tree of life from man (2:9; 3:24); Revelation tells of the tree of life regained in heaven (22:2,14).
 - 1) Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."
 - 2) Genesis 3:24: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."
 - 3) Revelation 22:2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - e. Genesis describes the entrance of death (2:17; 5:5); Revelation speaks of the end of death (21:4).
 - 1) Genesis 2:17: "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - 2) Genesis 5:5: "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: **and he died.**"
 - 3) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - f. Genesis gives details of the beginning of sorrow (3:16); Revelation speaks of sorrow being banished (21:4).
 - 1) Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."
 - 2) Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
5. The correct interpretation of Revelation requires:
- a. That obscure passages be interpreted in the light of clear, literal passages.
 - b. A knowledge of the author, the date of its writing, the purpose it was intended to serve, and some information about the ones to whom it was initially addressed.

B. The Author of the Book of Revelation.

1. To one who believes the Bible, the authorship is not in question: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant **John**" (Rev. 1:1).
 - a. The message came from God, through Christ, by the angel, to John the apostle.
 - b. The process was inspired by the Holy Spirit: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. John the apostle was the human instrument through whom the Revelation was given to the saints (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). There was only one John so well known that he did not need to identify himself more.

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- a. Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
 - b. Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
 - c. Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - d. Revelation 21:2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
 - e. Revelation 22:8: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things."
3. Uninspired writers of the second and third centuries affirm that John was the author. These ancient scribes include Hippolytus, Nepos, Origen, Crypian, Methodius, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Melito, Theophilus, and Justin Martyr (Studies in the Revelation, Jerry Moffitt, p.21).
 - a. "Early tradition is unanimous in its opinion that the Apocalypse was written by John the apostle" (Robert Mounce, *ibid.*).
 - b. "The historical testimonies in favor of John's authorship are singularly distinct and numerous, and there is very little to weigh against them" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. 8, pp.1062f).
- C. The Purpose of the Book of Revelation.
1. John wrote to motivate the persecuted Christians of the first century to die for their Lord, if need be, in order to remain faithful to him.
 - a. In Revelation 2:10, he calls on the saints to be faithful unto [eis] death; to maintain their loyalty to Christ even though they would be slain for their obedient faith.
 - b. A careful reading of other key passages will also make this clear:
 - 1) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."
 - 3) Revelation 12:17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Revelation 13:10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."
 - 5) Revelation 14:12-13: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 6) Revelation 18:24: "And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
 - 7) Revelation 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
 - c. It was written to prepare the saints for the persecution to be brought upon the church by unbelieving worldly and religious forces.
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2. Why did Rome and others want to oppose and destroy Christianity?
 - a. Christianity was an illegal religion—from the Roman perspective.
 - b. It aspired to universal acceptance, calling on all men everywhere to accept it at the expense of other religions.
 - c. It was an exclusive religion, denying that any other religious system had the approval of God. Thus, as it spread, it uprooted other systems.
 - d. Christians were accused of all kinds of evil activity, which brought them opposition from those who believed the charges, including the officials of the Empire.
 - e. Christians refused to sanction every act of Rome in her wars.
 - f. Many of those who accepted Christianity were from the ranks of the poor and outcast, which would tend to besmirch the official view of the church.
 - g. They would not compromise the faith, thus refused to worship the emperor.
 - h. Their zeal led many to believe they were fanatics.
 - i. Christianity conflicted with the temporal interests of some. "For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre" (Acts 19:24-29).

D. Apocalyptic Literature.

1. The word "Revelation" of 1:1 is from the Greek word apokalupsis ("apocalypse").
 - a. The meaning of the word is "something not concealed; an uncovering, a laying bare, making naked." It is from the root word apokalupto meaning "to uncover, unveil."
 - b. The book uncovers (unveils) by the use of symbols, signs, imagery, and visions. It seeks to prepare the people for the persecutions that were then impending.
 - c. The apocalyptic method prevented the enemies of Christianity from understanding the message, while making known to the saints the "things which must shortly come to pass."
2. Apocalyptic literature is a special kind of writing.
 - a. Only Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah (and parts of other prophets) are apocalyptic in the Old Testament; Revelation is the only one in the New Testament.
 - b. A fairly large number of counterfeit books containing apocalyptic literature were written between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. These uninspired writings include the "Apocrypha" and "pseudepigrapha."
 - c. Inspired apocalyptic writings always came during a period of trial and suffering. Ezekiel was given during the period of captivity. This helps us to see why the information was recorded in the apocalyptic form.
 - 1) It protected the writer and the readers.
 - 2) It hid the message from enemies and revealed it to the friends of the truth.
3. There are comparisons to be drawn between prophecy and apocalyptic literature.
 - a. Both contain predictive elements, however:
 - 1) Prophecies are usually specific:
 - a) Cyrus was called by name about 150 years before his birth: "That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid....Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in

sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me" (Isa. 44:28, 45:1-5).

- b) A period of seventy years of captivity was predicted for sinful Israel: "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations" (Jer. 25:11-12; cf. Jer. 29:10).
- 2) The predictive element of the apocalypse is more general; it is not intended to deal with specific matters, but is broader in outlook, and often deals with longer periods of time.
- b. The scope of the apocalypse is greater.
 - 1) The prophet may deal with the present, then jump to far into the future and back again. This change may be discerned in the text.
 - 2) The apocalyptic writer combines present, past, and future all in one unit, with one sweeping motion.
- c. There is a difference in the form between the two styles of writing. Prophetic visions are descriptive in order to exhort, and not to predict. In prophecy, symbols are usually natural; in apocalyptic literature they are usually arbitrary (they do not follow a set rule).
- d. Barnes offers these comments about picture-symbols:
 - 1) A picture may be a correct representation of an event. It was thus among the Mexicans, who, by means of pictures, were enabled to give a correct representation of the landing of the Spaniards, and to convey to their monarch a correct idea of the number and character of the Spanish forces.
 - 2) The following extract from Dr. Robertson's "History of America," book v., section xii, referring to the landing of the Spaniards in Mexico, will illustrate this: "During this interview (an interview between Cortez and the ambassadors of Montezuma), some painters in the train of the Mexican chiefs had been diligently employed in delineating, upon white cotton cloths, figures of the ships, the horses, the artillery, the soldiers, and whatever else attracted their eyes as singular. When Cortez observed this, and was informed that these "pictures" were to be sent to Montezuma, in order to convey to him a more lively idea of the strange and wonderful objects now presented to their view "than any words could communicate," he resolved to render the representation still more animated and interesting, by exhibiting such a spectacle as might give both them and their monarch an awful impression of the extraordinary prowess of his followers, and the irresistible force of their arms." [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.].
4. Some characteristics of apocalyptic literature.
 - a. There is always a historical significance of a critical nature. The book of Revelation was written during the reign of a tyrant. It is important to know the history of the times described in order to see the events predicted.
 - b. The message is presented mainly through visions. These are often highly elaborate.
 - c. It deals chiefly with the character of the events predicted rather than with details. Isaiah 7:14 (a prophecy of Christ's virgin birth) deals with minute detail, but apocalyptic writers were intent on dealing with the character of the events described and not the close details.
 - d. Symbols are used extensively. The writer had to describe events that could not be put into plain words. Symbolism is a system in which qualities, ideas, and principles are represented, not plainly stated.
 - e. It has a dramatic effect. The meaning of the figure is to be discerned by viewing it in broad perspective—as a whole and not by trying to determine the meaning of each minute detail. One must not become so interested in the actor that he forgets the plot and its meaning (Ray Summers, p.26).
5. Numbers bear special meanings in apocalyptic literature.

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- a. “In Revelation the numbers three, four, seven, ten, twelve, and multiples of some of these have special significance. Throughout the book the following numbers are found: one-fourth, one-third, one-half, one, two, three, three and a half, four, five, six, seven, (eight is not found, though ‘eighth,’ ‘ninth,’ etc., are found in a sequence), ten, twelve, forty-two, one hundred forty-four, six hundred sixty-six, one thousand, one thousand two hundred, one thousand six hundred, seven thousand, twelve thousand, one hundred forty-four thousand, one hundred million, and two hundred million. The fractions, one-fourth, one-third, one-half, are used in a symbolic or figurative sense to designate a minor part of the whole under discussion” (Hailey, pp.41f).
 - b. The number **one** symbolizes uniqueness and unity.
 - c. The number **two** signifies strength (two men are stronger than one man; the testimony of two witnesses is stronger than the word of one).
 - d. The number **three** is a symbol of the divine (there are three divine beings in the Godhead).
 - e. The number **four** symbolizes the terrestrial environment in which men live. From the human perspective, the earth is a flat surface, having four corners; there are four cardinal directions. Four angels, four living creatures, and four horsemen are discussed. Four became a cosmic number in the thinking of the ancients (Summers, p.22).
 - f. The number **five** appears to have a special significance in the Scriptures. There were five wise and five foolish maidens (Matt. 25); five loaves were multiplied to feed a multitude of five thousand men (Matt. 14:15-21); Paul said he would rather speak five words that were understood than ten thousand words that could not be understood (1 Cor. 14:19). “In Revelation John seems to use the number five as a symbol of a short but definite period, as when he speaks of the locusts hurting men for five months (9:5, 10)” (Hailey, p.44).
 - g. The number **seven** occurs “twenty times more in this book than in all other books of the New Covenant combined” (Hailey, p.45). We are told about seven churches, seven spirits, seven lampstands, seven stars, seven seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven thousand slain, seven heads, seven crowns, seven plagues, seven golden vials, seven mountains, and seven kings. Christ spoke of forgiving an offending penitent brother seventy times seven times (Matt. 18:22). “From its repeated use in Scripture, we observe that almost beyond question ‘seven’ stands as the numerical symbol of the complete or perfect. If it is correct that three is the symbolic divine number and four the symbolic world or creation number, then a proper combination of these would be perfection, completeness, and fullness” (Hailey, p.45).
 - h. The number **six** falls one short of the perfect number seven, hence, can be classified as symbolic of that which is sinister. Six was to the Jews what thirteen is to many today. [However, there could be no evil connotations placed on the six wings of the beings of Revelation 4:8—three pairs of two wings could indicate the rapidity with which they were able to carry out their duties]. The number [666] of the evil beast (Rev. 13:18) is certainly indicative of a sinister power.
 - i. The number **ten** bespeaks of fullness and completeness. References are made in Revelation to ten kings, ten crowns, ten horns, and ten days.
 - j. The number **twelve** had special meaning in the Old Testament. Jacob had twelve sons; his descendants were formed into twelve tribes which constituted the nation of Israel. Levi, the priestly tribe, was not reckoned as part of the twelve tribes; this tribe was not given their own territory in Canaan, but was spread through the nation, especially near the tabernacle. The Mosaic system called for twelve precious stones to be mounted on the high priest’s breastplate (Ex. 28:15-21), twelve cakes of showbread were kept on the table in the tabernacle, and in Solomon’s temple, there were twelve metal oxen which supported the laver. In the New Testament order, Christ selected twelve men to serve as his apostles. Paul was a special case—he was sent especially to the Gentiles. The heavenly city has twelve gates, guarded by twelve angels, and is established upon twelve foundations. Many other cases of the use of twelve may be found in the Bible and in Revelation.
 - k. The number **three and a half** (or its equivalent) is found several times in the Scriptures and in this book. This time frame is used of periods of testing and hardship.
 - 1) During Elijah’s time, there was a severe drought that lasted for three and a half years (Jas. 5:17); Daniel spoke of an occasion when the saints would be in the hands of a certain beast for “a time and times and half a time” (Dan. 7:25—three and a half).
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- 2) The two witnesses were slain and their bodies lay unburied in the street for three and a half days (Rev. 11:9-11). This was a period of sorrow and hardship.
- 3) The woman who gave birth to a baby boy was forced into the wilderness for twelve hundred and sixty days (i.e., three and a half years).
- 4) “In every instance where three and a half is used, it is used of a time of oppression, opposition, trial, or persecution. This fact leads to the conclusion that, just as seven is the symbolic number for fullness, completeness, or perfection, so three and a half, a broken seven, is the symbolic number for a period of trial, persecution, famine, and oppression. The number is used in each instance symbolically, not literally” (Hailey, p.48).

E. The Methods of interpreting the Book of Revelation.

1. Futurist Method.

- a. This method claims that Revelation 4-22 is yet future. This is the method of the premillennialists. They think Revelation tells of Christ’s return and reign on the earth for a literal thousand years. These are extreme literalists: they do not believe in the symbolic. They claim to take the Bible word-for-word, but will spiritualize a passage to make it fit their views. From the same verse, they view one or more items as literal but one or more as figures. This they do arbitrarily.
- b. They think their method is the only one which keeps alive an active hope in the Lord’s return, but reject other Bible information about his return. They think that any other view will not promote active evangelism.
- c. This approach has most of the book dealing with things of the future. It is the method employed by most of the denominations, especially the dispensational and premillennial brands. They usually outline it in the following manner:
 - 1) Chapters 2-3 are interpreted spiritually to be a sweep of the entire history of the church from the days of Christ to his second coming. The dispensational premillennialists divide human history into seven ages and view the seven letters as a description of seven ages of church history.
 - a) It lists seven stages of human history. [This division is based on mere speculation]:
 - Innocence: from the Garden of Eden to the fall.
 - Conscience: from the fall to the flood.
 - Government: from the flood to the promise given to Abraham.
 - Promise: from the promise given to Abraham to the giving of the Law.
 - Law: from the giving of the Law to the sacrifice of Christ.
 - Grace: from the sacrifice of Christ to his return.
 - The Kingdom: from his return for the 1000-year reign to the end of time.
 - b) Dispensationalists say the 7 churches of Asia (Rev. 1-3) represent seven stages of church history in which the conditions of the 7 churches depicted the condition of the church during subsequent times. These are mere assertions—no proof exists for the conclusions these errorists have reached.
 - Ephesus: Duty Without Love: 33-100 A.D. (Rev. 2:1-7).
 - Smyrna: Poor and Persecuted, but rich: 100-312 A.D. (Rev. 2:8-11).
 - Pergamos: Compromise with the World-System: 312-590 A.D. (Rev 2:12-17).
 - Thyatira: The Great Counterfeit: 590-1517. (Rev. 2:18-29).
 - Sardis: Dead Orthodoxy: 1517-1750. (Rev. 3:1-6).
 - Philadelphia: Revival and Evangelism: 1750-1900. (Rev. 3:7-13).
 - Laodicea: Compromise and Apostasy: 1900-Tribulation. (Rev. 3:14-22).
 - 2) Chapters 4-18 are applied to the great tribulation which they think is still future.
 - 3) Chapter 19 is said to be the battle of Armageddon, a literal battle between the armies of Christ and Satan.
 - 4) Chapters 20-22 are thought to describe a literal one thousand year reign of Christ and the final judgment.
- d. There are some strong argument against the futurist view.

- 1) It does not allow Revelation to have a message to the Christians of the first century, the very ones to whom the book was addressed.
 - 2) It is inconsistent with the plain statement of Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants **things which must shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
 - 3) This theory is based on a materialistic concept of the kingdom, and turns the cross from its spiritual intent.
 - 4) Having assumed this view of Revelation, all other passages are forced to fit this mold. Thus they think Christ will reign over a literal, earthly kingdom for a thousand years, that Daniel 2:44 has not been fulfilled, that there will be two literal resurrections separated by one thousand years, in the so-called Rapture, etc. Those who must "prove" their doctrines, usually pervert the plain statements of other passages to fit their fanciful interpretation of this symbolic book.
 - 5) Revelation is made a Jewish book.
2. Continuous-historical Method.
- a. This view takes Revelation to be a symbolic forecast of the history of the church from the days of Christ to his second coming. Many of our brethren have taken this approach, including John T. Hinds in the Gospel Advocate series of commentaries.
 - b. It demands detailed interpretations, and makes Revelation prophesy in detail the apostasy of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - c. Some objections to this method.
 - 1) What happens when all the symbols have been used in application to historical events? What about the rest of time?
 - 2) Why should the applications be limited to the Western Roman Empire?
 - 3) It would be out of touch with the very ones it was addressed to. How could the division of the Catholic Church have any significance to the saints living in a time of persecution in the first century?
 - 4) It attaches undue importance to the apostasy of the Catholic Church. It is true that the Catholic heresy has brought many evils, but other counterfeit churches have done the same. It is true that the pope is the enemy of the truth, but so also are all the other false teachers. Revelation was not written especially to set forth arguments against error except in the principles taught incidentally.
 - 5) It stoops to details as absurd as the futurist. Some apply the thirty minutes of silence in heaven to seventy years in the history of Rome. The seven thunders are said to be the seven anathemas hurled at Luther by the pope.
 - d. The view had some favorable aspects. It avoids the literalism of the futuristic method. It foresees the eventual overthrow of evil.
 - e. An example of this method (from Barnes on Rev. 6-11):
 - 1) The first seal: fulfilled in the state of the Roman Empire from the death of Domitian (96 A.D.) to the accession of Commodus (180 A.D.).
 - 2) The second seal: from the death of Commodus (193 A.D.) to 210 A.D.
 - 3) The third seal: the time of Carcella, 211-241.
 - 4) The fourth seal: the time of Decius to Gallienus, 243-268.
 - 5) The fifth seal: fulfilled in the Roman Empire in the persecutions especially in the time of Diocletian, 284-304.
 - 6) The sixth seal: the invasions of the Barbarians, beginning in 365.
 - 7) The seventh seal: the seven trumpets. These trumpets are interpreted to describe historical events from the invasion of Alaric the Goth (395-410, the first trumpet), to the time of the Muhammadans (the fifth trumpet), to the time of the Turks (the sixth trumpet), to the final triumph of the church (the seventh trumpet).
3. Philosophy of History Method.
- a. This method views Revelation as the expression of great principles of God's government, whose operation may be observed in every age. It sees the book merely as the setting forth of the principles

which form the basis of God's dealing with man. The events recorded are not as important as the underlying principles they describe.

- b. Symbols of the book represent certain principles applicable to all ages equally. The wild beast of chapter 13 simply represents the secular powers which oppose the church when and where these powers arise.
 - c. The visions are compared to several reels of film showing the same thing from different viewpoints. There is no continuity on the book, according to this view.
 - d. There are some objections to this view.
 - 1) It removes the book too far from those to whom it was written, but not as far as do the futurist and historical methods.
 - 2) It confines the book to too narrow a channel. It asserts that the symbols refer to forces or tendencies, and that there are no specific prophecies or events in the book.
 - 3) This method is weakened due to the lack of connection between the book and its historical setting.
4. Preterist Method.
- a. This position maintains that the book was written for the people of John's day and was fulfilled in that general time period.
 - b. Some hold that it was written before the fall of Jerusalem and was fulfilled in that event. Others maintain that it was written later and was fulfilled in the conflict between the church and the Roman Empire.
 - c. This view is the very opposite of the futurist interpretation. The futurists say that none of the last 19 chapters have been fulfilled, while the preterists say all was fulfilled in the days of the Roman Empire.
 - d. This method sees Revelation as a book primarily for Christians during the days of the Roman Empire with only secondary or incidental application to those living today.
 - e. The left wing of preterist thought denies the inspiration of the book; the right wing includes Foy Wallace, Jr., whose commentary on Revelation will be noticed at various points of these notes.
 - f. There are some strong point of this method.
 - 1) It is true to the background of the book.
 - 2) It makes the book meaningful to those to whom it was first written.
 - 3) It gives room to universal application of the message of the book.
 - 4) It allows an interpretation that is consistent with the scriptural teachings throughout the New Testament.
 - 5) It has more good points than bad.
5. Historical Background Method.
- a. This method states that the author wrote primarily for the encouragement of the Christians of John's day. Therefore, a study of the book must include a close study of the conditions then prevailing in the church and in the world. The message of the book is seen to be one of hope and comfort to the suffering saints.
 - b. This view states that the book is written largely in symbolic language. A symbol represents something else, thus an interpretation must be made by which the meaning of the symbols are applied to certain events or abstract ideas.
 - c. It understands the book to use many Old Testament terms with New Testament meanings. References to the temple do not necessarily mean the literal Old Testament temple.
 - d. This view also states that one must grasp the visions as a whole without pressing the details too far. Christ's parables are often pressed too far, which results in obscuration of their true meaning. Many of the details of Revelation are for dramatic effect and have no special significance.
 - e. A fifth principle of this method is that it is addressed to the imagination. This aspect of the method is especially dangerous, for imagination can be very misleading and unreliable.
 - f. This method is sometimes identified with the Preterist Method, but with this difference: this method says Revelation has a pertinent message for each generation.
6. Spiritual Method.
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- a. This method seeks to interpret the book spiritually.
 - b. It claims that Revelation figuratively discusses the conflict between good and evil, and refers to no specific historical events.
7. Contextual Method.
- a. This is a cross between the Philosophy of History and Historical Methods.
 - b. It is probably the most accurate and reliable method.
 - c. This method is a mixture of principles of the other methods.
- F. The Date Revelation was Written.
1. The date is important for it can determine the interpretation made.
 - a. If one holds to the early date (64-68 A.D.), then one has the basis for applying the symbols to the fall of Jerusalem.
 - b. If it can be established that it was written at the late date (95-96 A.D.), then the application cannot be made to the overthrow of Jerusalem.
 - c. The true exposition of Revelation depends, in no small degree, on knowing something about the existing conditions at the time of writing. Thus, what effect these circumstances and conditions would naturally have on the first readers' understanding of the book is significant (i.e., what would the Revelation signify to the first recipients?). The kingdom of Christ is spiritual, thus future wars and political intrigue hundreds of years in the future would not likely be the thrust of the book.
 - d. If the latter date view is held, then the things signified had nothing to do with events then past (the destruction of Jerusalem, the persecutions of Nero, etc.). The interpretation of the symbols would exclude these. The early date view would at least admit the possibility Jerusalem's overthrow could be included.
 2. Evidence supporting the early date (64-68 A.D.)
 - a. The title page of the Syriac Version indicates the early date. This is the earliest direct version; it was made in the second century. On the title page is found this inscription: "The Revelation which was made by God to John the evangelist in the island Patmos, into which he was thrown by Nero Caesar." This would place the date about 68 A.D. [This does not necessarily mean that the book was written while Nero was on the throne, for we do not know how long John was exiled on Patmos; if he was there for several years, it could have been later, during the reign of Domitian, that the visions were given. Also, it is possible that the title page is incorrect]. Eusebius says John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian.
 - b. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8). The reference to Jerusalem ("where our Lord was crucified") indicates that the city was still standing. [However, the fact that the book is filled with symbols would at least suggest that the reference to Jerusalem could be taken as symbolic, thus the literal city of Jerusalem may not be the one indicated].
 - c. Part of Revelation occurs during the reign of the sixth Roman Emperor. "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev. 17:10-12).
 - 1) The first six kings were Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The one which was "not yet come" was Domitian. Late date advocates say Revelation was written during Domitian's reign; early date supporters say it occurred during Nero's reign, the sixth ruler.
 - 2) Some say that Julius must be omitted from the list, thus making Domitian the emperor at the time of Revelation. Caesar was the official title of the Roman Emperors and was derived from the first emperor (Julius Caesar) who was the most famous of them all. [See the comments under the text for a discussion of these facts].
 - 3) Nero's reign extended from 54-68 A.D. Between these dates the book of Revelation was given, according to the early date advocates.
 - 4) Some have tried to escape this conclusion by trying to qualify certain vice-regents and mock rulers as genuine emperors and place them in the above-mentioned line, but this would also eliminate
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Domitian and void the argument for the Domitian-period date.

- 5) It assumes that the kings of Rome are meant.
- d. Revelation 2:19,25: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first....But that which ye have already hold fast till I come." This admonition to faithfulness was directed to those who comprised the church at Thyatira then; they were told to remain loyal "till I come." This could not be the second coming [they would not live that long], for the statement implies they would still be alive and subject to temptation until this "coming." The most natural interpretation seems to be as in Matthew 24:30, where a representative coming of Christ is described: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The coming was representative, in the awesome events of the time when Judaism was overthrown. The advocates of the early date view find several parallels between Matthew 24 and Revelation:
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MATTHEW	REVELATION
Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."	Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
Matthew 24:21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."	<p>Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."</p> <p>Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."</p> <p>Revelation 7:14: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."</p>
Matthew 24:2: "And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."	<p>Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."</p> <p>Revelation 18:10: "Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."</p> <p>Revelation 18:21: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."</p>
Matthew 24:16-21: "Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."	Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."
Matthew 24:7-8: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."	Revelation 18:8: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."
Matthew 24:34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."	Revelation 11:15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

- e. Only seven congregations were in Asia, a province in Asia Minor. Later, presumably there were many more congregations.
 - f. The character of the Greek and Hebraistic expressions are said to indicate the early date. [But with the Holy Spirit giving the message, using the vocabulary of John, this argument is insignificant, and does not disprove the late date or prove the early date].
 - g. The number "666" fits Nero: *neron kesar* (Nero Caesar). But others argue that it can be made to fit the family name of Titus Vespasian (*Teitan*), *Lateinos* (the Roman Empire), and the antichrist (*annoume*, to deny). In recent years some have tried to get Hitler out of it.
3. Evidence supporting the late date (95-96 A.D.)
- a. The primary evidence seems to be a statement made by Irenaeus who lived in the second century. He was writing about the mystic number given in Revelation 13:8, when he said: 'If it were necessary to have his name distinctly announced at the present time it would doubtless have been announced by him who saw the apocalypse; for it was not a great while ago that (it or he) was seen, but almost in our own generation, toward the end of Domitian's reign.' Brother Wallace says that the object of was seen is ambiguous, and may be understood to refer to either John or the Apocalypse (p.25). [However, it could be in reference to the book of Revelation, thus does not disprove the late date].
 - b. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Victorinus, Jerome, Eusebius, Hippolytus, and Hegesippus are said to have supported the late date view.
 - c. In Revelation 2 and 3, there is a spiritual decline noted in Ephesus, Sardis, and Laodicea that would have taken several years to develop. But see Galatians 1:6-9, where Paul expresses shock that the brethren in Galatia had so quickly begun to apostatize. [However, the Galatians had only begun the downward plunge; the warning in Revelation 2 is very strong, suggesting the Ephesians were on the brink of utter rejection, while the Galatians were still in good standing with the Lord].
 - d. A new Sect, the Nicolaitans, had developed, which is not mentioned in the rest of the New Testament.
 - e. It is claimed that the church at Smyrna may not have existed until after 60-64 A.D. It appears to be well-established in Revelation.
 - f. The Laodiceans are said to be rich, but the city was destroyed by an earthquake about 60-62 A.D. If Revelation was written during the late sixties of the first century, the city would not likely have had time to re-acquire its wealth, but thirty years later it could have.
 - g. It is asserted that emperor worship was not started until Domitian, which is said to support the late date.
4. Many other arguments are given in support of each of these two views, and many are given in rebuttal to them. All of the arguments can be controverted; none of them appear to establish the date indisputably. To accept the early date does not bind us to the conclusions that some have reached in applying the whole book to the destruction of Jerusalem. In this material, we have accepted the late date. The crux of the interpretation rests on the identity of the "Babylon" of Revelation. Some assert that Jerusalem is meant. It is more likely that it is the Roman Empire (with Rome as its heart and the emperor as its head).
- a. The Babylon of Revelation is one which ruled the world, a fact that does not fit Jerusalem. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem or Judaism has caused all men to go into sin? Was there any time when the Jews ruled the world (as did the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire)? This fact discourages the view that Revelation pertains primarily to the Jewish nation and its overthrow at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.
 - b. Revelation 14:8-11: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Which does this passage more logically fit—Jerusalem or Rome?

G. Miscellaneous Information.

1. There were several persecutions against the church by Rome.
 - a. Nero—67 A.D.
 - b. Domitian—81 A.D.
 - c. Trajan—108 A.D.
 - d. Marcus Aurelius —162 A.D.
 - e. Severius—192 A.D.
 - f. Maximus—235 A.D.
 - g. Decius—249 A.D.
 - h. Valerian—257 A.D.
 - i. Diocletian—303 A.D.
2. Five reasons why pagan Rome fell (Edward Gibbon).
 - a. Rapid increase of divorce with the undermining of the sanctity of the home which is the basis of society. Laws had to be passed to force people to marry. Some women counted their age by the number of husbands they had had.
 - b. Higher and higher taxes. Public money was spent on bread and celebrations. This was done to keep the lower classes contented.
 - c. The mad craze for pleasure. Sports became more exciting and more brutal.
 - d. The building of gigantic armaments, while the real enemy was within: the decadence of the people.
 - e. The decay of religion.
3. Causes for the fall of Rome (Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1944, pp.665-670).
 - a. Importation of foreigners in great number who later gained the majority.
 - b. Pestilence, revolution, and war.
 - c. Moral decay: sex ran riot in freedom while liberty decayed.
 - d. Christianity: undermined and exposed the weak underpinnings of a corrupt empire.
 - e. Economic causes: farms were abandoned when the tillers of the soil thought they could live as well on the public dole as from farming.
 - f. The Roman army was manned by foreigners who were not committed to the Empire's best interests.
4. The conditions within the Roman Empire during the first century.
 - a. During the first century, Rome was at the peak of its greatness.
 - 1) Its boundaries extended from the African desert to the British Isles; from the Euphrates to the Atlantic Ocean.
 - 2) The Mediterranean ["middle of the terrain"] was in the center of the Empire. "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters....And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. 17:1,15).
 - 3) To the people then, the Roman Empire was everything; it was all the civilized world.
 - b. Several things held the Empire together.
 - 1) It had a well-organized army.
 - 2) It was built on conquest and commerce. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all" (Rev. 18:11-14).

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- c. It was a time of great wealth and extravagance for many. Summers (pp.90f) gives several items which illustrate the point.
 - 1) Palaces of Rome were extremely beautiful.
 - 2) Caligula is reported to have spent \$500,000 on one banquet; a Roman citizen gave a dinner in Nero's honor and spent \$16,000 on roses alone.
 - 3) Slaves were used not only to serve masters, but also to show off the owner's riches. Many slaves were more cultured than their masters.
 - 4) The fashionable women of Rome had a different slave to apply each shade of color on their faces. Caligula's wife was reputed to wear emeralds valued at \$2,000,000.
 - d. There were only small middle class groups.
 - 1) People were extremely rich or poor; there was no need for hired labor—servants did the work.
 - 2) The idle poor streamed into the city to be supported by the dole system (welfare).
 - 3) The government provided circuses to keep people occupied, and from causing trouble.
 - e. As a result of these conditions, morality plummeted (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
 - 1) Teachers were inconsistent. Seneca preached against riches but amassed \$12,000,000 in a short time.
 - 2) Crime multiplied.
 - 3) Nero was homosexual and openly practiced this sin. By the time he was 25, already "he had murdered his innocent wife and his adopted brother, and had dyed his hands in the blood of his mother. Yet even these enormities seem to have disgusted the Romans less than his prostitution of the imperial purple, by publicly performing as a musician on the stage and a charioteer in the circus" (Conybeare & Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p.742).
 - 4) The sanctity of marriage was lost.
 - 5) Christians were warned not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed into the image of Christ.
 - a) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - f. Emperor worship was characteristic of the first century. Roman rulers were deified.
 - 1) Domitian strictly enforced this evil practice. Each year the people were to show their loyalty by sacrificing to the emperor. Certificates were issued to worshipers of the Emperor which they were required to show when questioned. Avid worshipers wore marks on their arms and foreheads.
 - 2) There was an organized group in each city [Oraefactus Urbi] which was empowered to enforce worship of the emperor.
 - 3) "Domitian delighted in being looked upon as divine and in being so worshiped. To the Christian such homage was idolatry and an utter denial of faith in Christ. To the Romans the refusal to worship the emperor was a sign of disloyalty to the State and an act of treason. Emperor worship was forced upon the Christians as a test of their loyalty to the State. At first Christians were called upon to perform the ceremonies of loyal service and worship to the emperor—the placing of a pinch of incense upon the altar. To refuse was disloyal; to agree was to prove that one was not a Christian....As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the 'praefectus urbi' for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for punishing people in the various cities over a province. The group with the greatest authority was the concilia composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and
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punished in various ways all who refused. Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty. All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom" (Summers, pp.92f).

- 4) The Romans had no reason to fear any rebellion on the part of faithful Christians against their Empire, for they were directed to support the government, pray for its rulers, and follow its laws.
 - a) Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - b) 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
 - g. Christians were reduced to poverty (cf. Rev. 13). They lost their positions, their homes, and their wealth.
5. The fall of Rome.
- a. "Externally the fall of the Western Roman Empire was hastened by the expansion and migration of the Hsiung-nu, or Huns, in northwestern Asia. Defeated in their eastern advance by Chinese armies and the Chinese Wall, they turned westward, and about A.D. 355 reached the Volga and the Oxus. Their pressure forced the Sarmatians of Russia to move into the Balkans; the Goths, so harassed, moved again upon the Roman frontiers. They were admitted across the Danube to settle in Moesia (376); maltreated there by Roman officials, they revolted, defeated a large Roman army at Adrianople (378), and for a time threatened Constantinople. In 400 Alaric led the Visigoths over the Alps into Italy, and in 410 they took and sacked Rome. In 429 Gaiseric led the Vandals to the conquest of Spain and Africa, and in 455 they took and sacked Rome. In 451 Attila led the Huns in an attack upon Gaul and Italy; he was defeated at Chalons, but overran Lombardy. In 472 a Pannonian general, Orestes, made his son emperor under the name of Romulus Augustulus. Four years later the barbarian mercenaries who dominated the Roman army deposed this 'little Augustus,' and named their leader Odoacer king of Italy. Odoacer recognized the supremacy of the Roman emperor at Constantinople, and was accepted by him as a vassal king. The Roman Empire in the East would go on until 1453; in the West it had come to an end" (Durant, Caesar and Christ, pp.669f).
 - b. "The brief reigns of Publius Helvius Pertinax (193) and Didus Severus Julianus were followed by that of Lucius Septimius Severus, who ruled from 193 to 211; his short-lived dynasty included the emperors Caracalla, who reigned from 211 to 217; Heliogabalus, from 218 to 222; and Alexander Severus (208-35), from 222 to 235. Septimius was an able ruler, but Caracalla was noted for his brutality and Heliogabalus for his debauchery. Caracalla, who in 212 granted Roman citizenship to all freemen living in the Roman Empire, is said to have so decreed in order to impose on them the taxes to which only citizens were liable. Alexander Severus was noted for his wisdom and justice.
 - 1) "After the death of Alexander Severus, a period ensued during which great confusion prevailed in Rome and throughout Italy. Of his 12 successors who ruled in the next 33 years, nearly all came to a violent death, usually at the hands of the soldiers who had established them on the throne. A

- temporary revival of peace and prosperity was brought about by the Illyrian emperors, natives of the area now known as Dalmatia, namely, Claudius II, surnamed Gothicus, who in a short reign (268-70) drove back the Goths; and Aurelian, who, ruling from 270 to 275, was victorious over both the Goths and the Germans and defeated and captured Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, who had occupied Egypt and Asia Minor. For a brief period the unity of the empire was restored. Aurelian was followed by a rapid succession of historically unimportant emperors, of whom six ruled in the 9-year period before the accession of Diocletian, also an Illyrian, who ruled from 284 to 305.
- 2) "An able administrator, Diocletian introduced many social, economic, and political reforms. He removed the political and economic privileges that Rome and Italy had enjoyed at the expense of the provinces. He sought to regulate rampant inflation by controlling the prices of provisions and many other necessities of life, and also the maximum wages for workers. To provide a more efficient administration, uniform throughout the empire, he initiated a new system of government by selecting a capable colleague, Maximian, who, like Diocletian, took the title of Augustus. He further reinforced this dual control by associating with him and Maximian two able generals, Galerius (242?-311) and Constantius, whom he proclaimed as Caesars, below the two Augusti in rank but with the right of succession to their posts. Diocletian himself had control of Thrace, Egypt, and Asia; to Maximian he gave Italy and Africa, to Constantius Gaul, Spain, and Britain, and to Galerius the Danubian provinces. This system created a stronger administrative machinery but increased the size of the already huge governmental bureaucracy, with the four imperial courts and their officials proving a great financial burden on the resources of the empire.
 - 3) "Diocletian and Maximian abdicated in 305, leaving the new Augusti and Caesars involved in a conflict that resulted in civil wars, not ended until the accession of Constantine the Great in 312. Constantine the Great, who had previously become Caesar of the army in Britain, overcame all rivals and reunited the Western Empire under his rule. In 314 the defeat of Licinius (270?-325), emperor in the East, made Constantine the Great sole ruler of the Roman world. Christianity, which had risen during the reign of Augustus and spread during that of Tiberius and of later emperors, had triumphed over Diocletian's attempts to crush it by persecution, and the politic Constantine the Great, adopting it as his own religion, made it also the official religion of the Roman Empire, an event of far-reaching significance. The other important event of Constantine the Great's reign was the establishment of a new seat of government at Byzantium, which was refounded as Nova Roma and subsequently called Constantinople (now Ystanbul). The death of Constantine the Great in 337 was the signal for civil war among the rival Caesars, which continued until Constantine the Great's only surviving son, Constantius II, succeeded in 353 in reuniting the empire under his rule. He was followed by Julian, known as the Apostate because of his renunciation of Christianity, who ruled from 361 to 363, and by Jovian (331?-64?), who ruled in 363-64. Thereafter the empire was again split in two. Theodosius I, the Great, was Eastern emperor on the death of the Western emperor Valentinian II in 392. Three years later, when Theodosius died, the empire was divided between his two sons, Arcadius (337?-408), emperor of the East, and Honorius (384-423), emperor of the West.
 - 4) "During the last 80 years of the Western Roman Empire the provinces, drained by taxes levied for the support of the army and the bureaucracy, were visited by internal war and by barbarian invasions. At first the policy of conciliating the invader with military commands and administrative offices succeeded. Gradually, however, the barbarians established in the east began to aim at conquest in the west, and Alaric I, king of the Visigoths, first occupied Illyricum, whence he ravaged Greece. In 410 he captured and sacked Rome, but died soon after. His successor, Ataulf (reigned 410-15), drew off the Visigoths to Gaul, and in 419 a succeeding king, Wallia, received formal permission from Honorius to settle in southwestern Gaul, where at Toulouse he founded the Visigothic dynasty. Spain, already divided between the Vandals, the Suebi, and the Alans, was in like manner formally made over to those invaders by Honorius, whose authority at his death in 423 was nominal in the western part of the continent. His successor, Valentinian III, witnessed the conquest of Africa by the Vandals under their king Gaiseric and the seizure of Gaul and Italy by the Huns under their famous leader Attila. The Vandals, having taken Carthage, were recognized by Valentinian in their new African kingdom in 440, and the Huns, the rulers of central and northern Europe, confronted the emperors of east and west alike as an independent power. Attila marched first on Gaul, but the Visigoths, being Christian and already half-Romanized, opposed
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him out of loyalty to the Romans; commanded by Flavius Aëtius, they signally defeated the Huns at Chalons in 451. The following year Attila invaded Lombardy (Lombardia) but was unable to advance further, and he died in 453. Two years later Valentinian, the last representative of the house of Theodosius in the west, was murdered. The 20 years after the death of Valentinian saw the accession and the overthrow of nine Roman emperors, but the real power was General Ricimer (died 472), the Suebe, called The Kingmaker. The last Western Roman emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was overthrown by the mercenary Herulian leader Odoacer (circa 435-93), who was proclaimed king of Italy by his troops. The history of Rome would subsequently merge with that of the papacy, the Holy Roman Empire, the Papal States, and Italy” (Encarta, 1999).

- c. A period of about three hundred years was involved in the fall of Rome, a time that is longer than the total existence of some nations.
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REVELATION 1

A. Revelation 1:1: The Source of Revelation.

1. Verse 1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
2. The message originated with God, was passed by Christ through an angel to the apostle John. The Holy Spirit was directly involved in the revelation.
 - a. Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."
 - b. Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - c. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
3. Revelation has a three-fold purpose.
 - a. To outline the fortunes of the church in the near future.
 - b. To bolster the sagging faith of Christians.
 - c. To teach Christians how to pay for their faith.
4. The first verse contains the title, the source, and the time framework (in part) of the Book. It was given by Christ to his servants through the apostleship of John.
5. The book was designed to show some things which "must shortly come to pass." The statement emphasizes the swiftness, speed, and rapidity with which the things indicated were to occur.
 - a. The word translated "shortly" is found also in 22:6, Acts 25:4, and Romans 16:20. The same word is translated "quickly" in Acts 12:7; 22:18, and Revelation 2:5; it is translated "speedily" in Luke 18:8.
 - 1) Luke 18:8: "I tell you that he will avenge them **speedily**. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
 - 2) Acts 12:7: "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up **quickly**. And his chains fell off from his hands."
 - 3) Acts 22:18: "And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee **quickly** out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."
 - 4) Acts 25:4: "But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart **shortly** thither."
 - 5) Romans 16:20: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet **shortly**. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."
 - 6) Revelation 2:5: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee **quickly**, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."
 - 7) Revelation 22:6: "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must **shortly** be done."
 - b. "Shortly" is a relative term that must be understood in the light of the context. It can mean immediately or within a reasonably short period of time. The nearness of the things is what is stressed, and the quickness with which they are to transpire. This statement (with 1:3) shows conclusively that the events described were not then thousands of years in the future. Many today claim that nearly all the things in the book are yet future—even to our time. Shortly shows this is manifestly false.
6. The word "signified" is a highly important word. The things revealed were signified, communicated by means of signs or symbols. While there are some references to literal entities in the book (e.g., 1:9,11), the book is filled with figurative and symbolic language. The same word appears also in the following places:
 - a. John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, **signifying** what death he should die."

- b. John 18:31-32: "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, **signifying** what death he should die."
 - c. John 21:18-19: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, **signifying** by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me."
 - d. Acts 11:27-28: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and **signified** by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar."
 - e. Compare Acts 21:10-11: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."
7. Many modern expositors try to make every horn and hoof literal; hence the 1,000 year reign, the 144,000, etc., are made literal. Verse one issues a warning against such a literal interpretation. The language of the book is couched in symbols, a code language which the Lord's people could comprehend, but which their enemies could not.

B. Revelation 1:2-3: The Message of Revelation is the Word of God.

- 1. Verse 2: "Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."
 - a. John states that he bore record of the word of God, of the testimony of Christ, and of the things he saw. These things comprise the contents of Revelation.
 - b. The testimony of Christ and the things which were revealed to John are the word of God; the book of Revelation is another inspired component of God's revealed word.
 - c. It is significant that at the very first of this book, a bold claim to inspiration is made in behalf of the book; and at the end, a strong word of warning is issued against changing its inspired contents: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19).
- 2. Verse 3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."
 - a. The first of seven beatitudes is given here. The others are located in 14:13, 16:15, 19:9; 20:6, 22:7, and 22:14. Here, a state of blessedness is pronounced upon the one who reads and understands the words of this prophecy, and keeps the things recorded therein.
 - 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

- b. Note the he that reads and they that hear. This probably refers to the practice of publicly reading the Scriptures. The reader and hearer alike are blessed. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (Jas. 1:25).
 - 1) Luke 4:16: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."
 - 2) Colossians 4:16: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea."
- c. Those who read and hear the words of prophecy are blessed. The phrase "words of prophecy" affirms the contents of the book to be inspired. To prophesy is to speak for God, with his approval and under his control. The prophetic message might relate to the past, the present, or future.
 - 1) Ephesians 3:5: "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."
- d. The time is at hand: the woes, the fears, the battles, and the hopes were all in the near future to the time John penned these words. This is given as strong motivation for heeding the things revealed.

C. Revelation 1:4-8: The Salutation.

- 1. Verse 4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
 - a. The information was initially addressed to the seven congregations in the province of Asia: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.
 - b. The gospel accounts contain announcements of the coming church; Acts shows its beginning and development; the epistles show the growth of, and admonitions to, the church; Revelation shows somewhat of the future of the church.
 - c. Once again it is affirmed that John is the inspired writer. But the real source of the message is "him who is, and who was, and who is to come." The Eternal God of heaven is this great personage. There has never been a time when God did not exist, and there will never be a time when he will cease to be. The same truths also describe the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.
 - d. The source of the message is also attributed to the seven Spirits which are before the throne of God. The seven Spirits is obviously a unique reference to the Holy Spirit. The number seven is used in the book to indicate fullness and completeness.
 - 1) This could not represent the seven churches since the greeting would be from the churches to the churches, in that case.
 - 2) In this context, the logical reference is to the Holy Spirit. Taken with the next part of the statement, the greeting is from the entire Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).
- 2. Verse 5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"
 - a. The salutation is also from Jesus Christ. He is mentioned third in the list here since it is he who is to be described in detail in the following verses.
 - b. He is called "the faithful witness" because he cannot be false in any way or matter. This description of the Redeemer is calculated to give comfort to the saints in their forthcoming struggles. He will remain faithful to them and will reward their faithfulness.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - 2) Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - c. He is called "the first begotten of the dead." He was not the first one raised from the dead, but he was

- the first one to be resurrected to die no more. Lazarus was resurrected from the tomb, but he faced death again.
- d. He is called “the prince of the kings of the earth.” His authority is greater than earth’s mighty rulers. "Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. 89:27). What a comfort this truth could be to the persecuted Christians! Those rulers who were the cause of their problems would be brought down by Christ in due time, and must themselves give account of themselves to Christ in the Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46).
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
 - e. The last clause of the verse is a plain statement that is not to be explained away. Christ loved us and cleansed us from the guilt of our sins in his own blood.
 - 1) Zechariah 13:1: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) Hebrews 9:22: "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."
 - 5) Hebrews 10:12: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."
 - f. Three facts are given here and in the next verse: he loved us; he loosed us from our sin; and he made us a kingdom and priests. The ASV has loosed in place of washed in the KJV. These two terms have slightly different connotations, but have the same practical meaning. One who is washed from his sins has been cleansed; one who is loosed from his sins has been freed from sin’s guilt.
3. Verse 6: “And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”
 - a. Christians have been made to be kings and have become priests. The ASV uses the word kingdom in the place of kings. We are not kings, but we are citizens in his kingdom; we comprise his kingdom. Collectively, we are his kingdom; individually, we are priests. Even the premillennialists admit that Christians are priests now, but they deny that the kingdom is presently in existence. However, this verse affirms that we are even now both priests and a kingdom; therefore, the kingdom has come.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 3) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."
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- 5) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
 - b. Two duties of Old Testament priests were to mediate and teach. They mediated for the people by offering sacrifices. Each Christian is a priest and offers his worship directly to God through Christ; and each Christian has the obligation to teach others what he has learned from God's word.
 - 1) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:15: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."
 - c. We are a kingdom and priests unto God the Father. God is our Father because he is the Father of our Lord, and we belong to the Lord. The Fatherhood of God is emphasized in the New Testament. We are his children because he has adopted us into his spiritual family.
 - 1) Matthew 23:8: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:16-18: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - d. To God be the glory and dominion for ever and ever. The definite article the is in the original, which indicates the universality of God's glory and power—all glory belongs to him.
4. Verse 7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
 - a. Some sound brethren have thought that this is not the second coming of Christ, but rather refers to his coming in judgment against the Roman Empire, or against Judaism. Some make this verse parallel with Revelation 18.
 - b. But this verse is in a literal context (verses 4-8). It is as literal as the statement in verse 5 that we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. Furthermore, the description given here fits perfectly with the picture of the second coming given elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - 1) Matthew 24:27: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - 2) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:10-11: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,"
 - c. Every eye shall see him, even those who pierced him. All kindreds (tribes) of the earth will wail
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because of him—due to the awesomeness of his coming and of the Judgment. The universality of his coming is plainly evident in the statement. Those who were involved in his crucifixion will be aware of his coming; all tribes of the earth will wail. The greatness of that day will be beyond any other day or event in all of human history! If we could only convince the world of the reality of this truth!

5. Verse 8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - a. This is a description of Christ. He is Alpha and Omega—the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This figure of speech is immediately followed with the more literal depiction—he is the beginning and the ending. He was present at the beginning of time and he will be present at the end of time.
 - b. What was said in description of the Father in verse four is given here in reference to the Son. Christ is, he has ever been, and will always be; there has never been a time when he did not exist; there will never be a time when he will not exist. Christ is not a created being, but is as divine and eternal as is the Father.
 - 1) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 2) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - 4) Revelation 1:17-18: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 5) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - c. This emphasis on Christ's dominion and eternal being was needed. The Romans on some occasions would march in the streets holding up two banners inscribed with "Lord God Emperor" and "Lord Christ" (Pledge, Class Notes). This was done to pressure the populace to choose between the two. It would intimidate some to shun Christ and to worship the emperor. This passage would encourage the saints to refuse to compromise.
 - d. It is hard to distinguish between God and Christ except in the fact that they are separate individuals and are different in authority. God has primary authority; Christ has been given all authority in all matters pertaining to the kingdom. Christ's authority is delegated authority.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - e. Christ is referred to in the verse as the Almighty. This uproots the Watchtower doctrine that makes him a second-rate god. There is no degree of Deity.

- 1) Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
- 2) John 20:28: "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
- 3) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

D. Revelation 1:9-11: John's Commission.

1. Verse 9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - a. The apostle continues his introductory statement by describing his relationship with the brethren and his present condition. He says he is their brother and companion. He is joint-partaker with them in the persecutions they were suffering.
 - 1) Tribulations are external pressures. The external circumstance under which Christians of various generations live differ, but the internal circumstances remain unchanged. We face varying degrees of opposition but inwardly we all are challenged to be faithful. The same internal battles have to be fought by every Christian regardless of the outward problems.
 - 2) Tribulation is like a winepress crushing juice from grapes; it exerts constant pressure, with no let-up. But what appears to destroy really is helpful. Crushing wheat results in flour; tribulations help us to be better servants of God. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:2).
 - b. He is their brother and companion in the kingdom. If one is John's spiritual brother, he is in the kingdom also; and if in the kingdom, he is a brother to John. This is another scriptural affirmation that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has been established. Therefore the premillennial view obtained from a perverted interpretation of Revelation 20 is seen to be false.
 - c. He was in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Two uses are made of the Lord's spiritual kingdom in the New Testament:
 - 1) In reference to the church.
 - a) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 2) In reference to heaven.
 - a) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c) 2 Peter 1:11: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - d. He was on the isle of Patmos, a small island in the Aegean Sea, 24 miles off the southwestern coast of Asia Minor, about 70 miles southwest of Ephesus, 40 miles from Miletus. It was a rocky, uninviting island about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. Pliny, a writer from ancient Rome, says Roman authorities sometimes banished criminals to Patmos. Eusebius says John was exiled to Patmos during the reign of Domitian.

- 1) "Pátmos, island, Greece, one of the most northerly of the Dodecanese (Greek dhodhek nisos, 'twelve islands') group. It lies close to the coast of Turkey in the Aegean Sea and has an area of about 34 sq km (13 sq mi). This small island is crescent-shaped, dry, and volcanic in origin. About 2500 people live on Pátmos growing grapes, olives, tomatoes, wheat, and other crops. The main town, also called Pátmos, is in the southeast. Overlooking the town is the fortified monastery...founded...in 1088. It houses a library of rare Christian books, some of them dating from the 6th century. According to tradition, the author of the biblical Book of Revelation, John the Evangelist, wrote it in a cave partway down the mountain from the monastery in AD 95. The cave is now in the Convent of the Apocalypse and is a place of pilgrimage....For hundreds of years in the Middle Ages the island was virtually deserted, but it passed into Venetian and then Turkish occupation from 1537 to 1912. It was ruled by Italy after 1912 and became part of Greece in 1947" [Encarta].
 - 2) Patmos: "Turkish island of the group Sporades, Southwest of Samos, mentioned once in the Bible, Rev 1:9, 'I, John....was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (dia ton logon tou theou kai ten marturian Iesou). The island is 10 miles long, and about 6 broad along the northern coast. It is for the most part rocky. The highest part is Mount St. Elias, which rises to a height of over 800 ft. As in Greece, and in the adjacent mainland of Asia Minor, the land is treeless. Near the city of Patmos there is a good harbor. A famous monastery, St. Christodulos, was founded on the island in 1088. Near this is a thriving school, attended by students from all parts of the Archipelago. The population of the island numbers 3,000, almost entirely Greek. The ancient capital was on an isthmus between the inlets of La Scala and Merika. Many ruins can still be seen. The huge walls of Cyclopean masonry, similar to those at Tiryns, attest their great age. In Roman times Patmos was one of the many places to which Rome banished her exiles. In 95 AD, according to a tradition preserved by Irenaeus, Eusebius, Jerome and others, John was exiled here—in the 14 th year of the reign of Domitian—whence he returned to Ephesus under Nerva (96 AD). The cave in which he is said to have seen his visions is still pointed out to the traveler. Only a small part of the once valuable library in the monastery of St. Christodulos is left. Just 100 years ago (1814) Mr. E.D. Clark purchased here the manuscript of Plato which is now in the Bodleian Library, the celebrated Clarkianus, a parchment written in the year 895, and admittedly the best of all for the 1 st of the 2 volumes into which the works of Plato were divided for convenience. Patmos is mentioned by Thucydides (iii.33), by Pliny (NH, iv.23), and by Strabo (x.5)" [J. E. HARRY, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by BibleSoft].
- e. John was on the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. He was there because of (dia) the word and testimony, not in order to (eis) preach it. This suggests that he was banished there because he had been preaching the gospel. Compare:
- 1) Revelation 6:9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."
 - 2) Revelation 20:4: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
2. Verse 10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."
- a. John continues to give the background for the message. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. "In the Spirit" is a reference to being under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) Revelation 4:2: "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne."
 - 2) Revelation 17:3: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The scene he beheld was visionary; he had to be under the influence of inspiration to see it.
 - 3) Revelation 21:10: "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Again, the scene was visionary; he had to be under the influence of inspiration to see it.

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- b. The text here is parallel to certain statements in Ezekiel.
- 1) Ezekiel 3:12, 14: "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place....So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me."
 - 2) Ezekiel 8:3: "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy."
 - 3) Ezekiel 11:24: "Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me."
 - 4) Ezekiel 37:1: "The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones."
 - 5) Ezekiel 43:5: "So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house."
- c. Being in the Spirit is a reference to being under the control of the Holy Spirit, empowered to see and learn certain divine revelations, and inspired to record them (Mark 13:11; 1 Cor. 2:9-14; Acts 10:9-48; 2 Cor. 12:1-12; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16). By the power of the Spirit, John saw and heard the things recorded.
- 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."
 - 3) Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."
 - 4) Acts 10:9-48: "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before
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me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

- 5) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."
- 6) 2 Corinthians 12:1-12: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
- 7) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

- d. John states that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. The text does not further identify the day. The Sabbatarians claim it is the Sabbath, but the Sabbath ended when Christ died on the cross. We can know with certainty that the Lord's day is not the Sabbath.
- 1) Only the Israelites and God were involved in the Sabbath Law:
 - a) Exodus 31:13: "Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you."
 - b) Deuteronomy 5:3: "The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day."
 - 2) The Law of the Sabbath was not revealed until Israel came to Sinai. Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham did not observe the Sabbath; no one else under Patriarchy observed the Sabbath. The Law of the Sabbath pertained only to the Jews during the time the Law of Moses was in effect.
 - a) Nehemiah 9:13-14: "Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant."
 - b) Ezekiel 20:10-12: "Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. And I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them."
 - 3) The Law of the Sabbath has been removed.
 - a) Romans 7:1-7: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
 - b) Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."
 - c) Colossians 2:14-17: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross....Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."
 - d) Hosea 2:11: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts."
 - e) Amos 8:2,9: "And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people of Israel; I will not again pass by them any more....And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day:" Compare Matthew 27:45: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour."
 - e. The term "Lord's" (kuriakos, belonging to the Lord) occurs only here and 1 Corinthians 11:20, where the Lord's supper is named. Both the supper and the day belong to him. The supper is the communion we eat with Christ and the day is the one that pertains exclusively to Christ. Ancient Christian writers dating from Ignatius (35-110 A.D.) taught that the Lord's day was the first day of the week. As

significant as their uninspired record is, the inspired testimony of the New Testament places the matter beyond question.

- 1) Jesus was raised from the dead on the first day of the week:
 - a) Mark 16:9: "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."
 - b) Luke 24:1: "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them."
 - c) Luke 24:13: "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs."
 - d) Luke 24:21: "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done."
 - e) Luke 24:46: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:"
- 2) The Holy Spirit came in power upon the apostles on the first day of the week:
 - a) Leviticus 23:15-16: "And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD." The Day of Pentecost always fell on the first day of the week.
 - b) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- 3) The church began on the first day of the week (Acts 2; Lev. 23:15-16).
- 4) The church met on the first day of the week for worship:
 - a) Acts 20:7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
- 5) The gospel was preached in its fullness for the first time on the first day of the week (Acts 2).
- 6) In the light of these facts, which day of the week has a peculiar and special connection to the Lord? It could only be the first day of the week (Sunday).
- f. The "Lord's day" should not be confused with "the day of the Lord" in the Old Testament. The latter expression refers to a day of judgment and retribution.
- g. John reports that he heard a great voice akin to a trumpet. The sound came from behind him. The voice is described as a trumpet due to its clarity and loudness. Trumpets have been used to call attention. Others heard sounds in connection with supernatural experiences.
 - 1) Exodus 19:16: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled."
 - 2) Exodus 19:20: "And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up."
 - 3) Ezekiel 3:12: "Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place."
 - 4) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

3. Verse 11: "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."
 - a. The voice spoke an intelligible and intelligent message, not gibberish. Christ is identified in the following verses as the spokesman. John is instructed to write what he sees and hears in a book (a scroll).
 - b. The phrases "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last" and "in Asia" are omitted from the ASV.
 - c. The information is to be sent to the seven churches in Asia; the seven are named. On the map, their locations describe a rough circle. A personal note is addressed to each of these seven congregations, but the entire book is addressed to the seven collectively—and the seven congregations represent the entire body of Christ.

E. Revelation 1:12-20: The Majesty and Glory of Christ is Described.

1. Verse 12: "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks."
 - a. As John turned at the sound of the voice, he saw the visionary scene depicting the glorious Christ in the midst of seven golden candlesticks (lampstands). The candlesticks are identified in verse 20 as representing the seven congregations.
 - b. John recognized this great one as Christ. The Lord is described as "like unto the Son of man" (verse 13). He had seen Christ in the transfiguration scene (Matt. 17:1-5), had been with the Lord after his resurrection, and had seen the Lord ascend back to heaven (Acts 1:9-11).
2. Verses 13-14: "And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire."
 - a. Christ is pictured as being in the midst of the candlesticks, perhaps indicating that they were arranged in a circle. Being in their midst shows his closeness with them; he knows their struggles, problems, strong points, sins, and needs. He is their controlling force and sustaining power.
 - 1) Colossians 1:17: "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 2) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 3) Hebrews 1:3: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."
 - b. He is spoken of as the Son of man. Daniel spoke of him under the same description. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (Dan. 7:13).
 - c. The clothing with which he was dressed are signs of high rank in ancient oriental custom. His head and his hair were as white as wool and snow. The description emphasizes his purity. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1:18).
 - d. His eyes were as a flame of fire, which denotes his penetrating, all-seeing knowledge. He knows us all (2 Tim. 2:19); all of our affairs, thoughts, motives, words, and deeds are open to him (Heb. 4:13). His eyes can show various emotions (Mk. 3:5; 10:21; Lk. 22:61).
 - 1) Mark 3:5: "And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."
 - 2) Mark 10:21: "Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me."
 - 3) Luke 22:61: "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from

- iniquity."
- 5) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
3. Verses 15-16: "And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."
 - a. The original text uses a Greek term [burnished brass, ASV] which is found only here and in Revelation 2:18. The exact metal is unknown, but some think it was a mixture of metals similar to brass or bronze.
 - b. The point is clear: when he comes in judgment his feet will enable him to trod underfoot all who oppose him.
 - 1) Acts 2:34-36: "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:25: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."
 - 3) Revelation 14:14-20: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."
 - c. His voice was as the sound of many waters, which gives a picture of authority, power, and majesty. Think of the mighty roar of ocean waves crashing upon a rocky shore; also of the mighty sound of Niagara Falls (cf. Ezek. 1:24; 43:2; Dan. 10:6). On the other hand, his voice can be one of tenderness and comfort.
 - 1) Ezekiel 1:24: "And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings."
 - 2) Ezekiel 43:2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory."
 - 3) Daniel 10:6: "His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude."
 - d. He is pictured as having seven stars in his right hand and a two-edged sword proceeding from his mouth. The seven stars are identified in verse 20 as the angels of the seven churches. The sword represents his word.
 - 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - e. His countenance is compared to the brightness of the noontime sun.
 - 1) Matthew 17:1-5 "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth

- them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
- 2) Luke 9:28-35: "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 4. Verse 17: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."
 - a. The glorified Christ dominates the book of Revelation. Notice the effect this vision of Christ had on John. If one fails to see that Christ dominates everything in Revelation, he is not apt to grasp the great message of the book. John is charged to write the thing he has seen. The scene described here introduces and sets the stage for the things yet to be unfolded. It has a message for saints of all time.
 - b. John fell down as if dead after seeing this wondrous scene. Imagine standing before Christ, which we must all do in the Judgment. Felix trembled when Paul preached on the Judgment (Acts 24:25).
 - c. The Lord expressed compassion to John by reaching out and putting his right hand on the apostle. Christ comforted and encouraged him by this tender act and by the words he spoke: "Fear not; I am the first and the last." He had no beginning and will have no end. He will still be around at the end of time to condemn the ungodly and to reward the righteous.
 - d. There is no reason for a faithful saint to be fearful or unsettled. What if one is faced with the choice of denying Christ or being slain? What if one has the daily danger of being denounced as a Christian, and be imprisoned or put to death as a result? "Fear not!" What are a few moments, or even many years, of persecution compared with eternal salvation? "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).
 5. Verse 18: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - a. Christ had lived on earth, had been put to death on the cross, and was alive forevermore. It was only his human body that died; his eternal being has never ceased to live and be operative. He is spoken of as the firstborn from the dead (1:5). He affirms his resurrection here.
 - b. The Lord states that he has the keys of hell (hades) and death. Having keys indicates having authority and privilege. Someone giving you the keys to his car indicates you have the authority to drive it. When someone is given the "key to the city," he has received honorary authority in that city. Peter and the other apostles were given the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18; 18:18) which they used on the Pentecost day of Acts 2.
 - c. Christ has the keys of hades and death. Hades and sheol (an Old Testament word) are both used to designate the place of the dead. Christ's body went into the tomb at his death, and his spirit went into hades (Lk. 23:43; Acts 2:27,31). When the time came for his resurrection, the gates of hades could not retain his spirit (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 2:14; John 10:17-18). The meaning of this to us is obvious.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

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- 2) 1 Corinthians 15:26: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
- d. Death claims the physical body and Hades is the place to which the soul (spirit) goes when the body and spirit are separated (Jas. 2:26; Eccl. 12:5,7). The body and the soul (or spirit) are different. The references to Hades being emptied of its inhabitants in the events of Revelation makes untenable the position that Christ released all from Hades at his ascension, and that all who die from that time onward go directly to their eternal destiny. Death will be ended at the Second Coming of Christ and those in Hades will be brought forth by the resurrection into the Judgment. Hades will not be vacated until the end of time.
6. Verse 19: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."
- a. John is commanded to write the things he has seen, what he is now seeing, and the things which will be revealed to him in the forthcoming visions. Things that are written are not nearly as likely to become obscured, twisted, or forgotten as things which are passed on by word of mouth only.
- b. The things John is to write have to do with the fortunes of the church in the then past, present, and future.
7. Verse 20: "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."
- a. The mystery of the vision is revealed. A mystery is something that cannot be known without more information.
- 1) Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
- 2) Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- b. The seven stars depict the angels of the seven churches. An angel is a messenger, whether heavenly or human: "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger [same word that is translated angel elsewhere] before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee" (Mark 1:2). Many interpretations are offered, including the eldership, the preacher, a guardian angel, a representative of the church, and the personification of the church. It may be impossible for us to know the specific entity to which the Lord referred. [Note: the doctrine of guardian angels is not taught in the Scriptures].
- c. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches addressed.
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REVELATION 2

The Letters to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira

A. Introductory information about the 7 churches.

1. Their spiritual conditions.
 - a. Ephesus—a cold church.
 - b. Smyrna—a poor and suffering church.
 - c. Pergamos—an impure church.
 - d. Thyatira—church with false teaching.
 - e. Sardis—a dead church.
 - f. Philadelphia—the open-door church.
 - g. Laodicea—a lukewarm church.
2. Descriptions given of the Author.
 - a. Ephesus—he holds the 7 stars and walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks.
 - b. Smyrna—he is the first and last, the one who was dead and lives again.
 - c. Pergamos—he holds the two-edged sword.
 - d. Thyatira—his eyes of fire and feet of brass.
 - e. Sardis—he has the 7 spirits of God and the 7 stars.
 - f. Philadelphia—the holy and true, and has the key of David.
 - g. Laodicea—the amen, the beginning (the author) of all creation.
3. The appraisal of the churches.
 - a. Smyrna and Philadelphia are only good.
 - b. Ephesus, Pergamos and Thyatira are both good and bad.
 - c. Sardis had only a faithful remnant.
 - d. Laodicea is condemned—no commendation is given.
4. Promises made to the churches: (1) made to the whole church but the individuals are responsible; (2) the promises are conditional (“to him that overcometh”).
 - a. Ephesus—the tree of life.
 - b. Smyrna—a crown, and not hurt by the second death.
 - c. Pergamos—manna, and a stone with a new name.
 - d. Thyatira—authority, and the morning star.
 - e. Sardis—white garments; name in the book of life, and that name confessed before the Father.
 - f. Philadelphia—pillar in God’s temple, security, and 3-fold inscription (name of God, name of New Jerusalem, and name of Christ),
 - g. Laodicea—fellowship, and a throne.
5. Threats if they do not repent.
 - a. Ephesus—remove the candlestick.
 - b. Smyrna—none.
 - c. Pergamos—make war against them.
 - d. Thyatira—cast into a bed of affliction, tribulation and death.
 - e. Sardis—come as a thief.
 - f. Philadelphia—none.
 - g. Laodicea—spew thee out of my mouth.

B. Revelation 2:1-7: The Letter to Ephesus.

1. The city of Ephesus was prominent in that day with a population estimated at 300,000. One of the seven wonders of the ancient world was located there—the Temple of Diana (Artemis). This temple served as a center for idol worship, as a bank, and a business (silversmiths). The morality of the pagans was nearly

- non-existent. Paul experienced much evil treatment at the hands of the Ephesian pagans.
- a. 1 Corinthians 15:32: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9: "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:8-9: "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."
2. The history of Ephesus goes back to about one thousand years before the coming of Christ. At one time long ago, its population is estimated to have been about three hundred thousand, but today only a little village remains.
 - a. "The great Ephesian temple of Artemis (loosely identified with Diana) was ranked by ancient writers as one of the seven wonders of the world, its importance deriving not merely from its architectural beauty and size, but from the status which the temple management enjoyed as 'bankers of the whole world.' It has been said that the temple of Diana was the equivalent in ancient pagan society to the Bank of England in modern times. The principal industry of Ephesus was that of manufacturing and selling images" (Coffman, p.373). The temple was about eighty thousand square feet in size, or about four times the size of the Parthenon in Greece.
 - b. "Ephesus, one of the 12 cities of Ionia (an ancient Greek district on the western coast of Asia Minor), located near modern Ýzmir, Turkey. As a port city at the mouth of the Cayster (modern Küçük-menderes) River, it was a major departure point for trade routes into Asia Minor. Known in antiquity for its sacred shrines, notably a famous temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) to the goddess Artemis, or Diana, the city was also an important center of early Christianity. Probably founded in the 11th century BC by Ionian Greeks, Ephesus was conquered by the Cimmerians in the 7th century BC; by Croesus, king of Lydia, in the 6th century; and soon after, by Cyrus the Great, king of Persia. Later it was a tributary of Athens, but it sided with Sparta against Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431-404BC). Sparta ceded it to the Persians, who were driven out by Alexander the Great in 333BC. Under this Macedonian rule Ephesus flourished, and it was briefly renamed Arsinoë. The city passed to Roman rule in 189BC and remained an important commercial center....Having been destroyed by the Goths in 262, Ephesus, although rebuilt, never regained its former splendor. Under the Byzantine Empire it declined, and its harbor silted up; it was abandoned in the 14th century" (Encarta, 1999).
 - c. The New Testament contains information about the church located there [See Acts 18:24—20:2; 20:17-38; Ephesians; 1 and 2 Timothy].
 3. Verse 1: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."
 - a. The author is described as in chapter one. The seven stars depict the angels of the seven churches. An angel is a messenger, whether heavenly or human (Mark 1:2). Many interpretations of the identity of the angels are offered, including the eldership, the preacher, a guardian angel, a representative of the church, and the personification of the church. It may be impossible for us to know the specific entity to which the Lord referred as "the angel of the church." [The doctrine of guardian angels is not taught in the Bible].
 - b. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches addressed. The Lord's close association with (and knowledge of) his people is emphasized. This fact offers comfort and caution to thoughtful members.
 4. Verse 2: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."
 - a. Christ, being in their midst, knew their situation perfectly. "I know thy works, and thy labor..." He knew what they were doing, and knew their struggles. They had toiled hard—the word indicates the work that produces perspiration. They had been loyal in many things.
 - b. I know thy works—a statement made when Christ was as far from the church as he is today. It is both a fearful and comforting expression.
 - 1) He knows if a congregation is faithfully upholding the truth (1 Tim 3:15). What if you were the

- only Christian; what if we were the only congregation—would the truth be safe in our hands?
- 2) He knows if a congregation is performing its mission: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV). Paul gives a summary of the work of the church in this passage (Eph. 4:12):
 - a) Edifying the members.
 - b) Helping the needy.
 - c) Converting the lost.
 - 3) He knows the true spiritual condition of a congregation. He knows if a congregation is like a city on a hill or if it is a candle under a basket: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain" (Phil 2:14-16; cf. Matt. 5:13-16).
- c. I know thy patience. They had refused evil and tried the spirits.
- 1) Passages:
 - a) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - b) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - c) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 2) They had had plenty of instruction since Paul, Apollos, and Timothy had worked there, a letter was written to them by Paul, and Christ sends this brief message to them. Despite these instructions the congregation and the city went out of business. Did the congregation completely lose its preserving influence? "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).
 - 3) At the time of this writing they were continuing to bear up under their burdens. They had not tolerated those who were evil; they had tried those who claimed to be apostles and proved them to be false.
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 5) 1 Thessalonians 1:5: "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake."
 - 6) Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 7) 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - 8) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
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5. Verse 3: "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." ["And thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary" (ASV)].
- a. He continues to compliment their strengths and accomplishments. They had not given up.
 - 1) Galatians 2:5: "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - b. The congregation had a history of activity in the Lord's work. They had borne hardships in serving their Master; they had endured faithfully, in the face of tribulation; they had not grown weary in their service.
 - c. The danger of growing weak is very real. These brethren had begun to falter, as the next verse shows. But at this point in the letter, the Lord is commending them for their past faithfulness. It was necessary for Paul to exhort saints to continue in their faithfulness:
 - 1) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"
 - 2) Galatians 6:9-10: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:12-15: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."
6. Verse 4-5: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."
- a. Having commended them appropriately, he now turns to correcting their weakness—they had left their first love. Outwardly perhaps there were no apparent signs of a spiritual malady, but the Great Physician knew of an internal illness. They continued to labor and endure, and did not tolerate false teachers, and practiced discipline; but something was missing: they were doing their duty but without the love or the degree of love they formerly had. When love for Christ wanes, love for brethren will also fade. Without fervent love for Christ, for service, worship, Bible study, godliness, prayer, soul-winning, etc., we do not measure up to the Lord's standards.
 - b. The pattern for their restoration was simple: remember, repent, and return to the first works. The rich, cultured and sinful nature of Ephesus had affected the saints. They had done what millions today deny is even possible—to fall away from Christ.
 - c. This fall would be fatal unless they repented. Godly sorrow produces repentance which in turn produces a reformed life.
 - 1) Matthew 3:8: "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 3) Acts 26:20: "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."
 - d. Unless they repented the Lord would come and remove their candlestick—would take away their identity as Christians. The church in Ephesus is not in existence today. The Lord must have destroyed it. When this happened the city was without the light of Christian influence, and perhaps this is the cause of the city itself being abandoned. The once rich city is now in ruins—only a village remains.
7. Verse 6: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."
- a. This is a further commendation: they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans which Christ also hated. There are many things the Bible says God hates.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 12:31: "Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the
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- LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."
- 2) Deuteronomy 16:22: "Neither shalt thou set thee up any image; which the LORD thy God hateth."
 - 3) Psalms 5:5: "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity."
 - 4) Proverbs 6:16-19: "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren."
 - 5) Psalms 11:5: "The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth."
 - 6) Psalms 45:7: "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
 - 7) Amos 5:21: "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." Compare: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them"(Isa. 1:14).
 - 8) Zechariah 8:17: "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD."
 - 9) Hebrews 1:9: "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."
- b. Because God and Christ love righteousness, they hate wickedness. "The child of God who does not hate wickedness does not love righteousness, however strongly he may boast of his love" (Hailey, p.123).
- 1) Psalm 119:128: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way."
 - 2) Psalm 119:104: "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
- c. Little is known about the Nicolaitans. We know that they flourished at Ephesus and Pergamos, but we know nothing definite about their origin, peculiar doctrines, and their later history.
- d. NICOLAITANS: "A sect or party that arose in the apostolic period of the church, mentioned twice by name in the book of Revelation (Rev 2:6,15). In the former passage it is said, to the credit of the church in Ephesus, that she shared in the feelings of the Lord concerning the Nicolaitans, viewing them with the hatred they deserved. The charge is made that some in Pergamos (v. 15) held to teachings of the Nicolaitans, who are compared to those who 'hold the teaching of Balaam,' etc. 'The general voice of antiquity accuses them of holding the lawfulness of eating things offered to idols, and of mixing in and encouraging idolatrous worship; and as they are charged with denying God to be the creator of the world, and attributing its existence to other powers, they could unquestionably, on such grounds, permit themselves so to act, and thus far it is probable that the accusation is not ill-founded. The community of women was another doctrine which they are said to have adopted, and their conduct seems to have been in the highest degree licentious' (Imperial Bible Dictionary, s.v.). The origin of the sect will perhaps never be ascertained with certainty" [The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
8. Verse 7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
- a. This command is repeated in each of the seven letters. It is similar to a statement frequently made by Jesus in his ministry.
 - 1) Matthew 11:15: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 2) Matthew 13:9: "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 3) Matthew 13:43: "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - 4) Mark 4:23: "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

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- 5) Luke 14:35: "It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - b. The Lord taught the need to take heed how we hear and what we hear.
 - 1) Mark 4:24: "And he said unto them, Take heed **what** ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."
 - 2) Luke 8:18: "Take heed therefore **how** ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have."
 - c. Hearing is personal and individual; each is to hear what the Spirit says to all the congregations. Notice that the information given in Revelation is attributed to the Spirit, but the source is the Father, through Christ, by the angel, to John—and on to men.
 - d. To him that overcometh: this is stated in each of the letters. The very statement indicates the necessity of diligent effort in order to be saved ultimately.
 - 1) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 2) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - e. The tree of life denotes that which man lost by sin in Eden which is now restored in Christ.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - 3) Ephesians 2:12-16: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."
 - 4) Revelation 22:2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - f. Paradise is a Persian word meaning "pleasure park." The word is used in other passages (see below). The context determines which pleasure park is meant.
 - 1) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." [This was the location of the Lord's spirit between his death and resurrection].
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:4: "How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." [This is also the place of comfort and rest in the Hadean Realm].
 - 3) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." [This Paradise is Heaven].
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- g. Our going to Paradise depends on our overcoming; the Lord will not do it for us.
 - 1) Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - 2) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

C. Revelation 2:8-11: The Letter to Smyrna.

1. Verse 8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."
 - a. The description of Christ is given: he is the first and the last; he was dead but is now alive. "...I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Rev. 1:11).
 - b. This declares his eternal nature.
 - 1) Psalms 90:11: "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath."
 - 2) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - 3) John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."
 - 4) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 5) Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - 6) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - c. He was put to death by man (and for man) but death could not keep him.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) Acts 2:23-24: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."
2. Verse 9: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."
 - a. Smyrna was the second great city in Asia (behind only Ephesus). It had a population then of about 200,000; today (known as Izmir, Turkey) it has about two million inhabitants. It is on the coast of the Aegean Sea, about 40 miles north of Ephesus. In John's day it was a center of emperor worship for the surrounding area; it had special favors granted to it by Rome because of its loyalty.
 - b. He knew their works, tribulation, and poverty. Though their fair city had much of which to boast, Christ was the real source of hope for the saints. They had undergone tribulation, were poverty-stricken (perhaps due to persecution), but had continued to serve the Lord faithfully. Living the Christian life was a genuine sacrifice for them. They were poor in material goods, but rich in faith and good works.
 - c. He knew of the blasphemy of those who claimed to be Jews. The real Jew today is a faithful Christian (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:16). [The name Jew means "praised"]. Unbelieving Jews had put the Lord to death, and were now opposing the Lord's church in Smyrna. Christ knew of their evil. These wicked

- ones were not God's people, but were of the synagogue of Satan. They are no longer God's people.
- 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
- d. To wear the name of Israel ("Prince of God"—Gen. 32:28) or Jew ("Praised") was an honor; but it carried with it an obligation to live up to those noble names. To wear the name Christian is the highest of honors we may have on earth, and with it comes the greatest obligations one can have here.
- 1) Acts 11:26: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:16: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."
3. Verse 10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
- a. Christ has not promised an easy road to his followers.
 - 1) Luke 6:26: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."
 - 2) John 14:18-21: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."
 - b. He warns them of even more suffering to come. The devil, working through his devious disciples, would cast some of them into prison. They would have tribulation for a certain period of time, the length of which may not be ascertainable. **Ten** is said by scholars to be a number indicating completeness. If so used here, the point made is that the brethren would undergo the full measure of persecution. The reference to **ten days** may mean a relatively short period of time.
 - c. The main emphasis of the verse is the closing clause: be faithful unto death. Be faithful even to the point of death. Polycarp was from this congregation; he died as a martyr in 155 A.D.
 - d. The reward of the faithful is the crown of life.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:24-25: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible."
 - 2) Colossians 1:5: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 4) James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."
 - 5) 1 Peter 5:4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."
 - 6) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."
4. Verse 11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
- a. The promise is to those who overcome (the tribulations, temptations). To give up before the end is to lose the reward.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the

end shall be saved."

2) Galatians 5:7: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"

b. The overcomers are told that they will not be hurt by the second death. This is equivalent to saying that they will have eternal life in heaven, and will not go to Gehenna.

D. Revelation 2:12-17: To the Church at Pergamos.

1. Historical information about Pergamos.

a. This city was situated about 60 miles north of Smyrna. It was renowned for its great library of 200,000 books, second only to the great library of Alexandria, Egypt. When it was denied papyrus by Egypt, it developed a better material for writing—parchment. The name “parchment” (pergamena) is derived from the name of the city.

b. It had a medical center where Galen, one of the most famous physicians of ancient times, lived and practiced medicine.

c. The people worshipped Aesculapius [identified with the Greek god Asclepius], the god of medicine under the form of a serpent. They also worshipped Zeus, Apollos, and Aphrodite. Idolatry and immorality flourished in Pergamos, but some unknown saint had planted the Lord’s church there. The brethren were being opposed.

d. “Asclepius, in Greek mythology, the god of medicine. He was a son of the god Apollo and Coronis, a beautiful maiden of Thessaly (Thessalia). Angry because Coronis was unfaithful to him, Apollo killed her and tore the unborn Asclepius from her womb. He later sent Asclepius to the centaur Chiron to be raised. Asclepius learned all that Chiron knew about the art of healing and soon became a great physician. Because Asclepius threatened the natural order by raising people from the dead, the god Zeus killed him with a thunderbolt. The cult of Asclepius was centered in Epidaurus, but it was popular throughout the Greco-Roman world. The sanctuaries of Asclepius functioned as health resorts, where therapeutic regimens such as exercise and diets were prescribed. The most important practice associated with the cures was the ritual of incubation, in which afflicted people slept within a temple or sacred enclosure in the hope that the god would come to them in dreams and prescribe cures for their illnesses” (Encarta).

e. “Aesculapian Snake, common name for a harmless snake that symbolizes the Greek god of medicine, Asclepius. Asclepius is often pictured with his staff, around which is entwined one of these snakes. Aesculapian snakes were kept in the combination hospital-temples built by the ancient Greeks and, later, by the Romans in honor of the god. They are found today in southern Europe, as well in warmer areas of Germany and Austria” [Encarta, © 1993-2003 Microsoft Corporation].

2. Verse 12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."

a. The Lord is described as one having the sharp two-edged sword.

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

2) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

3) Revelation 1:16: "And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

b. Who could hope to oppose him successfully? He does not directly fight against his enemies with a literal sword, and his servants are not so to do. The kingdom of Christ is not defended by carnal weapons, but with word of God.

1) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

2) 2 Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."

3) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness

- and wrath of Almighty God."
- c. Converts are not to be made by force but through preaching the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 11:13-14: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 3. Verse 13: "I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."
 - a. Christ had some commendations to offer. He was fully aware of their works and their situation. They served Christ in an evil place—where Satan had his throne and headquarters. This would make living the Christian life and serving Christ extremely dangerous. Compare living in an Arab land today.
 - b. Even so, they still held fast to the Lord's name. "Name" here stands for all that pertains to Christ and his cause.
 - c. They had not denied his faith. The faith of Christ is not his personal faith but his gospel. Paul had kept [guarded, defended] the faith.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."
 - 2) Colossians 1:22-23: "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - 3) Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - 4) Galatians 1:23: "But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."
 - 5) Ephesians 4:5: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."
 - 6) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 7) Jude 3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."
 - d. They had remained loyal even during the time when Antipas was slain. So at least one of their number had been martyred. We are given no further details about Antipas and how he was slain.
 - e. So wicked was this city that the Lord could refer to it as Satan's dwelling place (the devil's den). But the saints still clung to the Lord's name and had not renounced the gospel.
 4. Verse 14-15: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate."
 - a. However, there were a few things that needed to be remedied. He had a few (but not many) things against them—the faithful element was too tolerant of the error some among them held.
 - b. Some of them held to the doctrine (teachings) of Balaam (Num 22-24). The Moabite king (Balak) hired Balaam to curse Israel; God would not permit him to do so. But Balaam wanted the money Balak promised, thus he advised the king to use his Moabite women as enticing bait before the Israelite men.
 - 1) These men were thus led into idolatry and immorality. God was obliged to punish Israel for this sin (24,000 were slain); in this fashion Balaam was able to cause a curse to be brought upon Israel.

- "Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD" (Num. 31:16; cf. Num. 25).
- 2) Balaam was also slain: "And they slew the kings of Midian, beside the rest of them that were slain; namely, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam also the son of Beor they slew with the sword" (Num. 31:8).
 - c. The ungodly element in the church at Pergamos followed this same kind of scheme to corrupt the faithful saints.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."
 - 2) Jude 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
 - d. Balaam's scheme included getting the people involved in idolatry (eating meat offered in idol worship—used as part of idol-worship). So this unfaithful element tried to entice the faithful into idol worship. The eating of meat that had been used in idol worship as in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 was allowed as long as it did not go against one's own conscience or did not cause some weaker brother to violate his conscience. But eating of things offered to idols is forbidden here. In the former case some of the meat which had been used in idol worship was offered for sale in the marketplace. A Christian could buy and eat this meat. But in the latter case the eating was done in connection with the idol worship itself, and was thus wrong.
 - e. Balaam's scheme led Israel into fornication; so the ungodly members at Pergamos tried to lure the other saints into this sin. Fornication was extremely widespread and common in first century society. "Everyone is doing it, they all can't be wrong, so let's not be odd-balls! We will be able to reach more people if we will only conform a little. After all, we aren't living in the middle-ages anymore!" Unless Christians joined in with the popular lifestyle, they were outcasts. But consider the following truths:
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."
 - 4) Colossians 2:20-22: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"
 - f. They also had allowed the Nicolaitans to gain and maintain a foothold in the congregation. It appears that this error was different from the doctrine of Balaam because his use of the word "also" (vs. 15). In Ephesus the brethren hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans, but here in Pergamos these evil men were tolerated by the otherwise faithful members.
 5. Verse 16: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth."
 - a. Repent: this is addressed to the ones who were tolerating the false teachings; they were not directly involved in the sins denounced but tolerated those sins in their midst.
 - 1) 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

- 2) The sin of the "faithful" element was in tolerating evil and not disciplining those guilty of it. Christ will not overlook compromise.
 - b. Three groups needed to repent: the Balaamites, the Nicolaitans, and the saints who practiced neither error but tolerated those who did.
 - c. If the repentance demanded was not forthcoming, the Lord promised to come unto the church quickly and fight against "them" (those who were practicing error). If the brethren did not repent of their unlawful toleration the Lord would come and deal with the errorists.
6. Verse 17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."
 - a. The Lord gives the standard admonition to hear these words. The promise given to him who overcomes is the privilege of partaking of the hidden manna and to receive the white stone with the new name inscribed thereon.
 - b. The hidden manna—a reference to the rich eternal blessings in heaven which are otherwise described as eating of the tree of life (2:7; 22:2,14). This food was unseen by them (and us) but will be amply supplied in heaven. "But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark 10:30).
 - c. The white stone—a metaphor of some kind, but the meaning is doubtful. The reference may be to an ancient custom: those acquitted in a trial were informed of it by a white pebble dropped into an urn; those judged guilty had a black pebble dropped into the urn. Those of the church who overcome are therefore said to receive the white stone of eternal justification and vindication.
 - d. The new name would be one known only to the recipient. It is therefore entirely without profit to speculate as to the precise name indicated. White and new suggest something pure and fresh—and precious.

E. Revelation 2:18-29: The Letter to Thyatira.

1. Historical information on Thyatira.
 - a. This city was situated about halfway between Pergamos and Sardis. It was a city of labor guilds which caused problems for our brethren. To pursue a trade demanded membership in a guild; but each guild had its own idol. Guild members ate meals together during which the idol was honored, and the entertainment was sometimes immoral. A failure to participate and conform meant loss of job.
 - b. The ISBE give the following on Thyatira:
 - 1) "Thyatira was a wealthy town in the northern part of Lydia of the Roman province of Asia, on the river Lycus. It stood so near to the borders of Mysia, that some of the early writers have regarded it as belonging to that country. Its early history is not well known, for until it was refounded by Seleucus Nicator (301-281 BC) it was a small, insignificant town. It stood on none of the Greek trade routes, but upon the lesser road between Pergamos and Sardis, and derived its wealth from the Lycus valley in which it rapidly became a commercial center, but never a metropolis. The name 'Thyatira' means 'the castle of Thya.' Other names which it has borne are Pelopia and Semiramis. Before the time of Nicator the place was regarded as a holy city, for there stood the temple of the ancient Lydian sun-god, Tyrimnos; about it games were held in his honor. Upon the early coins of Thyatira this Asiatic god is represented as a horseman, bearing a double-headed battle-ax, similar to those represented on the sculptures of the Hittites. A goddess associated with him was Boreatene, a deity of less importance. Another temple at Thyatira was dedicated to Sambethe, and at this shrine was a prophetess, by some supposed to represent the Jezebel of Rev 2:20, who uttered the sayings which this deity would impart to the worshippers.
 - 2) "Thyatira was specially noted for the trade guilds which were probably more completely organized there than in any other ancient city. Every artisan belonged to a guild, and every guild, which was an incorporated organization, possessed property in its own name, made contracts for great constructions, and wielded a wide influence. Powerful among them was the guild of coppersmiths; another was the guild of the dyers, who, it is believed, made use of the madder-root instead of shell-fish for making the purple dyestuffs. A member of this guild seems to have been Lydia of

Thyatira, who, according to Acts 16:14, sold her dyes in Philippi. The color obtained by the use of this dye is now called Turkish red. The guilds were closely connected with the Asiatic religion of the place. Pagan feasts, with which immoral practices were associated, were held, and therefore the nature of the guilds was such that they were opposed to Christianity. According to Acts 19:10, Paul may have preached there while he was living at Ephesus, but this is uncertain; yet Christianity reached there at an early time. It was taught by many of the early church that no Christian might belong to one of the guilds, and thus the greatest opposition to Christianity was presented.

- 3) "Thyatira is now represented by the modern town of Ak-Hissar on a branch line of the Manisa-Soma Railroad, and on the old Roman road 9 hours from Sardis. Ak-Hissar is Turkish for 'white castle,' and near the modern town may be seen the ruins of the castle from which the name was derived. The village is of considerable size; most of the houses are of mud, but several of the buildings erected by Caracalla are still standing, yet none of them are perfect. In the higher part of the town are the ruins of one of the pagan temples, and in the walls of the houses are broken columns and sarcophagi and inscribed stones. The population of 20,000 is largely Greek and Armenian, yet a few Jews live among them. Before the town is a large marsh, fever-laden, and especially unhealthy in the summer time, formed by the Lycus, which the Turks now call Geurdeuk Chai. The chief modern industry is rug-making" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
 - c. Lydia was from this city (Acts 16:14). It is possible she is responsible for the establishment of the church there.
 - d. It was an idolatrous city.
 - e. This epistle is the longest of the seven letters.
2. Verse 18: "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass."
 - a. The Lord plainly identifies himself as the Son of God. Again a very impressive description is given of him. He had eyes like a flame of fire. The penetrating power of his insight and knowledge of our affairs is suggested.
 - 1) Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 2) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."
 - b. His feet are likened to fine brass—beautiful to the spiritual (cf. Rom 10:15), but awesome to the wicked when he begins to trod them down (cf. Rev 19:15).
 - 1) Romans 10:15: "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"
 - 2) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
3. Verse 19: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first."
 - a. Jesus knew their works and is able to offer commendations. They had been active. He knew their charity, service, faith, patience, and works.
 - 1) Works is used twice in the statement [the same word in the Greek]. The word is used at the first of each of the seven letters, most likely in a general sense, to include all that they had done. In the second use of the word in this verse, it is used in connection with their increase in all the works of Christian living.
 - 2) He commends their growing charity (love)—toward God and man.
 - 3) The Lord compliments their service—a reference which likely includes all the service which the saints had done in carrying out their obligations. The original word is from diakonia, which is used

- in reference to ministering, servicing, etc.
- 4) He commends their faith—their continuing loyalty and obedience.
 - 5) He recognizes their patience—their faithful endurance even in the face of rejection and cruel treatment by their neighbors.
- b. He knew that they had actually increased in these.
- 1) Every Christian and every congregation must endeavor to maintain a regular pattern of growth. The public Bible study program, gospel preaching, and private studies are intended to increase our knowledge and enhance our spiritual strength. The more we learn, the greater our obligations—and the greater our blessings! We are able to promote the Lord's Cause more, and will be of greater benefit to our family, our society, and our nation.
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:3: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:10-12: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."
- c. Divine insight is a welcomed benefit to the righteous. Faithful saints have nothing to fear from his close examination of our hearts.
4. Verse 20: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."
- a. There was a problem among them: they had tolerated the sinful conduct of "Jezebel." Jezebel is a figurative description of someone (or perhaps a group) there. It is more likely that one particular individual is meant since a singular word is used. The Lord used plural words to refer to groups: "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate" (Rev. 2:14-15).
 - b. There was something in common between this woman and Ahab's wife who called herself a prophetess, but was not speaking for the Lord. The Jezebel of our text is said to have taught and seduced others, which indicates that the fornication could have been figurative.
 - c. She seduced his servants to do evil—to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. This could be either literal or figurative—applications are possible in each case.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:18: "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error."
 - 2) Jude 16: "These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
 - 3) The Book of Hosea is filled with references to the spiritual adultery of Israel.
5. Verse 21: "And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."
- a. She had been given ample time and opportunity to repent but had not done so. This implies the word had been faithfully proclaimed there so that she knew what the Lord wanted.
 - b. The Lord had been longsuffering with her as he is with others.
 - 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
6. Verse 22: "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation,
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- except they repent of their deeds."
- a. The Lord's warning: he would cast her and her fellow sinners into a bed of great tribulation; but he still held out the opportunity for repentance. The bed of sinful pleasure will become a bed of pain to her and all her compromising companions.
 - b. Repentance is the only way to prevent this. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:8-10).
7. Verse 23: "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works."
- a. The punishment intended was death. When he dealt out the punishment then all the congregations would know that the Lord is able to search out the innermost secrets.
 - b. Reins—literally, kidneys; but figuratively (as used here) it refers to “the seat of the deepest emotions and affections of man, which God alone can fully know” (ISBE).
 - 1) “Whatever the distinction between ‘reins’ and ‘heart’ may be, the thought is that the discerner of hearts sees the whole inner man: emotions, affections, will, mind, and thoughts of each” (Hailey).
 - 2) “Reins nefrous (NT:3510). An old word for kidneys, here only in the New Testament, quoted also with kardias (NT:2588) from Jer 17:10. See Rev 22:17 for the reward of punishment” [Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament, © 1985 by Broadman Press].
 - 3) “Reins nefrous (NT:3510). Only here in the New Testament. Strictly, ‘kidneys.’ Used of the ‘thoughts, feelings, and purposes’ of the soul. A similar use of the physical for the spiritual organ is splangchna (NT:4698) ‘bowels’ for ‘heart.’ See the note on ‘pitiful,’ 1 Peter 3:8” [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 4) Reins: “efros, nefrou, ho, a kidney: (Plato (428-348 B.C.), Aristophanes); plural: the kidneys, the loins, as the Septuagint (LXX) for k^alaayowt, used of the inmost thoughts, feelings, purposes, of the soul: with the addition of kardias, Rev 2:23, with which compare Ps 7:10; Jer 11:20; 17:10; Sap. 1:6” [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - c. The Lord knows the real condition of each person and will give unto each one accordingly.
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."
8. Verse 24-25: "But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."
- a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: “But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, who know not the deep things of Satan, as they are wont to say; I cast upon you none other burden. Nevertheless that which ye have, hold fast till I come.”
 - 2) NKJV: “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. But hold fast what you have till I come.”
 - 3) ESV: “But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come.”
 - b. He speaks to those not contaminated by Jezebel's doctrine. These had not known the depths of Satan (had not corrupted themselves by following her). It is not necessary to experience sin (murder,

- fornication, etc.) to understand it.
- c. He put no other burden upon them than purity and faithfulness. He never puts a burden on anyone that cannot be borne, or offers a goal that can not be reached.
 - 1) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."
 - d. As they speak.
 - 1) The English Standard Version gives this wording: "But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call the deep things of Satan, to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden. Only hold fast what you have until I come."
 - 2) The Lord addresses the point of this passage to those who oppose the devil's doctrine under review. Those who opposed the error referred to it as "the deep things of Satan."
 - e. They are told to hold fast what they have: do not regress; keep on being faithful. Compare:
 - 1) Hebrews 10:35-39: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:12-15: "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."
 - f. They are to hold fast till I come—this is not the second coming, for this would imply his coming would be during their life time; they are now dead and he has not come. In the other letters he spoke of coming in judgment against them or in their aid. Thus, a figurative, representative coming is indicated here.
9. Verse 26-29: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
- a. The promise to the overcomer is to rule over the nations with a rod of iron. The conditions are to overcome and keep the works of Christ to the end. He stresses the necessity of remaining faithful.
 - b. This faithfulness is to be unto the end—a strong term.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:8: "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:13: "I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
 - 3) Hebrews 6:11: "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."
 - c. Christ sits and reigns today.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:25-26: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
 - 2) Hebrews 1:3, 13: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high....But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?"
 - 3) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall
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- build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- d. The Lord will share his rule with the overcomer. The reigning we do is figurative.
 - 1) Romans 5:17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:6: "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."
 - 3) Some think that the supremacy of Christians over the nations was achieved when the gospel ultimately undermined and overthrew the ancient pagan world of Rome. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 - e. Mention is made of the morning star. "The meaning seems to be that as the morning star, one of the brightest in the heavens, heralds the approach of dawn and a new day, so Christ here promises that He will give to the conqueror a new day; the night is almost over" (Hailey). "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16).
 - f. In verse 29, the admonition is again made to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
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REVELATION 3

The Letters to Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea

A. Revelation 3:1-6: The Letter to Sardis.

1. Historical information about Sardis.

- a. Sardis was an ancient city; it was the first city in which coins were made. Five major highways led to it, promoting commercial success. The city was naturally fortified on three sides, and was located on Mt. Timolos. There was a narrow path to the city which could easily be defended. It was taken twice (in 546 and 218 B.C.). The city was captured when the attackers scaled the cliffs and overcame the defenders from behind. This is significant in view of the fact the Lord warned the church there to be watchful (verses 2-3).
- b. The ISBE offers the following information about Sardis:
 - 1) "Sardis is of special interest to the student of Herodotus and Xenophon, for there Artaphernes, the brother of Darius, lived, and from there Xerxes invaded Greece and Cyrus marched against his brother Artaxerxes; it is also of interest to the student of early Christian history as the home of one of the Seven Churches of Rev (Rev 1:11; 3:1 ff). It was moreover one of the oldest and most important cities of Asia Minor, and until 549 BC, the capital of the kingdom of Lydia. It stood on the northern slope of Mt. Tmolus; its acropolis occupied one of the spurs of the mountain. At the base flowed the river Pactolus which served as a moat, rendering the city practically impregnable. Through the failure to watch, however, the acropolis had been successfully scaled in 549 BC by a Median soldier, and in 218 by a Cretan (compare Rev 3:2-3). Because of its strength during the Persian period, the satraps here made their homes. However, the city was burned by the Ionians in 501 BC, but it was quickly rebuilt and regained its importance. In 334 BC it surrendered to Alexander the Great who gave it independence, but its period of independence was brief, for 12 years later in 322 BC it was taken by Antigonus. In 301 BC, it fell into the possession of the Seleucidan kings who made it the residence of their governor. It became free again in 190 BC, when it formed a part of the empire of Pergamos, and later of the Roman province of Asia. In 17 AD, when it was destroyed by an earthquake, the Roman emperor Tiberius remitted the taxes of the people and rebuilt the city, and in his honor the citizens of that and of neighboring towns erected a large monument, but Sardis never recovered its former importance (compare Rev 3:12). Again in 295 AD, after the Roman province of Asia was broken up, Sardis became the capital of Lydia, and during the early Christian age it was the home of a bishop. The city continued to flourish until 1402, when it was so completely destroyed by Tamerlane that it was never rebuilt. Among the ruins there now stands a small village called Sert, a corruption of its ancient name. The ruins may be reached by rail from Smyrna, on the way to Philadelphia.
 - 2) "The ancient city was noted for its fruits and wool, and for its temple of the goddess Cybele, whose worship resembled that of Diana of Ephesus. Its wealth was also partly due to the gold which was found in the sand of the river Pactolus, and it was here that gold and silver coins were first struck. During the Roman period its coins formed a beautiful series, and are found in abundance by the peasants who till the surrounding fields. The ruins of the buildings which stood at the base of the hill have now been nearly buried by the dirt washed down from above. The hill upon which the acropolis stood measures 950 ft. high: the triple walls still surround it. The more imposing of the ruins are on the lower slope of the hill, and among them the temple of Cybele is the most interesting, yet only two of its many stone columns are still standing. Equally imposing is the necropolis of the city, which is at a distance of two hours' ride from Sert, South of the Gygaean lake. The modern name of the necropolis is Bin Tepe or Thousand Mounds, because of the large group of great mounds in which the kings and nobles were buried. Many of the mounds were long ago excavated and plundered" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclo-paedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
- c. Sardis was destroyed by an earthquake in 17 A.D. and was rebuilt by 26 A.D.
- d. It was known as one of the most permissive cities of the time.
- e. Sardis was the capital of Lydia, and was once home to Croesus, who was worth over one-half billion dollars when Cyrus conquered his domain in 546 B.C.

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- f. Sardis was dying in A.D. 96, and so was the congregation located there.
2. Verse 1: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
- a. The Author is described as one having the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. The "seven Spirits" is a reference to the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:4); seven stars represent the angels (messengers) of the seven congregations.
- b. He has control of the messengers: Christ directs his followers by the Spirit-inspired word.
- 1) John 14:26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - 2) John 16:13-14: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
- c. "I know"—because he walks in their midst. This statement is made in each of the letters. His appraisal of them was far different from the proud picture they had of themselves.
- d. They had the reputation of being alive but their true condition was not so. Based on human standards they were alive but the Lord saw them as dead. His standard is his word:
- 1) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - 2) John 15:7: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 4) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 5) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- e. Just because there is feverish activity in a congregation does not prove that the Lord acknowledges them as his own. A congregation is alive in the Lord's view if it is obedient to his will: the members being pure, sincere, faithful, and seeing to it that the mission of Christ is being done (Eph. 4:12). But the brethren in Sardis were smug with self-righteousness: the Lord gave them a jolt. Compare: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5:6).
3. Verse 2: "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God."
- a. There was still hope for the church in Sardis: they could make a change. They are warned to be watchful, and to strengthen the good things they still retained. He had not found their works to be perfect before God. They had works but not faith; they had some things that were right but not enough to keep them spiritually alive.
- b. Be watchful:
- 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."
 - 2) Acts 20:31: "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love" (ASV).
- c. To be perfect (from pleroo) means to "bring to completion, finish something already begun" (Arndt-Gingrich).
4. Verse 3: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore
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thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."

- a. We know nothing of the circumstances of the church's beginning in Sardis. Christ here calls on them to remember how they had received and heard the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 2) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 3) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."
 - 5) 1 John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."
 - b. Remember: memory can be both a blessing and a curse.
 - c. Hold fast the things which are good; repent of the things that are wrong. If they were not properly watchful, he would come as a thief in the night. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1-3). There is in this warning an allusion to the times when the enemies of Sardis took the city because the guards were not watchful.
 - d. The coming of Christ referred to here is not his Second Coming but rather his bringing of judgment on the unfaithful. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:5).
 - e. The church at Sardis had become much like the city itself. "Churches in the torpor of death are always blind to their own condition" (Hailey, p.146).
5. Verse 4: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."
- a. Not everyone in the church had soiled himself with sin: there were a few who were pure. In the midst of spiritual corpses the Lord sees the faithful, living Christians. They were to the Lord what an oasis is in the desert, or like having a refreshing shower of rain in the midst of a drought.
 - b. In a congregation where only a few are loyal, the faithful few are the only human hope for the congregation; the unfaithful many can give no hope for the congregation's survival.
 - c. Sin is pictured as defilement; sin is to the spirit what filth is to a clean garment.
 - 1) James 1:27: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 - 2) Jude 23: "And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."
 - d. The precious promise is made to those few individuals who had maintained their purity: they were the ones who would walk with the Lord in white; they were worthy to do so. White is heaven's color. Walking with the Lord indicates fellowship and agreement.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 9:8-9: "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour

- which thou takest under the sun."
- 2) Isaiah 1:18: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."
 - 3) Amos 3:3: "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"
- e. To walk with him in white is to walk with him in purity and holiness which come to us initially when we put him on in baptism. In heaven, the faithful will walk with the Lord in purity and holiness.
- 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 3) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 4) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - 5) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 6) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- f. They were worthy—not because of personal merit, but because they had sincerely obeyed the gospel and lived as the Lord directed.
- 1) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
6. Verse 5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
- a. To the faithful Christian who overcomes (remains loyal regardless of life's circumstances) the Lord promises a threefold reward.
 - 1) He shall be clothed in white raiment.
 - 2) The Lord will not blot out his name from the book of life.
 - 3) His name will be confessed before God and the angels.
 - b. He shall be clothed in white raiment: God will put on each one, perfect purity. On earth our holiness is at best imperfect (we cannot live above sin entirely), but in heaven we will be arrayed in all the glory that "white" implies.
 - c. The Lord will not blot out his name from the book of life.
 - 1) The idea of having our names recorded in heaven occurs often in the Bible.
 - a) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - b) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
 - c) Luke 10:17-20: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from

- heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
- d) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."
 - e) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - f) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - g) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - h) Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - i) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - j) Revelation 22:19: "And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."
- 2) It is thought that the Jews kept a register containing the names of their citizens; the names of the dead were removed from that list.
 - a) Nehemiah 12:22-23: "The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian. The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib."
 - b) Isaiah 4:3: "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."
 - c) Ezekiel 13:9: "And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD."
 - 3) But God has a book of life made up of the names of the righteous: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous" (Ps. 69:28). The fact that a name can be removed from God's book of life is proof that a child of God can fall from grace and be lost.
 - d. Christ will confess his name before his Father and the angels. As the ones graduating from school have their names read before the audience, so the faithful will have their names acknowledged as they receive the crown of life. Those whose names are not in the book will not be acknowledged. To have him confess us in the there and then, we must confess him in the here and now.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Luke 12:8-9: "Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."
 - 3) Matthew 7:23: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) Luke 13:27: "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye
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workers of iniquity."

7. Verse 6: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. Again the charge is given to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The Holy Spirit had a message for the seven churches of Asia; he spoke that message through the apostle John; the message was uttered in the letter sent to each.
 - b. The Holy Spirit speaks to our world today, but he does not do so audibly or through intuition or privately. He speaks through the message he revealed through the apostles and the prophets of the New Testament. It is a message delivered through the written word the Spirit inspired the selected men to receive, deliver, confirm, and record. That message was completed and confirmed during the first century; since then, no other message has been communicated from heaven to men.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - d. Ephesians 3:1-11: "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.:"
 - e. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - f. Jude 1:3: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

B. Revelation 3:7-13: To the Church at Philadelphia.

1. Historical information about Philadelphia.
 - a. Philadelphia was the youngest of the seven cities. It was founded in 150 B.C. to spread Greek culture. Thus the open-door idea would be clear in the minds of the people. The city was named by King Attalus II, who had great love for his brother Eumenes. The name of the city means "brotherly love." The city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17; it was rebuilt by Tiberius Caesar, and for a while it was called "Neo-caesarea." Due to its many temples and public buildings it was called "Little Athens." It had an excellent climate where grapes could be grown in abundance. The god of wine (Bacchus— Roman; Dionysus—Greek) was of chief importance there.
 - b. The ISBE offers this about Philadelphia:
 - 1) Philadelphia: A city of ancient Lydia in Asia Minor on the Cogamus River, 105 miles from Smyrna. It stood upon a terrace 650 ft. above the sea. Behind it are the volcanic cliffs to which the Turks have given the name of Devitt, or 'inkwells'; on the other side of the city the land is exceedingly fertile, and there was produced a wine of whose excellence the celebrated Roman poet Virgil wrote. Philadelphia is not so ancient as many of the other cities of Asia Minor, for it was founded after 189 BC on one of the highways which led to the interior. Its name was given to it in honor of Attalus II, because of his loyalty to his elder brother, Eumenes II, king of Lydia. Still

another name of the city was Decapolis, because it was considered as one of the ten cities of the plain. A third name which it bore during the 1st cent. AD was Neo-kaisaria; it appears upon the coins struck during that period. During the reign of Vespasian, it was called Flavia. Its modern name, Ala-shehir, is considered by some to be a corruption of the Turkish words Allah-shehir, 'the city of God,' but more likely it is a name given it from the reddish color of the soil. In addition to all of these names it sometimes bore the title of 'Little Athens' because of the magnificence of the temples and other public buildings which adorned it. Philadelphia quickly became an important and wealthy trade center, for as the coast cities declined, it grew in power, and retained its importance even until late Byzantine times. One of the Seven Churches of the Book of Rev (Rev 3:7 ff) was there, and it was the seat of a bishop. As in most Asia Minor cities, many Jews lived there, and they possessed a synagogue. During the reign of Tiberius the city was destroyed by an earthquake, yet it was quickly rebuilt. Frederick Barbarossa entered it while on his crusade in 1190. Twice, in 1306 and 1324, it was besieged by the Seljuk Turks, but it retained its independence until after 1390, when it was captured by the combined forces of the Turks and Byzantines. In 1403 Tamerlane captured it, and, it is said, built about it a wall of the corpses of his victims.

- 2) "Ala-shehir is still a Christian town; one-fourth of its modern population is Greek, and a Gr bishop still makes his home there. One of the chief modern industries is a liquorice factory; in the fields about the city the natives dig for the roots. On the terrace upon which the ancient city stood, the ruins of the castle and the walls may still be seen, and among them is pointed out the foundation of the early church. The place may now best be reached by rail from Smyrna" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
 - c. It is said to have been a small city and that the church was likewise small. The church is not named elsewhere in the New Testament. The Lord has no complaint against them.
2. Verse 7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."
- a. A unique description of the Author is given in the introductory part of the letter.
 - 1) He is **Holy**—absolute separation from all evil: "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).
 - 2) He is **True**—absolutely trustworthy. Infidel Jews denied Jesus was the Christ; there were many such in Philadelphia; his affirmation here is in rebuttal to their denials.
 - a) John 1:9: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."
 - b) John 6:32: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."
 - c) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - d) John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman."
 - e) Hebrews 13:5: "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."
 - f) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - g) 1 John 5:20: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."
 - h) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
 - i) Revelation 6:10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - j) Revelation 19:11: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."
 - b. He has the key of David—authority, legal right, and absolute power are his. As David possessed regal right over the nation of Israel, so Christ has all authority over things that pertain to his spiritual kingdom. No man has the right to make changes to his will, nor can any thwart his purpose.

- 1) Isaiah 22:22: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."
 - 2) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 3) Acts 2:31-32: "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:24-26: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."
 - 5) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
- c. He opens and closes doors—no man can defy his will successfully.
- 1) The open door of the passage refers to opportunities. Christ will use the faithful, giving them opportunity to spread the gospel and otherwise to be useful in his kingdom. [Thirty Memphis School of Preaching graduates baptized more in 18 months than all 45 churches in Memphis did during the same period of time].
 - 2) Opportunities lost are often forever lost. We are to prepare for service, pray for opportunity to serve, use our opportunities wisely when they are given, and give him the glory.
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 16:9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 2:12-13: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
 - 5) Colossians 4:3-4: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you."
3. Verse 8: "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."
 - a. He knew their works. He would give them an open door for them to serve because they had a little strength and had not denied his name. Thus, because they were faithful, he would use them in the kingdom. He will not use the services of those who are unfaithful.
 - b. Their "little strength" may indicate that the congregation was few in number. But they were stronger in the Lord's eyes than Sardis.
 4. Verse 9: "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."
 - a. The synagogue of Satan was located in Philadelphia: this is a reference to the infidel Israelites who lived there. They claimed to be Jews (God's people) but were not. The true Jew (spiritually) is identified in the New Testament as a Christian.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 3) Revelation 2:9: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

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- 4) Matthew 21:33-45: "Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."
- b. The Lord did not make the mistake Premillennialists make: they claim Israel is still the chosen people of God. The text and the other passages cited above disprove this notion. Satan is ever active; he will always oppose the Lord's church. Satan had synagogues at Smyrna and Philadelphia, and his seat was located at Pergamos. Christ knows who his people are (2 Tim. 2:19). The Jews who did not believe in Christ are called the synagogue of Satan. They were the physical descendants of Abraham, but were totally unworthy to be called the spiritual descendants of that great man of God.
- 1) John 8:39-45: "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."
- 2) John 8:56: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad."
- 3) Galatians 3:6-9: "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."
- 4) Galatians 3:26-29: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
- c. The Lord promised them ultimate victory over this synagogue of Satan: they would come and worship at the feet of the saints and would know that Christ had loved these saints. How was this accomplished? "Just how this would be done is not stated.....At the judgment, if not before, all enemies of the gospel will be forced to concede that the gospel is true and the church is a divine institution" (Hinds, p.58).
5. Verse 10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
- a. They had kept the word of Christ's patience. They had shown the same kind of endurance Christ had shown in his earthly mission. Because of this, blessings are promised to them.
- b. He would keep them from the hour of temptation. This refers to a period of trying or testing that would
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afflict the world generally. They would be made immune to the tribulation indicated or would be seen safely through it. "From" (ek) means "out of the midst of" so it could indicate either conclusion.

- c. The point appears to be that there was a sore trial coming on the world of unregenerated men to try them; but the saints would be kept from having to endure this trial (cf. Rev. 18). But what great trial could be meant? Barnes gives these comments:
 - 1) "Here, perhaps, all that is implied is, that the trial would be very extensive or general—so much so as to embrace the world, as the word was understood by those to whom the epistle was addressed. It need not be supposed that the whole world literally was included in it, or even all the Roman empire, but what was the world to them—the region which they would embrace in that term. If there were some far-spreading calamity in the country where they resided, it would probably be all that would be fairly embraced in the meaning of the word. It is not known to what trial the speaker refers. It may have been some form of persecution, or it may have been some calamity by disease, earthquake, or famine that was to occur. Tacitus (see Wetstein, in loco) mentions an earthquake that sank twelve cities in Asia Minor, in one night, by which, among others, Philadelphia was deeply affected; and 'it is possible that there may have been reference here to that overwhelming calamity. But nothing can be determined with certainty in regard to this.
 - 2) "[To try them that dwell upon the earth] To test their character. It would rather seem from this that the affliction was some form of persecution as adapted to test the fidelity of those who were affected by it. The persecutions in the Roman empire would furnish abundant occasions for such a trial" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, ©1997 by Biblesoft].
6. Verse 11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."
 - a. The coming here is not the Second Coming, for that coming has not occurred yet and nineteen hundred years have passed since the promise here was made. But he would come quickly to aid them and protect them as promised in verse 10. The Second Coming was not then soon to come: Paul wrote that the great apostasy must occur and the man of sin be revealed before the Lord would return (2 Thess. 2:1-12). Many years were required for the apostasy to develop fully.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-2: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-2: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:1-2: "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
 - b. The Second Coming will be as unannounced as the coming of the thief in the night: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:1-3).
 - c. They are exhorted to hold fast lest some man should take their crown. We have the crown of eternal life in promise. If we had eternal life in fact, no one could deprive us of it.
 - 1) Titus 1:1-2: "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; **In hope of eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."
 - 2) 1 John 2:25: "And this is the promise that he **hath promised us, even eternal life.**"
 - d. The fact that someone can take our crown from us is clear evidence that a Christian can so-sin as to

lose his eternal reward. One cannot lose what he does not have. We have eternal life in hope and promise; we can lose this hope and promise, and thus lose our crown. How can we lose the crown? Not through coercion, but through our own unfaithfulness—by accepting some religious error or by getting involved in some other kind of sin.

- e. John 10:27-29: "My sheep **hear** my voice, and I know them, and they **follow** me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall **never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
 - 1) We must continue to hear his voice.
 - 2) We must continue to follow Christ.
 - 3) Therefore, no one can pluck us from the Father's hand,
7. Verse 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."
- a. To the one who overcomes, certain promises are given. Promises are given in each letter, describing the avoidance of hell and the attainment of heaven, in different ways.
 - b. He will make him a pillar in the temple of his God. The victory and the reward are individual rewards. The letter is addressed to the church as a whole, but when blessings of overcoming are discussed, it is addressed to the individual saint. The figurative description of being made a pillar stresses permanence rather than support, since the next clause says, "he shall go no more out." Pillars in a great building are intended to last indefinitely. But since Philadelphia was an earthquake-prone city, perhaps this figurative description of eternal reward would have special meaning to the faithful saint from that place.
 - c. He will write on him the name of his God and the city of his God (new Jerusalem). The saved ones in heaven will have inscribed on him (symbolically) the name of God (which indicates ownership) and the name of new Jerusalem (citizenship), and the new name of Christ (he will share with him the glory of heavenly redemption).
 - 1) John 14:2-3: "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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - 2) John 17:24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."
 - d. Some apply these blessings to the church as it comes out of the great persecutions then prevalent. This position says that those that were lukewarm would be gone from the church after the sore trials came; only the truly dedicated would be left. But after the persecutions ended, the church went completely and quickly into apostasy. Persecution had often descended upon the church until 313 A.D., when Constantine, the new Roman Emperor, issued the "Edict of Toleration." He was friendly toward Christianity. His influence hastened the church's decline into absolute apostasy.
8. Verse 13: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
- a. This epistle closes with the clear charge that each one with ears (ability to perceive) hear (with a view to heed) what the Spirit says to the churches. The very statement itself implies that what the Spirit says is the standard by which we are to conduct ourselves. In Revelation 22:18-19, a strong warning is given to make no additions to or any subtractions from the things recorded herein by the Spirit.
 - b. If there is no standard, there is no such thing as sin.
 - 1) Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."
 - 2) Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - 3) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - c. If the Bible does not have authority, we would have no evidence or reason to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And why are we warned to make no alterations to what is written in it (1 Cor. 4:6; 2 John 9)? If we can reject any part of it without penalty, we can reject it all without penalty. It all stands together or it all falls together.

C. Revelation 3:14-22: To the church in Laodicea.

1. Historical information about Laodicea.

- a. Laodicea was founded in the third century B.C. by Antiochus II (a Seleucid king), who named it after his wife, Laodice. It was a banking center. It was known for a type of cloth made from the black wool of sheep raised there. A famous school of medicine was located nearby. An eye medicine was developed by the school, known as Phrygian powder, which was widely used. Compare: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). When the city was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 60, the proud, independent people rebuilt their own city without Rome's aid. It was a wealthy city: bankers, millionaires, and rich retirees lived there.
 - 1) "Many Jews were attracted by the city's affluence and trade and made it their home. The city's easy and opulent life made it an appealing retirement center for the wealthy. Because retired persons often conclude that they have served their purpose and reached their goal in life, they consequently become lukewarm to the issues facing society. Ramsay describes Laodicea as a city of no extremes, a city that had no peculiar characteristics unless this lack of peculiar characteristics was its peculiar characteristic. These qualities that distinguished the city were also reflected in the church" (Hailey, p.156).
 - 2) The attitudes and lifestyles of these people would naturally affect the church, thus the brethren in Laodicea thought of themselves as rich, increased with goods, and in need of nothing; however, the Lord saw them as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. No Christian can ever retire from the Lord's service; though we may be able to retire from our secular occupation, yet our race is not over until we pass from earthly scenes.
 - 3) Laodicea has been described as a retirement center. Retirement years afford those in good health with golden opportunities to serve the Master, perhaps more and better than ever before; and there are many temptations to spend our time and energy on fleshly, worldly pursuits. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas 4:17).
 - b. The ISBE reports about Laodicea:
 - 1) "A city of Asia Minor situated in the Lycos valley in the province of Phrygia, and the home of one of the Seven Churches of Rev (Rev 1:11). Distinguished from several other cities of that name by the appellation Ad Lycum, it was founded by Antiochus II (261-246 BC) of Syria, who named it for his wife Laodike, and who populated it with Syrians and with Jews who were transplanted from Babylonia to the cities of Phrygia and Lydia. Though Laodicea stood on the great highway at the junction of several important routes, it was a place of little consequence until the Roman province of Asia was formed in 190 BC. It then suddenly became a great and wealthy center of industry, famous specially for the fine black wool of its sheep and for the Phrygian powder for the eyes, which was manufactured there (compare Rev 3:18). In the vicinity was the temple of Men Karou and a renowned school of medicine. In the year 60 AD, the city was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake, but so wealthy were its citizens that they rejected the proffered aid of Rome, and quickly rebuilt it at their own expense (compare Rev 3:17). It was a city of great wealth, with extensive banking operations (compare Rev 3:18). Little is known of the early history of Christianity there; Timothy, Mark and Epaphras (Col 1:7) seem to have been the first to introduce it. However, Laodicea was early the chief bishopric of Phrygia, and about 166 AD Sagaris...was martyred. In 1071 the city was taken by the Seljuks; in 1119 it was recovered to the Christians by John Comnenus, and in the 13 th century it fell finally into the hands of the Turks.
 - 2) "The ruins, now called Eski Hissar, or old castle, lie near the modern Gonjelli on the railroad, and they have long served as a quarry to the builders of the neighboring town of Denizli. Among them nothing from before the Roman period has appeared. One of the two Roman theaters is remarkably well preserved, and there may still be seen the stadium, a colonnade, the aqueduct which brought the water across the valley to the city by an inverted siphon of stone pipes, a large necropolis, and the ruins of three early Christian churches" [E. J. BANKS, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblesoft].
 - c. The origin of the church in Laodicea is unknown. It was 11 miles from Colossae, and 6 miles from
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Hierapolis. Epaphras is mentioned in connection with all three of these cities (Col. 4:13,16), and may have been instrumental in starting the church there. "For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis....And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. 4:13,16).

- d. Nothing good is said about the church in Laodicea.
2. Verse 14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
 - a. **The Amen.** The definite article (the) is in the original. What he says will surely be dependable; used as a proper noun here, it guarantees all that he says. The word is akin to the Hebrew word meaning "truth" (cf. Isa. 65:16). The Greek word is used by Christ very often, translated verily. It is used of Christ in 2 Corinthians 1:20, stressing the certainty of his promises.
 - 1) Isaiah 65:16: "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
 - b. **The faithful and true witness.** There is no unfaithful particle in his character or person. As a witness, he is true: there is no deceit or guile about him. His testimony is true, and his warnings and promises are to be taken seriously. A properly qualified witness must (1) have first-hand knowledge of the information he affirms, (2) be competent to recall and present the information, and (3) be willing and able to present it faithfully and truthfully (Trench). Our Lord is fully qualified in each of these.
 - c. **The beginning of the creation of God.** The Watchtower Witnesses claim this means Christ was the first thing God created; and that Christ is a "lesser god" (Cf. Isa. 44:4; John 1:1-3); they reject the eternity of Christ. However, see Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 1:15-18. The word (arche) translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation. According to Thayer, the word carries this definition: "1. beginning, origin. a. used absolutely, of the beginning of all things: John 1:1f. b. in a relative sense, of the beginning of the thing spoken of: John 6:64. 2. the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader: Col 1:18. 3. that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause Rev 3:14. 4. the extremity of a thing: of the corners of a sail, Acts 10:11. 5. the first place, principality, rule, magistracy Luke 12:11" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - 1) Significant passages:
 - a) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."
 - b) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - c) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."
 - 2) Their assertion about the eternal nature of Christ violates Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." There has never been a time when Christ did not exist; he is eternal.
 - 3) Their assertion that he is not God violates John 20:24-28: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And

- after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
- 4) Their assertion that Christ was created by God (and is not eternal) violates the very passage they claim as proof, for the word arche means "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, p.77); "the beginner, or author" (Vincent, p.695). See Hebrews 12:2 (author, leader). The passage does not say that Christ is the first of God's creations, but that he is the one who did the creating (he was God's agent in bringing the universe into existence, John 1:10 ASV; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:15-18).
 - a) 1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (ASV).
 - b) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (ASV).
 - c) Hebrews 1:5-8: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - 5) If he were created, he would be praising himself here: "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, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).
 - 6) "(1) Hebrews 2:10 refers to Jesus as the 'author' (Grk. archegos) of salvation. Would this kindred form of arche indicate that Jesus was the first person saved, or does it denote that He was the originator of salvation? The latter, of course (cf. Arndt & Gingrich, Greek Lexicon, p.112). Similarly, Revelation 3:14 refers to Christ's role as Creator (cf. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2), and not to an alleged origin. (2) God is designated 'the beginning (arche) and the end' in Revelation 21:6. Does this mean that Jehovah was created? The Witnesses do not so argue. Further, if 'beginning' denotes the Lord's commencement in time (as per 3:14), would 'end' suggest an ultimate termination for God?" (Wayne Jackson, Notes From the Margin of My Bible, p.180).
3. Verses 15-16: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."
 - a. Christ, being the all-powerful head of the church, could know fully the real condition of the church at Laodicea (and elsewhere). "I know thy works."
 - b. They were neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm; they were not committed for him nor were they committed against him.
 - 1) Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - 2) Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - 3) John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - c. Christ would rather they be hot or cold: he could not permit their lukewarmness. In effect, they were trying to serve two masters (Matt. 6:24); one cannot hold to the hand of the Lord and the hand of the world at the same time.
 - d. To be hot is to be fervent; to be cold is to be hard-hearted, indifferent, or antagonistic.
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- 1) Acts 18:25: "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."
 - 2) Romans 12:11: "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
 - e. Why is lukewarmness worse than coldness? The cold person might perchance be softened by the gospel or providence and be saved; one who is lukewarm might not even realize he is lost—or care.
 - 1) Hebrews 6:4-6: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:20: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."
 4. Verse 17: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."
 - a. The cause and consequence of their lukewarmness is stated here. They viewed themselves as rich, increased with goods and in need of nothing. They were self-deceived; their assessment of themselves was not their true condition. The Bible frequently warns against self-deception.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:18: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise."
 - 2) Galatians 6:3: "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."
 - 3) James 1:22: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."
 - 4) 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
 - b. The Lord's evaluation is not always the same as man's. These were not as they thought but were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—by Christ's standard. His assessment is the only one that counts.
 - 1) Hosea 12:8: "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin."
 - 2) Luke 18:9-14: "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."
 - 3) John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - c. The Lord used some strong language in describing their real condition:
 - 1) The Lord said they were wretched. This is the same word used by Paul in Romans 7:24: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
 - 2) He also said they were miserable. This term is used also in 1 Corinthians 15:19: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."
 - 3) He said they were poor. This word is used here to describe the poverty-stricken nature of their souls.
 - 4) He said they were blind. This term is used elsewhere:
 - a) Romans 2:19: "And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness."
 - b) 2 Peter 1:9: "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins."
 - 5) He also said they were naked. This described the soul without its heavenly habitation:
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- a) Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - b) 2 Cor. 5:2-3: "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."
 - d. The cold person, having rejected the gospel, will certainly be rejected; and the lukewarm Christian, being indifferent toward Christ and the gospel, will be spewed from the Lord's mouth (that is, be rejected, sent to torment). A saved person can lose his salvation and be removed from the Lord's body.
 - e. One might get the idea that because he is in good physical health, that his soul is also well; he might think that because he is physically handsome, his soul is likewise handsome; he might get the notion that because his body is in excellent condition and full of strength, that his soul is also in a similar condition; he might have the thought that since he is financially wealthy, that his soul is also well-endowed with spiritual wealth.
 - 1) The statement that the Laodiceans thought of themselves as being rich indicates that they were well-blessed with financial prosperity. Obviously, one can be wealthy in this world's goods and still be poverty-stricken in the spiritual realm. Christ stated the unvarnished truth that their spiritual condition was far from what they thought.
 - 2) Prosperity and wealth can make a Christian to become complacent and lukewarm. This was the precise condition of the Laodiceans. When economic times are hard, or when a condition of war exists, or when one is in dire need of the essentials of life—these are times when individuals see their need for Heavenly help! But when times are prosperous, when peace exists in society, when men have more than sufficient of this world's goods—these are exceedingly dangerous times to the soul!
 - f. Other passages:
 - 1) Hosea 12:8: "And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin."
 - 2) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - 5. Verse 18: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." [This is the Lord's counsel to the lukewarm].
 - a. They should buy from him gold that has been tried in the fire; this is a reference to spiritual riches—true and lasting wealth.
 - b. They should buy white raiment; this is a reference to pure spiritual clothing.
 - c. They ought to buy eyesalve from him; the purpose of this was to give them the ability to see their true condition. The eye medicine made at Laodicea would not suffice to relieve their spiritual blindness.
 - 1) Psalms 19:8: "The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."
 - 2) Psalms 119:18: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."
 - 3) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
 - d. The price by which they could buy the proffered benefits was that of a dedicated, obedient life.
 - 6. Verse 19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
 - a. The Lord's rebukes are indications of his love, not his hatred; wise parents discipline their children out of love and concern, not hatred or malice.
 - 1) John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."
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- 2) John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
- 3) Galatians 4:16: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"
- b. To allow another Christian to continue in a sin or error unrebuked is not to show love, but indifference and unconcern; it would be like allowing an innocent little child to play with something dangerous.
- c. The Lord called on the Laodiceans to be zealous (become hot) and repent. It is not his wish that any be lost; but he will not compromise his will. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers" (2 Tim. 2: 10-14.).
- d. In the text the Lord uses the Greek word *phileo* (love), not *agape*. The latter is a broader and more inclusive term which involves the will (indicating an intelligent and purposeful principle by which we live and act toward God and man); the former (*phileo*) is a term indicating warmth and affection. His love here (*phileo*) expresses his warm concern for them even though they were lukewarm toward him.
7. Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
- a. This invitation is addressed to lukewarm, indifferent saints. He had already called on them to repent; here he is pictured as standing outside their spiritual door; thus here is a case where Christ has been shut out of the lives and hearts of his own people (that a child of God can fall from grace is thus illustrated).
- b. Only the individual has the power to open the door: Christ will not and cannot do so because of the nature of his will. An artist has pictured this scene and showed the only doorknob as being on the inside.
- c. This passage (especially verse 20) clearly shows that the Calvinist theory is wrong, which asserts that the individual has no power of choice regarding his eternal destiny.
- d. Christ shows his willingness to be in communion with these lukewarm Christians: he will enter and sup [eat a meal] with them and they with him—provided they repent. Supping with them is a beautiful figure to the Oriental mind of the warm, close communion which Christ desires to have with people.
8. Verse 21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- a. This is the usual statement regarding the one who overcomes. The blessing—they will be allowed to sit with Christ in his throne. This is a reference to the great blessings made available by Christ.
- b. Christ even now sits on his throne, contrary to the notions of the millennialists. The Bible nowhere teaches the fanciful theory of the materialists.
- 1) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."
- 2) Hebrews 8:1: "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens."
- 3) Zechariah 6:11-13: "Then take silver and gold, and make crowns, and set them upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- c. The throne is God's throne because he was the one who gave it to Christ.
- d. The blessing indicated could be applied to our present relationship with Christ or future blessings in heaven. Even in this life we reign with him.
- 1) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also
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- overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- 2) Romans 5:17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
- e. "The faithful share with him in this life and his victory over sin and in his reign in righteousness, and shall also share in the reign for ever and ever in eternity (22:5)" (Hailey, p.163).
9. Verse 22: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. Although the promise of this letter is directed to those in the church at Laodicea, it is all-inclusive: all who overcome reign with him.
 - b. All are enjoined to hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

A Brief Preview of the Coming Chapters

1. Chapter 4: This pictures the reigning God and his sovereignty.
 2. Chapter 5: This vindicates the sovereignty of God by the works of Christ; it pictures the redeeming Lamb.
 3. Chapters 6-20: This section shows God's wrath against his enemies.
 4. Chapters 21-22: This concluding section shows the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people.
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REVELATION 4

The Throne Scene

A. A Survey of the Chapter.

1. "In Chapter 4 John finds himself again in the spirit (see Rev. 1:10). This time he sees a throne in heaven upon which Almighty God is seated. He is surrounded by 24 thrones upon which 24 elders, representing, in all probability, respectively, the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of the Lamb. In the midst of and round about the throne are four living creatures, the first like a lamb, the second like a calf, the third like the face of a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle. Great emphasis is placed in this chapter on the worship of God by all creation, expressed by doxologies" (W.B. West, *Studies In Revelation*, p.65).
2. Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him."
3. Psalms 99:1: "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved."
4. Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

B. Revelation 4:1-4: The Throne Scene.

1. Verse 1: "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter."
 - a. This introduces a new aspect of the message, which follows what began in Revelation 1:1. The entire revelation was probably seen in one continuous vision.
 - b. In the letters to the churches, certain victories are promised to those who overcome. The question before the minds of the saints at this point would be, "What shall become of the enemies and what shall be our fate?" The following chapters detail the fierce struggles and the final outcome.
 - c. But before describing the conflict ahead, God drew aside the curtain of heaven to give John a vision of the majestic court of the Almighty. This scene is not intended to be understood as a literal description of heaven, but is a picture of the awesome presence of God (cf. Isa. 6:1-5). The setting had been on Patmos; now it switches to heaven.
 - d. Having this great image of heavenly might stamped on the heart, the suffering saint can be assured of a pleasant outcome if he remains loyal to his Lord.
 - e. A door was opened in heaven. This is the third door spoken of thus far—the door of opportunity (see Rev. 3:8) and the door of the human heart (Rev. 3:20) are the first two. This open door was the means by which John was able to see the heavenly scene described.
 - f. He heard a voice speaking, which is likened to a trumpet—with a clear and powerful sound. He was told to come and see things which must be hereafter. These things would follow in the future, but how far in the future is not stated. We remember the opening words of the book, which spoke of things "which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1).
 - g. The identity of the speaker is not given.
2. Verses 2-3: "And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."
 - a. John was already "in the Spirit" (1:10). Since he is to see and record even greater things, he repeats the statement, "Immediately (straightway) I was in the spirit." He now is to see and write of wondrous things in heaven—additional information was to be conveyed to him. He receives here a fresh out-

- pouring of inspiration to empower him to see the forthcoming mysteries God wished to reveal to him.
- b. "He does not affirm that he was caught up into heaven, nor does he say what impression was on his own mind, if any, as to the place where he was; but he was at once absorbed in the contemplation of the visions before him. He was doubtless still in Patmos, and these things were made to pass before his mind as a reality; that is, they appeared as real to him as if he saw them, and they were in fact a real symbolical representation of things occurring in heaven" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - c. He sees a throne set in heaven. The word set emphasizes the firmly established nature of the throne. God's word is also said to be set in heaven (Ps. 119:89). The reference is to the Father and his throne. God is here depicted as sitting on his throne, but notice that no personal description is given of God by John, nor is any given elsewhere by other divine writers.
 - 1) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 2) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 1:17: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."
 - 5) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 6) 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."
 - d. "And, behold, a throne was set in heaven; or, a throne was situated.... There is no action of placing or setting up. Compare the vision of Ezekiel, 'In the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne' (Ezek 10:1), where the throne appears above the cherubim, in the position of the cloud of glory (cf. also Isa 6:1,2, where the seraphim are above). And one sat on the throne. Probably the Triune God The Person is not named, because (1) the Name of God is incommunicable; it is the 'new Name' (see on Rev 3:12); or (2) because the seer describes only what is seen; or (3) it is suppressed from a sense of reverence" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - e. What John beheld is likened to a jasper stone—this is an opaque species of different colors, subject to high polish. The sardine stone had lasting beauty of color, with a brilliant flash. John is describing the grandeur and glory of God's divine Being; he is not giving a description of God's form or countenance, but is saying that to look upon him was like looking upon precious stones.
 - f. A rainbow was about the throne. The colors of the scene depict the beauty, splendor, grandeur and the majesty of God and his throne room.
 - g. The saints needed a reminder of the fact that God was on his throne in heaven, thus everything would turn out all right eventually. The things occurring on earth do not change his splendor and sovereignty.
3. Verse 4: "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."
- a. Around the throne were 24 seats upon which sat 24 elders. Crowns, thrones, and elders may indicate authority in some secondary sense. The crowns may indicate victory (as in 2:10), thus the beings who are pictured are representative of all the saints who endure to the end.
 - b. Why are they called "elders"? This term used in both the Old Testament and the New Testament to identify authority figures.
 - 1) Exodus 18:13-14: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?"
 - 2) Deuteronomy 27:1: "And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 3:1-7: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good

- behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."
- 4) Titus 1:5-9: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."
- c. Their presence enhances the glory of God, as does their praise (vs. 10), and their being before God's throne shows that ultimate victory is assured for the faithful.
 - d. Why 24 in number? Probably to represent people under both covenants: there were 12 patriarchs (and tribes) and there were 12 apostles of Christ (Levi was an extra tribe and Paul was an extra apostle). This being so, the 24 are representative of all the redeemed from each dispensation.
 - 1) Matthew 8:11: "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:15: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."
 - 3) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
 - 5) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - e. They were clothed in white, which indicates purity. The One on the throne is pure and those who come before him must be pure.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 5) Revelation 7:14: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
 - 6) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - f. The crowns of gold suggest victory, and perhaps authority in some sense.
 - 1) Revelation 2:26-27: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."
 - 2) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

C. Revelation 4:5-8: Manifestations of God's Marvelous Might.

1. Verses 5-6: "And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind."
 - a. Some marvelous manifestations of might are here shown in the vision. Lightnings, thunderings, and voices would be manifestations of God's power. "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled" (Ex. 19:16; cf. Heb. 12:18-26). This picture of God's awesome power forms an important truth for the suffering saint. Where is God when this persecution is being meted out by ungodly men? He is in heaven; he has not forgotten his people. His wrath and his might are expressed in the great sounds emanating from his throne; he voices his great displeasure against the persecutors. His people can take heart in the knowledge that God will take care of them, and will punish the oppressors. This majestic scene was designed to stress the greatness of God and thus encourage the saints.
 - 1) Psalm 18:13-24: "The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me. They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay. He brought me forth also into a large place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me. I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity. Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:18-26: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven."
 - b. The seven lamps John saw are identified as the seven Spirits of God. It is the Holy Spirit that is thus represented. The seven Spirits is obviously a unique reference to the Holy Spirit. The number seven is used in the book to indicate fullness and completeness. This could not represent the seven churches since the greeting would be from the churches to the churches, in that case. In this context, the logical reference is to the Holy Spirit. Taken with the next part of the statement, the greeting is from the entire Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).
 - 1) "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. The Holy Spirit, represented in his sevenfold operation, by lamps, which illumine. The same idea is expressed under another figure in Rev 5:6, where the searching, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit is typified by seven eyes" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft]. The Holy Spirit works through the word which he enabled the New Testament apostles and prophets to receive, confirm, communicate, and record.

- 2) Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne."
- 3) Revelation 5:6: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Here, the seven Spirits are represented by a figure having seven horns and seven eyes. Seven indicates completeness and perfection; thus the HOLY Spirit. He is before God's throne, ever at God's command. The enemies of the early saints (including Domitian and other Roman authorities) are powerless in comparison to God! What power do the enemies of God's people have that can withstand God?
- c. John saw a sea of glass which looked like crystal. A sea was a pool or lake [a different word from the one used in John 5:4; 9:7]. A "sea" (of a different kind) was at the Old Testament temple (1 Kings 7:23; 2 Kings 16:17; 25:13). Solomon's sea was a great laver containing water. Here in our text, the sea before God's throne represents the transcendancy of God over his lowly offspring, the infinite distance between the holy God and sinful man. "It can only be bridged by overcoming through the trials and persecutions which Peter (1 Pet. 4:12) and Paul (1 Cor. 3:5) refer to under the term 'fire'" (Tom Gaumer, *Studies In The Revelation*, p.128). Passing through this sea of glass mingled with fire (15:2) is this process; and when this trial is over, the sea is no more (21:1).
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. Verses 6-8: "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."
 - a. Four living creatures [beasts—KJV] are introduced. Beasts is from zoe, meaning "life." The pictures given are similar to those of Ezekiel 1 and 10.
 - b. They are described as having eyes before and behind—nothing escapes their gaze.
 - c. The face of the entire creature was like the earthly being named. These creatures, having the appearances of the beings indicated, possess the prominent characteristics of those earthly beings.
 - 1) The lion is known for its strength and regal appearance.
 - 2) The calf [ox] suggests faithful service. "Calf moschoo (NT:3448). Compare Luke 15:23. In the Septuagint for 'an ox or steer.' Ex 22:1; Ezek 1:10" [Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament.]
 - a) Exodus 22:1: "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep."
 - b) Ezekiel 1:10: "As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."
 - 3) Man is known for his intelligence.
 - 4) The eagle is known for its swiftness.
 - d. They had six wings and were full of eyes—this symbolized their mobility and awareness. God's eternal

watchfulness of all that occurs on earth is depicted.

- e. These creatures are the highest order of angels (since they are closest to the throne), or are some heavenly beings who continually worship God and carry out his will: "And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind" (Ps. 18:10). They are servants of God and worshipers of him. They are either seraphim (Isa. 6:2-3) or cherubim (Ezek 1, 10).

D. Revelation 4:9-11: The Two-Fold Song of Praise to the Almighty,

1. Verse 9: "And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - a. The creatures are representative of the heavenly host praising God; the elders represent the redeemed from earth offering praise.
 - b. This praise is directed to God, not to a Roman emperor. Only God is worthy to receive adoration and reverence. No angel or human is worthy of being revered and adored. The so-called "reverends" of denominational world take to themselves honors that they do not deserve; no man is worthy of this.
 - 1) Psalms 111:9: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." God's name is to be revered; not so with any man's name.
 - 2) Matthew 23:8: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Since the Lord prohibited men from receiving these religious titles that exalt them above their fellows, so he forbids men today to use similar appellations. The Lord thus forbids here the use of this or some other such terms as a title of distinction, which exalts the individual to a position of superiority over his brethren. The Lord does not forbid our describing someone as a teacher, if that is what that person does and is; he does forbid the use of the term as a title of distinction which exalts one above another.
 2. Verses 10-11: "The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."
 - a. The elders cast their crowns before God; they realize they are unworthy. They realize they are not worthy to wear the crowns of victory so they cast their crowns before Him. Compare: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:5).
 - b. The chapter presents the truth of a sovereign God: he is eternal; the Creator; the protector of his people; he will surely pour out punishment on the wicked; he is on his throne immovable. Therefore, if the invincible, sovereign God, the center of activity and point of emphasis, is in heaven, all suffering on the part of his people must be temporary. It was necessary for Israel to endure severe hardships in Egypt in order to be welded together in an unbreakable bond that has lasted thirty-five hundred years, so it was essential that the Lord's church go through great persecutions in order for it to be able to take root on earth, and survive. Faithfulness on the part of our brethren in the first century forms a strong encouragement to others living in later times.
 3. Chapter 4 emphasizes the power of God as Creator; chapter 5 presents the love of God as Redeemer.
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REVELATION 5

Worthy Is The Lamb

A. Revelation 5:1: The Book with the Seven Seals in the Hand of God.

1. This chapter shows the close relationship of Christ and the Father; when one is praised, so is the other. The previous chapter showed God's power; this chapter shows Christ's power. God brings to pass the things revealed; Christ reveals the things to come.
2. Verse 1: "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals."
 - a. The book was a scroll, not the flat type of book we have today. Ancient books were made of parchment or papyrus formed in a long sheet upon which the writing was inscribed; this sheet was then rolled from one cylinder to another as it was being read.
 - b. The book John saw had writing inscribed on both the inside and outside, indicating the fullness and completeness of the information recorded. Ezekiel saw a similar vision but the book he saw was open: "And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe" (Ezek 2:10).
 - c. John's book was sealed with seven seals, meaning that the information it contained was not accessible. Seals were often of wax or other soft substance on which the owner impressed his signet ring. Seven seals were on this book suggesting the futility of an unworthy person trying to open the book.
 - d. The book contained information concerning the future of Christianity and its struggles with the sinful world. It had a message of justice and destiny. No one could reveal its contents because it was in the hand of God. His providential dealings with the world cannot be seen before they occur. The book was simply a means of bringing into focus the central force of Christianity—Christ. In this unique way the Lamb in introduced into the vision.

B. Revelation 5:2-4: A Search for One Who was Worthy to Unseal the Book.

1. Verse 2: "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"
 - a. The strong angel with mighty voice asks, "Who is worthy to open the book?" None of the mighty angelic beings earlier pictured are qualified to open it; and no man was worthy to do so.
 - b. The fact that this angel is called a "strong" angel does not imply that there are any weak angels! The strength with which the angel was endowed by his creator is the point of emphasis.
 - c. "If there be any creature who thinks himself sufficient either to explain or execute the counsels of God, let him stand forth, and make the attempt" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database, © 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.].
2. Verse 3: "And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon."
 - a. No man in heaven, on earth, or under the earth was found to be worthy to open the book. Only a sovereign power could open it. To open it meant more than merely loosing seals and exposing the contents. It meant to comprehend, disclose and bring about the events therein contained.
 - b. Worthy (able, ASV) is from dunamai: "possessing power or ability by virtue of his own resources" to open the book. No one was found who was worthy or able.
3. Verse 4: "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon."
 - a. John wept much (kept on weeping). John wept perhaps for several reasons: the overwhelming sense of urgency the powerful scene created, and his sense of disappointment over not being able to realize the promise of Revelation 4:1.
 - b. The purpose for which he was summoned (in the vision) to heaven was to see "things which must be hereafter." John was longing to know what the future will be for the church. He was deeply concerned about his beloved brethren. So he weeps (imperfect tense) as a child who has been hurt or sorely disappointed.

C. Revelation 5:5-7. One Was Found Who Was Worthy to Open the Book.

1. Verse 5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
 - a. John continued to weep until one of the elders announced to him that One was found who was able to open the book. This elder urged John to stop weeping; he knew something John did not know, thus could tell him there was no need for tears. We often are grieved over things needlessly. No created beings were able to open the book, but one who inhabits eternity was able: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).
 - b. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is a clear reference to Christ.
 - 1) Passages:
 - a) Genesis 49:9-10: "Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."
 - b) Hebrews 7:14: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - 2) He is pictured as possessing the strength of a lion, and was predicted to have the sceptre of power (Gen 49:10; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 3:21).
 - a) Hebrews 1:8: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."
 - b) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - c. He is called the root and offspring of David.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:11-14: "And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."
 - 2) Isaiah 11:1-10: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."
 - 3) Acts 2:29-36: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God

- raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
- 4) Romans 15:8-12: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."
 - 5) Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."
- d. He has prevailed and overcome and made himself worthy and able to loose the seals, open the book, and make known and carry out its contents. He won the victory over Satan, took from him the keys of death and hades, and secured redemption for the faithful. Therefore he is worthy to open the book.
2. Verse 6: "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."
 - a. John looked and saw a lamb in the midst of the throne, creatures, and elders. What he saw was not a literal, actual lamb but a Being having the ability to atone for sin. When one who is acquainted with Old Testament terminology and practice thinks of a lamb, he automatically thinks of an atoning sacrifice. Christ is represented in the vision as a lamb that has been slain ("as though it had been slain" —ASV), and prevailed to open the book because he was slain and resurrected, and is now alive in heaven. We are being brought back to the focal point of Revelation—Christ. He is the only one worthy to open the book to vindicate God's sovereignty.
 - b. The seven horns symbolize perfect divine power to put down earthly enemies. Many passages use "horn" as a symbol of power. The number seven symbolizes perfection.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 33:17: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 2:10: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 18:10: "And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed."
 - c. Thus the power of Christ is perfect and complete; he is omnipotent. What trouble would he have in overcoming the enemies who sought to defeat Christianity?
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Ephesians 1:19-23: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - d. The seven eyes symbolize full and perfect knowledge. He is omniscient—he sees all. What enemy could or would be able to out-smart or overpower him?
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 16:9: "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars."

- 2) Zechariah 1:18-21: "Then lifted I up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the LORD showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it."
- 3) Zechariah 3:9: "For behold the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."
- 4) Zechariah 4:10: "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth."
- 5) John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
- 6) John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
- 7) Colossians 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
- 8) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
- e. In the previous chapter this power is attributed to the Father; here to the Son. If one fails to see Christ as present in the midst of his people, he has failed to see the full picture of Revelation.
3. Verse 7: "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."
 - a. Christ is pictured as taking the book from God's hand; he had the right and authority to do so, and took it without hesitation. "It shows an unhesitant attitude and a spirit of strong determination on the part of the Lamb as 'the first thing you know he has taken the book right out of the hand of him who sat on the throne.' Only Christ can open the book and carry forward God's judgments on wicked men. The destiny of men is in the nail-pierced hands of the Lamb who was slain" (Summers, p.136).
 - b. He had won the right to be the Redeemer; he now takes the book and reveals the defeat of his enemies and the victory of his people ("the things which must be hereafter....things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 4:1; 1:1).
 - c. The Father gave Christ all authority with regards to the kingdom during the Christian Dispensation. He obtained it as a consequence of his obedient death on the cross and his triumphant resurrection from the dead.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:22-28: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 4) Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

D. Revelation 5:8-10: Tributes of Praise Given to the Lamb.

1. Verse 8: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before

the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints."

- a. The action of taking the book caused great joy in heaven; those heavenly beings recognized the true significance of this, as we ought. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before him, each having harps and golden vials full of odors. These odors represent the prayers of the saints; hence the combined worship of heavenly and earthly beings is pictured.
 - b. The bowls of incense are figurative, so the harps must also be figurative. Nothing material is or will be in heaven, a purely spiritual realm:
 - 1) Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
 - 2) John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 15:50-53: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."
 - c. Prayer and incense are connected:
 - 1) Psalms 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."
 - 2) Luke 1:10: "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense."
 - d. An argument is made from this verse by the advocates of instruments of music in worship. Assertions are made that whatever is permitted in heaven is surely allowed on earth. "There is an old adage—'that which proves too much, proves nothing.' It was never more true than in this circumstance. The very passage which refers to harps also mentions 'incense' offered to a 'Lamb.' Shall we burn incense to a literal lamb in church worship?... "If the harp is authorized for church worship, so are the incense and lamb. Further, if there is no difference in the conduct of the saints in heaven and the saved on earth, then Christians are prohibited marriage, for in heaven there is no marriage (Matthew 22:30). Moreover, in heaven there is no eating (Revelation 7:16); shall we henceforth abstain from food on earth?... The truth is, one cannot literalize the figures of speech in the book of Revelation and make earthly applications with them. That is irresponsible exegesis" (Wayne Jackson, Notes From the Margin of My Bible, p.181).
2. Verse 9: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."
- a. Worship is here devoted to Christ; what is done toward one in the Godhead is done toward the other two divine persons. These heavenly beings sang a new (*kainos*) song in which the Lamb's virtues are extolled. Vine give the definitions of two different Greek words translated "new" in English:
 - 1) "**Kainos** denotes 'new,' of that which is unaccustomed or unused, not 'new' in time, recent, but 'new' as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old. 'The new tongues,' *kainos*, of Mark 16:17 are the 'other tongues,' *heteros*, of Acts 2:4. These languages, however, were 'new' and 'different,' not in the sense that they had never been heard before, or that they were new to the hearers, for it is plain from v. 8 that this is not the case; they were new languages to the speakers, different from those in which they were accustomed to speak."
 - 2) "**Neos** signifies 'new' in respect of time, that which is recent; it is used of the young, and so translated, especially the comparative degree 'younger'; accordingly what is *neos* may be a reproduction of the old in quality or character. *Neos* and *kainos* are sometimes used of the same thing, but there is a difference, as already indicated. Thus the 'new man' in Eph 2:15 (*kainos*) is 'new' in differing in character; so in 4:24 (see No. 1); but the 'new man' in Col 3:10 (*neos*) stresses the fact of the believer's 'new' experience, recently begun, and still proceeding. 'The old man in him...dates as far back as Adam; a new man has been born, who therefore is fitly so called' [i.e., *neos*], Trench, Syn. Sec. lx. The 'New' Covenant in Heb 12:24 is 'new' (*neos*) compared with the Mosaic, nearly fifteen hundred years before; it is 'new' (*kainos*) compared with the Mosaic, which is old in character, ineffective, 8:8,13; 9:15" [Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, ©

1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers].

- b. He was worthy to take the book and open the seals because he had been slain and had redeemed many to God out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation; this redemption is offered to all people. For this cause he was worthy to open the book.
 - 1) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 4) Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." The fact that he obtained perfection does not imply that he was imperfect in any moral sense prior to that time. He has always been perfectly sinless. But before his sacrificial death, he was not yet completely qualified as Savior (cf. John 12:32-33). By means of his ordeals on earth, he was made a perfect Savior—fully qualified in every respect to become the Redeemer. Having qualified as the complete Savior, he became the author of eternal salvation. He is the source of salvation (John 8:24; 14:6); his is the only name by which salvation is possible (Acts 4:12); to reject Christ is to reject God (Luke 10:16).
3. Verse 10: "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
 - a. "And madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth" (ASV). The ones made to be a kingdom and priests are those purchased from all nations by the blood of Christ (vs. 9). John had earlier said that those cleansed from sin by the blood of Christ were made a kingdom and were priests unto God: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; and he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1:5-6, ASV).
 - b. This kingdom is the one God established in fulfillment of Daniel 2:44, which Christ received on his return to heaven: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14).
 - c. In this kingdom into which Christians have been translated, redemption and forgiveness of sins are obtained: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:13-14).
 - d. The ones in the kingdom are priests at the same time (5:10) that they reign on earth. As the priesthood is spiritual, so also is the reigning.
 - 1) Ephesians 2:5-6: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:15-16: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

- e. Reign on earth is present tense (in the ASV). Shall reign in the King James Version describes the continuing action of reigning. The priesthood is now and so is the reigning: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:17). This passage does not give any support or comfort to the premillennialists. Death reigned over the race because of one man's sins; but many will obtain life through Christ. When a penitent believer obeys the gospel, his guilt is cleansed by the blood of Christ; he is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ; his old man of sin has been put to death and buried and he becomes a new creature in Christ. Before he was dead in sin [death reigned over him]; now he is alive in Christ—he "reigns" in life [he is alive spiritually and lives in hope of eternal life in heaven]. Consider these comments on Romans 5:17:
- 1) "Reigned. The emphatic point of the comparison. The effect of the second Adam cannot fall behind that of the first. If death reigned, there must be a reign of life" [Vincent's Word Studies of the New Testament, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) Hailey offers these succinct comments: "And they reign upon the earth," for as Christ reigns now, so are the redeemed endued with kingly power to rule with Him upon the earth at this present time. These who are saved by grace were raised up to sit with Him in this spiritual realm (Eph. 2:5f), and through this abundance of grace...they reign in life through Him (Rom. 4:17). A parallel is seen between the redeemed Israel whom God brought to Sinai and told, "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom and priests, and a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6) and these redeemed in Christ who are made "a kingdom and priests", "a holy nation." In summary, these purchased by Christ's blood are made a kingdom and priests, and they reign upon the earth, exercising kingly power with Him" (p.182).
- f. All of this is designed to bring encouragement and strength to the suffering saints.

E. Revelation 5:11-14: The Praise of the Lamb Continues.

1. Verse 11: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."
 - a. A great host of angels offers praise; their number is beyond enumerating. No attempt is here made to give a definite number to the angels. Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million; plus thousands of thousands,
 - b. If heavenly beings see the need to praise God, so should earthly beings. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:14).
 - c. God and Christ are worthy of our devotion; their greatness is far beyond anything we have ever seen. If brethren and the people in the world could only see and appreciate the greatness of God, what a change would be effected! One cannot praise God with his lips and life, and live for the devil at the same time. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
2. Verse 12: "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."
 - a. The angels ascribe power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing to the Lamb. Each tribute expresses a separate characteristic. Only one definite article is used, seemingly to indicate that the seven items form one great attribute,
 - b. Passages:
 - 1) John 10:10: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
 - 2) Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
 - 3) Colossians 1:16-17: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 4) Colossians 2:3: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."
 - 5) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

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- c. Despite the greatness of angels, they do not match the Lamb in greatness. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom....And Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands...But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. 1:5-14).
3. Verses 13-14: "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, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."
- a. The whole creation is pictured as adoring the name of Christ. "Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapours; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 148).
- b. "Beyond the innumerable host of angels a wider circle is now revealed which includes the whole of creation, animate and inanimate—all created things in every realm. These join in one thunderous acclamation of praise to the Creator and Redeemer. It is not said that John saw the whole creation, but that he heard the praise of the creation as it blended with that of the creatures of heaven and earth, the spirits under the earth (cf. v.3), and all things on the sea. In this instance 'the sea' is to be taken literally, as in heaven, earth, and Hades; it is introduced here for the first time. Its creatures are included in the total praise; 'on the sea' probably means near the surface, though 'all things therein' includes everything beneath" (Hailey, p.184).
- c. "The sound dies away with the quartet's hearty amen as a grand finale to the majestic scene" (ibid., p.185). The only word attributed to the four creatures is "Amen." What else was needed?
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REVELATION 6

The Opening of the First Six Seals

A. Revelation 6:1: The Main Action of the Book Begins.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."
2. The main action of the book begins here; the rest of the book explains the seals. It shows that back of all history is God (and Christ). Christ is the only representative qualified to open the seals. He does so here. Revelation chapters 6-20 depicts God's wrath against his enemies; in chapters 21-22 the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people is shown. Seven seals are opened; when the seventh seal is broken, the seven trumpets are blown; then seven vials (bowls) of divine wrath are poured upon the earth.
3. The Lamb opened the first seal; a noise like thunder was heard. Remember that what John is seeing is apocalyptic, an unveiling of information by the use of signs and symbols. Apocalyptic literature deals with the character of events rather than with the close details. Since we are not given enough specific information regarding the horsemen and their riders [Rev. 6:1-8], we are not in a position to know precisely and positively what they represent and when the events they represent would occur. The book was sealed with seven seals; the removal of one seal (in a literal situation) would not permit the opening of the book; however, in apocalyptic writings such is possible. When Christ removed the first seal the information contained in the first part of the book (the white horse and its rider) was revealed.
4. The difficulty and uncertainty of interpreting such scenes is obvious. "No person in the vision is identified as a living character; no specific historical event is defined; and no definite point in time is recorded which would enable the reader to build his interpretation around any of these. One must rely on John's assurance, received from a divine source, that he writes of 'the things which must shortly come to pass' (1:1), the general period of the church's beginning" (Hailey).
5. One of the living creatures spoke, "Come." The four horsemen appear on the scene in succession as the first four seals are opened. They pass across the stage without saying a word and vanish in the distance. The nature of what is represented is seen clearly, but the precise event referred to is obscure.
6. Horses are portrayed in the Old Testament as noble animals (Gen. 49:17; Job 39:19-25); the beasts of burden were oxen, camels, and donkeys, but horses were warriors, used by kings (Ex. 9:23; Esth. 6:8). Solomon had thousands of stalls for his many horses, although God forbade Israel's kings from having many of them (Deut. 17:16). Horses were used extensively and almost exclusively for warfare. Hence, the use of horses in the apocalypse depicts war scenes.

B. Revelation 6:2: The White Horse and His Rider—the First Seal.

1. Verse 2: "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."
 2. Many commentators think this is a reference to Christ. Chapter 19 pictures Christ on a white horse and he is wearing many crowns. The word translated "crowns" (in Rev. 19) is a word describing the crown of a ruler (diademata), royal crowns; in 6:2 the word for crown is stephanos, which is the crown of the victor. Some scholars think that militarism in general (Parthian or Roman in particular) is what is symbolized.
 3. If Christ is pictured as the victorious conqueror, then the conquest made is the success of the gospel as it was preached in the first century.
 - a. Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - b. Matthew 28:18-20: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - d. Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of
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God."

- e. Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - f. Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - g. Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - h. Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - i. Acts 11:19-21: "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."
 - j. Romans 10:13-18: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
4. If militarism in general is pictured, then some earthly conflict affecting first century Christians is described. Brother Wallace applies it to the attack on Jerusalem by the Romans. Some think that the Parthians, who used the bow successfully against Romans, are described.
 5. It seems more likely that the white horse and its conquering rider represent the successful spread of the gospel in the first century; the red horse scene that follows would depict the resultant opposition to the gospel by the Lord's enemies; the black horse scene would describe the economic effect of persecution the saints faced; the pale horse would have reference to a limited punishment on the oppressors by the Lord.

C. Revelation 6:3-4: The Red Horse and Its Rider—the Second Seal.

1. Verses 3-4: "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."
 - a. The second living being said, "Come." The red horse came on the scene. "There is a very general agreement that the red horse signifies war—slaughter by the sword which was given to 'him that sat thereon.' Slight variations of the application occur. Wordsworth, following the more ancient expositors, thinks that only that aspect of war is intended which consists in the persecution of the saints; while Alford and others would not restrict the meaning, but consider that war in general is meant, relying upon the following words, 'that they should kill one another,' and quoting our Lord's prophecy, 'I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matt 10:34). Both views may be correct. Though there had never been persecution, war would be one of the great afflictions from which Christians in various ages suffer, and in which they need consolation; but we may well believe that John, in writing to Christians who were themselves being grievously persecuted, should refer especially to the slaughter of the saints, as one of the trials inflicted upon them with God's knowledge and permission" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - b. Brother Wallace applied this to the suffering brought upon Jerusalem by the Roman army in 70 A.D. Others apply it to civil warfare in the Roman Empire (under Trajan this was so great that there was little but turmoil). Such events would have at least an indirect effect on the church. But since the saints were nearly all gone from Jerusalem when Rome destroyed the city, the suffering was brought to bear

almost entirely upon unbelieving Jews.

2. But if the white horse symbolized the successful spread of the gospel, the scene of the red horse could represent the persecution that would naturally follow. "Red" can mean bloodshed, as a result of literal warfare or physical persecution. Our Lord showed that his gospel would be rejected and hated by many people, for the great majority will die lost (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).
 - a. Among families there would be some who believed and some who disbelieved; some unbelieving family members would hate and persecute the believing members: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:34-39).
 - b. The Romans, beginning with Nero and continuing under Domitian, brought severe persecution upon the Lord's church. In many places in the empire, when the gospel was preached and practiced by Jews or Gentiles, local people hated and opposed the saints. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Persecution was so common that every saint was most likely to suffer its ravages.
 - c. This persecution would be intense and far-reaching; it would fit this scene of the red horse and his rider. "'That they should slay one another' indicates the slaughtering of men by their fellowmen. The word 'slay' (sphatto), used here and also in reference to the Lamb slain in sacrifice...and to the souls underneath the altar that had been slain for the Word of God and the testimony they held (6:9), confirms the position taken above. The sword (machaira) was the short sword of the Roman infantry, such as the one Peter used to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (John 18:10-11.). Machaira was the word used by Jesus to indicate the sword he would send forth (Matt. 10:34). In the Septuagint it is the word translated 'knife' at the offering of Isaac by Abraham (Gen. 22:6,10). Hence, the 'great sword' given to the rider was a butchering sword or knife with which he would slaughter men in sacrifice; it was 'great' (or 'long,' megas) because of the extent to which it would be used" (Hailey, p.190)

D. Revelation 6:5-6: The Black Horse and Its Rider—The Third Seal.

1. Verses 5-6: "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."
2. Third creature said, "Come." The black horse appeared; his rider carried balances, an ancient weighing device. The obvious purpose of this scene is to depict a time of want.
3. Brother Wallace applies this scene to Matthew 24:7: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: **and there shall be famines**, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Others apply it to a time of scarcity in the Roman Empire following the period of civil strife under the red horse symbol.
4. The "penny" was the Roman coin called denarius, which was the daily wage of the common working man: "And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard" (Matt. 20:2). Thus, the food supply would be so low that a day's wage would only buy food with nothing left over for other necessities. However, the oil and wine would not be limited. Wallace applies the oil and wine to "providential alleviation of suffering and mitigation of sorrow—with oil and wine he would bind up their wounds."
5. Oil and wine were among the staples of ancient societies. The terms are used in reference to the produce of the land; they are used figuratively to denote spiritual blessings.
 - a. Genesis 27:28-29: "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."
 - b. Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye,

buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

6. The symbolism suggests famine.
 - a. Ezekiel 4:16-17: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment: That they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity."
 - b. Ezekiel 5:16-17: "When I shall send upon them the evil arrows of famine, which shall be for their destruction, and which I will send to destroy you: and I will increase the famine upon you, and will break your staff of bread: So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it."
 - c. But the famine was likely contrived, since the oil and wine were not hurt (not limited); in a natural famine the oil and wine would be affected: "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness"(Hos. 2:8-9).
 - 1) This third seal may represent discrimination against the saints by the pagan trade guilds: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Rev. 13: 16-17). Thyatira was a city of labor guilds which caused problems for the saints. To follow a trade demanded membership in a guild; but each guild had its own idol. Guild members ate meals together during which the idol was honored, and the entertainment was sometimes immoral. A failure to participate and conform meant loss of jobs.
 - 2) Economic discrimination was a major form of persecution: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Heb. 10:34).
 - d. The second and third seal would go together and describe the killing of Christians and economic oppression in which the property of the saints would be seized.
 - e. "Wheat, barley, oil, and wine were the staple foods of the period, wine and oil being the more luxurious fare. On such a meager salary one could provide only a bare living and would find it impossible to afford any of these luxuries. The Christian who refused to compromise his conscience by sustaining membership in a pagan guild, as at Thyatira (2:18ff.), or bow to the emperor's image in worship, as at Pergamum (2:12ff.), or be injured in his occupation by Jewish influence, as at Smyrna (2:8ff), would be hard-pressed to find work whereby he could earn a living. As the luxury items were not hurt, it appears that the rider of the black horse symbolizes hardship and suffering through prejudice against Christians. The price of discipleship might mean discrimination by the world, loss of earnings because of conviction, or difficulty with the world in competing where corruption so often reigns" (Hailey, pp.191f).

E. Revelation 6:7-8: The Pale Horse and Its Rider—The Fourth Seal.

1. Verses 7-8: "And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."
2. The fourth seal is opened by Christ, and the next horse and rider appear. The rider of the pale horse is identified as "Death." Hell (hades) followed closely behind. They were given power over one fourth of the earth to kill with sword, hunger, death, and with beasts of the earth. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezek. 5:17).
3. The afflictions noted were caused by the sword, by hunger [famine], and by death [pestilence]. Hades is the realm of the dead (personified in the vision). Hades always follows death because it "gathers" up the spirits of those who exit this world through death.
4. The color of this horse was the color of a dead body—not a pleasant shade. Their power to hurt was limited (one fourth of earth's population). Wallace applies this to the punishment the Roman army brought

on Jerusalem. Others apply this to the third century, when Galinius of the Roman Empire was being attacked on every side, at which time there were famine and death everywhere, which affected all the people, saint and sinner alike.

5. But this scene probably symbolizes God's retribution against those who were opposing the gospel and persecuting the saints—a partial judgment. The prophet Daniel spoke of the kingdom having a disastrous effect on the worldly kingdom (the Roman Empire): "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:36-45).
6. If our conclusions are right on the meaning of these scenes, then the four go together. The gospel was successfully preached; the saints encountered bloody opposition; they were oppressed economically; the Lord brought a partial judgment against their oppressors in the forms indicated in verse 8.

F. Revelation 6:9-11: The Souls of the Martyrs Under the Altar—The Fifth Seal.

1. Verse 9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."
 - a. In the Old Testament Law, it was said that the life of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23), and that the blood of the sacrifices was to be poured out at the base of the altar (Lev. 4:7,18,30). When the blood was poured out it was the life that was being offered. The Hebrew word for "altar" means "place for blood-sacrifice" (Hailey, p.194).
 - 1) Leviticus 17:11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:23: "Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh."
 - 3) Leviticus 4:7: "And the priest shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."
 - 4) Leviticus 4:18: "And he shall put some of the blood upon the horns of the altar which is before the LORD, that is in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."
 - 5) Leviticus 4:30: "And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar."
 - b. The souls (psuchas) John saw in the vision were the lives of those who had been sacrificed for Christ. Christ gave his life (psuchen) a ransom for many: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).
 - c. Those seen under the altar had given their lives for (dia—because of, by reason of) the word of God and for (dia) the testimony they held. They are later said to have overcome because (dia) of the word of their testimony (12:11). Compare:

- 1) Philippians 2:17: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."
- 2) 2 Timothy 4:6: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."
- d. The scene is one which describes the martyrdom of many faithful saints.
2. Verse 10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - a. These martyred saints are here pictured as crying out to God for vindication. Compare:
 - 1) Genesis 4:10: "And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."
 - 2) Luke 18:7: "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"
 - b. Why does not God come and relieve his people and avenge his righteous self on the unrighteous enemy? Since those represented are Christians who had remained faithful unto death, their cry is not one for personal vengeance, but rather for divine retribution from the one who is "holy and true."
 - 1) Revelation 6:10: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"
 - 2) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - 3) Revelation 16:7: "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."
 - 4) Revelation 19:2: "For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."
 - c. How long? This suggests that the struggle had been continuing for some time—from the Jewish persecution in Jerusalem, and now the Roman persecution. When would it end?
 - d. The church is in such a dire condition that only God can give it relief. The persecution is so severe that it appears on the verge of being utterly destroyed from the earth. But for our own strength and purity, God often allows suffering (Heb. 12).
 - e. Those who dwell on the earth in this passage are the unregenerated men of the earth.
3. Verse 11: "And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."
 - a. God's answer to this cry is here given. White robes of victory were given to these martyred saints; they had won the victory that counts. They were to rest for a little time. God works according to his own timetable.
 - b. A little time was involved (cf. Rev. 2:12; 20:1-3). Two generations were involved: those who had already been slain and those yet to be martyred. "Little" is relative.
 - 1) Revelation 12:12: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
 - 2) Revelation 20:1-3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."
 - c. They are told to rest until their fellowservants (their brethren) should be similarly slain. The persecution was not going to end immediately. God does not promise an easy life on earth but he does promise a greater life beyond death.
 - d. They are not told just how long they were to rest—that was God's business. Compare: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the

kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:6-8).

G. Revelation 6:12-17: The Judgment Revealed—The Sixth Seal.

1. Verse 12-14: "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."
 - a. A heavy judgment is obviously the meaning of the sixth seal. A list of seven things is given: an earthquake, the sun being darkened, the moon becoming as blood, stars falling unto the earth, the heaven departing as a scroll, every mountain being moved, and every island being moved out of place. These are figures of speech, for a star is larger than the earth, thus would not fit on the earth.
 - b. The Lord is picturing a crashing world, earth-shaking events with no light to guide, and darkness engulfing wicked people (Hailey). This scene is filled with Old Testament pictures given in those ancient times to describe judgments God brought against heathen nations which had oppressed Israel.
 - 1) Isaiah 13:10,13: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine....Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."
 - 2) Isaiah 29:6: "Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."
 - 3) Isaiah 50:3: "I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering."
 - 4) Jeremiah 4:23-24: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly."
 - 5) Jeremiah 4:28: "For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it."
 - 6) Joel 2:31: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come."
 - 7) Matthew 24:29-30: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." [This passage used figures from the Old Testament to depict the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.].
 - c. The picture drawn depicts the end of the world under consideration (not the end of the universe at the Second Coming of Christ).
 - d. God is here answering the question of the martyred saints of the fifth seal. He gives assurance that he will surely avenge their cause by this heavy judgment. The pagan Roman Empire was sorely afflicting the saints; the judgment would be against this cruel Roman world. The fulfillment of the passage is therefore likely to be seen in the ultimate overthrow of Pagan Rome.
 - e. "As a scroll is read, it is rolled up on the other spindle; so when a nation comes to an end, its heaven is rolled up, no longer visible. Isaiah had said of heathen nations as the end of their time had come, 'And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fade away, as the leaf falleth from the vine, and as the fading leaf from the fig tree' (Isa. 34:4). Their heaven should pass away, for the nations and their world would be no more. The mountains, symbols of permanence and strength and the very foundations of the earth, were removed. The isles were symbols to the ancient people of the remote lands and far-flung portions of the earth, or of a nation's possessions. At the fall of Tyre, the great commercial power of its period, the isles would shake (Ezek. 26: 15,18; 27:35). These all indicate and illustrate the fall and passing of a great national power when judged by Jehovah" (Hailey, p.198).

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- f. Wallace applies this passage to the overthrow of Jerusalem. Hinds applies the events of this seal to the time of the Emperor Constantine, who elevated Christianity to a position of respect and protection.
 2. Verses 15-16: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."
 - a. A list of seven groups of individuals is cited:
 - 1) Kings.
 - 2) Great men.
 - 3) Rich men.
 - 4) Chief captains.
 - 5) Mighty men.
 - 6) Every bondman.
 - 7) Every free man.
 - b. These all hid themselves in dens and rocks of the mountains; they cried out to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. At the second coming, there will be no time for this in any literal way; the scene could be applied to a limited judgment against the enemies of Christ in the early age of the church. But at the Second Coming of Christ, great events will occur:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - c. Men seeking refuge in caves and amongst rocks occurs three other times, in each case with reference to national calamity.
 - 1) Hosea 10:8: "The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us" [Samaria].
 - 2) Isaiah 2:19: "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" [the overthrow of Jerusalem].
 - 3) Luke 23:30: "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us" [this is said about Jerusalem in its destruction by the Romans in 70 A.D.].
 - d. "Since the seventh seal, under which there are seven trumpets, must intervene between this seal and the end of time, the language of this text cannot refer to Christ's coming and the end of the world" (Hinds).
 3. Verse 17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - a. This judgment is called the great day of his wrath. The events depicted under this seal continue on toward the end of the book.
 - b. The Jews did not have power to kill Christians as described in this chapter; it seems clear that the events are more far-reaching than the overthrow of Jerusalem.
 - c. Who is able to stand? "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him" (Nahum 1:6). This was said in reference to Nineveh. In the judgment of this chapter, none would be able to stand against God's punishing power.
 - d. However, a day of judgment against God's enemies on earth is also a day of deliverance for his people!
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REVELATION 7

An Interlude

A. This Chapter is an Interlude Separating the Opening of the Sixth and Seventh Seals.

1. It also answers the question with which the previous chapter closed: "Who shall be able to stand?" When the Judgment described under the sixth seal takes place, who shall stand? When the enemies of the Roman Empire invaded, who would be able to continue and survive? Those who would stand would be those who had the seal. God did not need some physical mark to identify his people; the seal would be a symbolic identification for the benefit of the enemies of Rome.
2. The invaders would know that the Christians were not allied with Rome. Saints were told to come out from and be not part of the evil world around them.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - b. 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
3. John sees a two-part vision which relates to the saints on earth and under the altar. Those on earth are sealed; those under the altar are before the throne praising God.
4. Assurance is given about God knowing each of his people.
 - a. Isaiah 40:26: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth."
 - b. 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

B. Revelation 7:1-3: The Four Angels Holding the Four Winds

1. Verse 1: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree."
 - a. After this—after the events of the sixth seal. "But, even if not looked upon as an integral part of the revelations made under the sixth seal, the connection is so close that the two must be regarded practically as one. The incidents of the seventh chapter are evidently the complement of those narrated in the closing verses of the sixth. They take up the question with which that chapter closes, 'Who is able to stand?' and afford comfort and help to those suffering Christians who were so sorely in need of a renewed assurance of the certainty of their final reward" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - b. The four corners—this is an accommodative description referring to the four cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west). What is described is the whole surface of the earth. "Standing on the four corners of the earth. That is, standing in the four opposite directions, and thus controlling all the earth (cf. Isa 11:12; Rev 20:8). The number four is the symbol of universality and of creation (see on Rev 5:9)" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - 1) Isaiah 11:12: "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."
 - 2) Isaiah 24:16: "From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."
 - 3) Matthew 24:31: "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall

- gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."
- 4) Revelation 20:8: "And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."
 - c. The four winds—these are representative of destructive force. "The winds blow in fact from every quarter, but it is convenient to speak of them as coming from the four principal points of the compass, and this method is adopted probably in every language. So among the Greeks and Latins, the winds were arranged under four classes—Zephyrus, Boreas, Notus, and Eurus—considered as under the control of a king, Aeolus" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Bibesoft].
 - 1) Jeremiah 25:32: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth."
 - 2) Jeremiah 49:36: "And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come."
 - 3) Jeremiah 51:1: "Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind."
 - 4) Revelation 7:3: "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."
 - d. The earth, the sea and the trees—these are probably a reference to the whole creation, and likely indicates God's complete mastery over that which he created.
 - e. The destruction would be delayed until the saints were sealed and identified for all to see. After the initial waves of persecution brought upon the church by Roman authorities, everyone would know about the Christians, hence they would be identified, and thus would be spared by the invaders. Otherwise, when the Empire fell, the church would likely be severely and unnecessarily afflicted, if not destroyed.
2. Verses 2-3: "And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."
 - a. John saw the angel with the seal ascending from the east. When Jehovah is pictured as leaving Jerusalem (giving them up to destruction in 586 B.C.), he is said to have departed to the east.
 - 1) Ezekiel 11:23: "And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city." In Ezekiel 10, the glory of the Lord is depicted as leaving the temple, which had been intended to serve as a meeting place between God and Israel. "Then the glory of the LORD departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims" (10:18). It was no longer God's house, but a place of idolatry and sin. The Jews of the first century had polluted the temple of their time, so that it could no longer be considered a place of prayer. "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. 21:12-13; cf. John 2:13-17; Matt. 23:37-39). The angelic beings, which were a prominent feature in the vision of which the prophet was also part, lifted up their wings and began to leave the doomed city. The heavenly vision moved to the east side of the city and stood upon the mountain. The mountain was the Mount of Olives. From this height, the destruction of the city could be clearly viewed. Our Lord gave his famous speech to the apostles from this same location (Matt. 24:3—25:46).
 - 2) Ezekiel 43:2: "And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory." The symbolic temple was now ready for its Resident to occupy it. Everything is now prepared for his entrance. In the vision, Ezekiel was positioned at the gate, which faced to the east. It was toward this direction the glory of God had earlier in the book departed from Solomon's temple, preparatory to its destruction by the Babylonians.
 - b. This angel had the seal of God—an instrument with which one marked his belongings and validated legal documents. A seal was "used to stamp a document, giving it legal validity. Judah probably wore

his suspended from the neck over the breast (Gen 38:18; Song 8:6; Job 38:14). As the plastic clay presents various figures impressed on it by the revolving cylinder seal (one to three inches long, of terra cotta or precious stone, such as is found in Assyria), as 'it is turned,' so the morning light rolling on over the earth, previously void of form through the darkness, brings out to view hills, valleys, etc. Treasures were sealed up (Deut 32:34); the lions' den in Daniel's case (Dan 6:17); so our Lord's tomb (Matt 27:66). Sealing up was also to ensure secrecy (Dan 12:4; Rev 5:1). The signet ring was the symbol of royal authority (Gen. 12:41-42; Esth. 3:10; 8:10). Clay hardens in the heat, and was therefore used in Assyria and Babylon rather than wax, which melts. A stone cylinder in the Alnwick Museum bears the date of Osirtasin I, between 2,000 and 3,000 B.C. The Assyrian documents were often of baked clay, sealed while wet and burnt afterwards. Often the seal was a lump of clay impressed with a seal and tied the document. Such is the seal of Sabacho or So, king of Egypt (711 B.C.), found at Nimrud (2 Kings 17:4)" [Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database, © 1998 by BibleSoft].

- 1) Genesis 41:42: "And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck."
 - 2) Esther 3:10: "And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy."
 - 3) Esther 8:2: "And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman."
 - 4) Daniel 6:17: "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel."
 - 5) Matthew 27:66: "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch."
- c. God's servants were to be sealed. The seal is not to be thought of as a literal mark on the bodies of those sealed in John's vision. The Lord would know his people, and the enemies of Rome would be aware that they had nothing to fear from the Christians—they were the enemies of none. The Christians could easily be identified by the way they lived (Matt. 5:13-16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Tim. 4:12; Phil. 1:27). Consider these verses in the light of our text:
- 1) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 1:22: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."
 - 4) Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 6) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 7) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 8) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 - 9) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether

I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”

- d. No harm was to be done to the earth, sea, or trees until the sealing was accomplished. Whatever the harm was, it was not to occur until this mission was finished. Nothing can thwart God’s plans; he controls the universe; nothing will interfere with the sealing of his servants.
- e. The sealing is symbolic, as are the numbers which follow. The scene depicted is similar to that of Ezekiel 9:1-8. Ezekiel’s vision occurred prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In each case (Revelation and Ezekiel), God’s people received a sign on their foreheads (a conspicuous place, visible to all). They are preserved against destruction, but not spared from persecution and problems on earth. "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar. And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side; And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house. And he said unto them, Defile the house, and fill the courts with the slain: go ye forth. And they went forth, and slew in the city. And it came to pass, while they were slaying them, and I was left, that I fell upon my face, and cried, and said, Ah Lord GOD! wilt thou destroy all the residue of Israel in thy pouring out of thy fury upon Jerusalem?" (Ezek. 9:1-8). The following information is from the author’s material on Ezekiel (9:1-8):
 - 1) The previous chapter of Ezekiel closed on a note of warning, a threat directed against Jerusalem for the sins of the people. This threat of punishment is now to be executed. The men in the vision were heavenly beings, not mere men. They came from the north, the very direction from which the Babylonian army was to come in their invasion of Palestine. One of the men was dressed in a linen garment, and instead of having a battle axe, was armed with a scribe’s inkhorn. An inkhorn was a small container made of horn or other material, used obviously to hold ink. This man’s work will be shown later. These men, apparently seven in number, came and stood beside the brazen altar, awaiting further instructions from the Lord.
 - 2) In the vision, the prophet sees the manifestation of God, rising above the cherub, and taking up a position at the threshold of the temple. The source of the following instructions is the Almighty. The man who was dressed in linen and equipped with the inkhorn was told to go through the city and mark those individuals on the forehead who had opposed the abominations done there. Even though the impression is left that virtually the entire population had been involved in the idolatry described before, there were some who had besought God’s help in ridding the city of these abominations. Some unidentified mark was to be placed on the forehead of each of the faithful ones. We are not told what that mark was, but some have supposed it was the sign of the cross; this is speculation. It is unnecessary for us to know what the mark was, or that it had any particular or uniform shape. It was intended as an identification mark for the other men who comprised the company. Of course, the mark was not a literal inscription.
 - 3) These men with the battleaxes were told to follow the man in the linen clothing, and slay every one who did not have the mark on their forehead. They were not to spare anyone; they were to have pity for no one; the old and the young, men and women, were to be slain. They were to begin their work at the temple. Ezekiel saw these men begin to slay the old men who were in front of the temple. They were told to defile the house with dead bodies. They were faithful to their orders; they went forth and slew those in the city who did not bear the mark on their forehead. The temple had ceased to be the holy place it was intended to be. Instead of serving to bring the people into a closer fellowship with God, it had become the fountainhead of the spiritual corruption which had defiled the whole nation. The fact that some were to be spared in the slaughter of the majority shows that

God is able to show mercy even as he dispenses punishment. Once again, we are impressed with the fact that the majority was in the wrong, and the righteous were a distinct minority. Truth, holiness, and righteousness are not palatable to the majority. Compare: "And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads" (Rev. 7:2-3).

- 4) God had made provision for the deliverance of the righteous. They would be spared. But the prophet is moved by a tender heart to influence God to spare also some who did not deserve compassion. In our ignorance and misguided sensitivity, we may seek to include in the company of the redeemed certain ones who do not belong. Only God's word reveals the qualifications of the saved; we are not able to set the prerequisites. No man has the authority or ability to exclude those God accepts or to include those God rejects. Similar statements, indicating profound concern for the lost, are given in other passages.
 - a) Genesis 18:16-33 shows the intervention of Abraham in behalf of the people of Sodom and the other cities of the plain. He gained God's agreement not to destroy those cities if ten righteous souls could be found in their midst.
 - b) Numbers 11:2: "And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched."
 - c) Numbers 14:19: "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."
 - d) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

C. Revelation 7:4-8: John Reports the Number of Those Sealed.

1. Verse 4: "And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel."
 - a. John does not describe the actual sealing, but simply reports the number of those sealed as being 144,000. The number is not to be taken as a literal number any more than the ones sealed are to be taken literally as Israelites. A reasonable view is that the sum is reached by multiplying the 12 tribes of Israel by the 12 apostles of Christ by the complete number 1000. Therefore, the point stressed by John is that the number was very great.
 - b. Some take the number to symbolize the redeemed Jews and the great multitude of verse nine to represent the redeemed Gentiles. But if the number (144,000) is symbolic, then the tribes are likely symbolic, thus would include both Jews and Gentiles..
 - c. The 144,000 are pictured as being on earth; the very great multitude (vs. 9) is pictured in heaven (around the throne). The two groups described are the same group pictured in two different scenes (vs. 4 and vs. 9). If this is so, then the number of 144,000 is intended to be a very great, indefinite number, for in verse 9 the number is said to be innumerable. The number is a complete number (144,000), and includes all of God's children. In verse 4 their deliverance from the terrible judgment of the sixth seal is assured; in verse 9 their ultimate victory and reward are pictured.
 - d. We cannot compete with the world in wealth, numbers, physical strength, or political power. The only advantage we have over the world is our faith. In the final analysis, our faith is the only thing we need to be concerned about: our lives, our families, our property, our social standing, are all of lesser consequence than our faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). Faith guarded the men of God in old times (Heb. 11). Faith is what makes life worthwhile, that sustains us daily, that will bring us to heaven: "And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim. 4:18).
 - e. Revelation tells us that we must pay for our faith and how to pay for it.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."

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- 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 4) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 5) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - f. New Testament writers often spoke of Christians as being spiritual Israel (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:15-16; Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 3:28-29; Ph. 3:3). Thus, the 144,000 could be in reference to all Christians, regardless of their fleshly backgrounds. The New Testament (including Revelation) is a Christian book, not a Jewish book; Old Testament names and items are used, but are given New Testament applications.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Romans 9:6: "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:"
 - 3) Galatians 3:28-29: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
 - 4) Galatians 6:15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 5) Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - g. Later we will read of those who have the mark of the beast, who are the opposite of these here who have the mark of God.
 - 1) Revelation 13:15-18: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."
 - 2) Revelation 16:2: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."
 2. Verses 5-8: "Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtholim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."
 - a. The twelve tribes are listed: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Notice that the listing is different from Old Testament listings. This may indicate that some other group is referred to rather than literal Israel.
 - b. Judah is listed first, but Reuben was the firstborn of Jacob. Judah, however, was the kingly tribe, from whose ranks all of the kings from David through Zedekiah sprang, and the greatest King of all, Jesus Christ, was from this regal tribe.
 - 1) Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
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until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

- 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
- c. Dan and Ephraim are missing from the list. These two are singled out as sinful (Deut. 29:18-20; Hos. 4:17; Judges 18:30; 1 Kings 12:28-29). These two tribes are replaced by Levi and Joseph; both of these have pleasant connotations.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 29:18-20: "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven."
 - 2) Judges 18:30: "And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land."
 - 3) 1 Kings 12:28-29: "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan."
 - 4) Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." [Ephraim, the leading tribe of the ten northern tribes, is representative of the ten tribes—the nation of northern Israel. Idolatry became characteristic of them all].
- d. These 144,000 who are sealed probably represent the active, faithful members of the Lord's church on earth, still striving against sin, still facing persecution, still needing to avoid the slaughter, which is to be inflicted upon the Romans by the various invading hordes. Their being sealed would represent the good pleasure God has in them, recognizing them as his own, and signifies that he will protect them because they belong to him. The seal symbolically represents God's approval of them. We often speak of putting out stamp of approval on something or someone: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2: 19).
3. "According to the Watchtower Witnesses, the 'kingdom' or 'the church' will consist ultimately of only 144,000 people who will be in heaven. Supposedly, this 'ruling body' will exercise authority over the rest of those receiving eternal life, who will live upon God's glorified earth (Let God Be True, p.113). The Witnesses appeal to Revelation 7:4ff and 14: 1ff as proof for this unorthodox concept. The theory is false for many reasons. (1) The kingdom/church is frequently represented in the New Testament as existing on earth (cr. Revelation 1:4,6,9). (2) After the return of Christ, there will be no earth, for it will have been utterly destroyed at the Judgment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 21:1). (3) There is but 'one hope' (Ephesians 4:4) for the faithful, and it is heaven (1 Peter 1:3,4). Watchtower doctrine argues for two hopes—heaven or earth. (4) The numeral 'thousand' is used more than twenty times in the book of Revelation and not once is it employed literally. The 144,000, mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14, is a symbolic number as evidenced by the following facts. (1) If it is literal in chapter 7, only Jews would be in heaven (see 7:4ff). The fact that: Dan is omitted, Joseph is classified as a 'tribe,' and Levi is included demonstrates that the description is figurative. Moreover, in addition to the 144,000, there was a 'great multitude' there (7:9). (2) If the numeral is literal in chapter 14, only unmarried men will be in heaven, for the group consisted of virgins who had not been defiled with women (14:4). Note also that they follow the 'Lamb' wherever He goes. Is that a literal or figurative lamb...."If literal, only Jews in heaven....If literal, only unmarried men in heaven" (Wayne Jackson, Notes From the Margin of My Bible, pp.181f).

D. Revelation 7:9-17: The Very Great Multitude of the Redeemed.

1. Compare these passages:
 - a. Genesis 13:16: "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."
 - b. Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars,

- if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."
- c. Genesis 32:12: "And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."
 - d. Galatians 3:7,29: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
2. Verse 9: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."
- a. The great multitude was beyond number; they are before God's throne. Although the number of the redeemed in heaven is described as few, this is a comparative number; in comparison to the vast numbers who do not choose to be saved, the number of the redeemed is small. But when the number of saved persons from every generation, plus those who died in innocency, are combined, that number is multitudinous. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13-14).
 - b. The Roman Empire covered the known world, encompassing many nations, tribes, peoples, and languages. Converts to Christ were made from these various groups. These saints are pictured as being in heaven. This is a counterpart of verses 1-8: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. And 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 given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."
 - c. These redeemed ones were wearing white robes—this pictures purity and victory. They were holding palms in their hands—these palms were symbolic of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:26-32, 39-44). It followed the atonement sacrifice, and was held after the harvest was gathered; it was a time of joy—the most joyous of Jewish feast days (cf. John 12: 13). The heavenly scene described in our text was one of joy.
 - 1) Leviticus 23:26-32: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God. For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people. And whatsoever soul it be that doeth any work in that same day, the same soul will I destroy from among his people. Ye shall do no manner of work: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be unto you a sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls: in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath."
 - 2) Leviticus 23:39-44: "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths,
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- when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God. And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD."
- 3) Compare John 12:13: "Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord."
3. Verse 10: "And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."
 - a. This great multitude raised a great shout of gratitude and praise to God. To him and to the Lamb they ascribe their salvation. God made provision in Christ for a common salvation. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).
 - b. The Son procured salvation through his blood.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 4) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
 4. Verses 11-12: "And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."
 - a. The heavenly beings pictured earlier in the book are here shown to offer their praise to the Father. Their "amen" expressed their approval of the praises offered in verse 10 by the great multitude. "The angels, through their intense interest in the scheme of redemption, desired to look into these things (1 Peter 1:12); from Eden, the angels had served as ministering servants for the sake of these who should 'inherit salvation' (Heb. 1:14), and had learned the true significance of the divine plan as they had seen it fulfilled in Christ and the church (Eph. 3:10f). Now they fell before the throne in praise and adoration for what had been achieved" (Hailey, p.208).
 - b. These heavenly beings offer a seven-word tribute of praise to God—blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and might. "As in the throne scene (5:12) where the angels had offered their sevenfold ascription of praise to the Lamb, so here they offer a sevenfold attribution of worship and praise to God. In speaking of Him as 'our God,' the angels are identifying themselves with the redeemed as belonging to Him....In the praise offered by the angelic host in 5:12, only one definite article appears at the beginning of the list. Here, however, the article appears before each of the attributions, making each distinct, as in 4:11" (ibid., pp.208f).
 5. Verses 13-14: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
 - a. One of the elders asked John who these of the multitude were and from where did they come. It was asked that it might be answered. John's reply indicates his ignorance of the answer and his desire for information.
 - b. They had come out of great tribulation. "Came" (KJV) indicates past action; the ASV indicates a continuing process. But what tribulation is meant? Consider these four views:
 - 1) One view: The great tribulation that would befall Jerusalem as predicted in Matthew 24:21,29. For this view to be established one must first establish the early date for Revelation. Another difficulty

- is in the fact that these saints are said to “come” out of this tribulation as though it was continuing at the time. This tribulation applied almost exclusively to the Jews; only to a lesser degree to the Christians. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be....Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken" (Matt. 24:21,29).
- 2) A patently erroneous view is that of the literalists who claim that there will be a great tribulation following the supposed “rapture” and before the end of time. There is no evidence for this view in the Scriptures. This view is manifestly in error.
 - 3) Another view is that reference is to the tribulation and hardship all Christians face as a consequence of serving Christ (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12). It is great because it sums up all the tribulations of saints from Pentecost to the second coming.
 - a) John 16:33: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
 - b) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - c) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - d) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 4) Another view holds that this is the period of physical persecution brought on the church by Rome beginning with Nero’s persecution in 64 A.D. and continuing until the edict of Constantine in 313 A.D. This may be the most fitting, for it would offer great comfort and encouragement to the saints who were even then going through terrible affliction at the hands of pagan Rome. This vision of ultimate victory and reward would certainly offer great assurance.
- c. They had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. This shows that they had been sinners but were cleansed of their guilt. Sin is pictured as something that dirties and stains the soul; the only cleansing agent is the blood of the Redeemer:
- 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."
 - 3) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Compare:
 - a) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 4) Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 5) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - 6) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 7) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 8) Revelation 5:9-10: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to

- open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."
- 9) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - d. The washing that had been accomplished required action on the part of the individual. "They washed" is active, not passive. When they believed, repented, confessed their faith in Christ and were baptized into him, they were washed from their sins. They met the conditions and the Lord did the sin-removal.
 - e. In the first part of this vision (verses 1-8), they were being sealed for protection; in this second phase they are coming out of the great conflict victorious.
6. Verses 15-17: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."
- a. The blessed state of the redeemed is pictured. Because they had washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, the blessings described are given them.
 - b. They will ever be before God's throne where they can rejoice and serve God.
 - c. God will dwell among them; he will spread his tabernacle over them; they will be secure under his protection.
 - d. They shall not suffer hunger or thirst; they shall not have to endure the scorching, blistering rays of the sun any more.
 - e. The Lamb will be their shepherd; he shall guide them to the waters of life; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.
 - 1) Psalms 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."
 - 2) Psalms 126:5: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:1-11: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 5) Philippians 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."
 - 6) Revelation 21:1-4: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither

sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

- 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
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REVELATION 8

The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets

A. Revelation 8:1-2: The Seventh Seal—30 Minutes of Silence in Heaven.

1. Verses 1-2: "And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."
 - a. This silence is a break in the action and prepares one for the next series of visions. It is much like the calm before the storm, or the suspense before a jury verdict is made known. Something great is about to happen. The silence was for effect.
 - b. Some think the seventh seal, which is now ready to be opened, is inclusive of the remainder of the book. It does precede the seven trumpets and sets the stage for the visions to come.
2. Revelation deals with "the fortunes of the church in the world and the destiny of the world as it opposes the church" (Hailey, p.214). When God's people [Israel] in ancient times faced hostile invasion and destruction by Babylon, the Lord admonished: "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). From his temple he then assured his people that he would aid them and punish the enemy (Hab. 3). The silence of our text focuses attention on heaven's interest in the welfare of the saints; those in heaven wait in breathless suspense and expectation for what is to follow.
3. John saw seven angels having each a trumpet. The awesome events which occurred at the sounding of these trumpets are detailed from Revelation 8:6 through 11:19.
 - a. After the seventh seal was opened, the seven trumpets were sounded in sequence. These trumpets symbolize great earth events. Wallace applies these to the Jews and Rome in connection with the overthrow of Judaism.
 - b. This last seal includes the half hour of silence and the activities of the angel with the golden censer. It is likely symbolic of calamities which befell the Roman Empire from the latter part of the first century through the early part of the fourth century. But since the text does not clearly identify any specific event, we are unable to pinpoint the exact events described.

B. Revelation 8:3-5: The Angel with the Golden Censer.

1. Verse 3: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne."
 - a. This scene depicts the attention that is given to the prayers of suffering saints. The prayers thus offered are carefully received; specific and elaborate attention is given to them. The description is not to be taken literally, but symbolically.
 - b. The angel was before the altar or leaning over it. Under the Mosaic system, the censer was a dish or pan on which coals from the altar were placed; on these coals incense was burned.
 - 1) Leviticus 10:1: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not."
 - 2) Leviticus 16:12: "And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil."
 - c. This Old Testament activity is used symbolically to describe the prayers of the saints arising to heaven, and the attention that is given there to these prayers.
 - d. This angel is not Christ, nor is the angel filling the role of mediator; but he is simply a servant in the scene described. We are told that there is only one mediator between man and God; that exalted one is Christ: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - e. A great lesson is demonstrated—God is not indifferent to the struggles and pains of his people.
2. Verse 4: "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand."
 - a. The prayers of the saints together with the smoke of the incense ascend up before the Father. "The smoke [was] caused by the burning incense. John, as he saw this, naturally interpreted it of the prayers of the saints. The meaning of the whole symbol, thus explained, is that, at the time referred to, the

anxiety of the church in regard to the events which were about to occur would naturally lead to much prayer. It is not necessary to attempt to verify this by any distinct historical facts, for no one can doubt that, in a time of such impending calamities, the church would be earnestly engaged in devotion. Such has always been the case in times of danger; and it may always be assumed to be true, that when danger threatens, whether it be to the church at large or to an individual Christian, there will be a resort to the throne of grace" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].

- b. "The prayers, accompanied by the incense, and typically purified by it, are received by God. He hears the prayers; and the judgments against the wicked, which follow in the trumpet visions, constitute the answer to them. This makes more probable the view that the following visions are judgments against the world..." [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
3. Verse 5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - a. The angel, after offering the incense, took the censer, filled it with coals from the altar, and cast the coals upon the earth. This depicts the heavenly response to the prayers given by the saints.
 - 1) Luke 18:1-8: "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"
 - 2) James 5:16-20: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 - b. The saints on earth cried unto the Father; he responds by casting the fire of his righteous judgment on the ungodly. Compare Ezekiel 10:1-2: "Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne. And he spake unto the man clothed with linen, and said, Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city. And he went in in my sight." Ezekiel's vision was fulfilled when Babylonian troops destroyed rebellious Jerusalem; John's vision was fulfilled when judgment was poured out on Pagan Rome which was persecuting the saints. The seven trumpets furnish the details.
 - c. Voices, thunderings, and lightnings—these symbolize divine power and majesty; the earthquake symbolizes the divine judgment brought to bear on the oppressors of the saints.
 - 1) Isaiah 29:6: "Thou shalt be visited of the LORD of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire."
 - 2) Joel 3:16: "The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."
 - d. The prayers before the throne were from "all the saints," therefore these judgments cannot be localized or be made to fit any specific time and event. These judgments would certainly fit the punishment visited upon the Roman Empire, but in a broader sense, it can include judgments against wicked oppressors of any age.

C. Revelation 8:6-12: The First Four Trumpets.

1. Verse 6: "And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound."
 - a. The seven angels prepared to sound. What an awesome omen! The seventh seal may not extend to include the seven trumpets, though some scholars think it does.
 - b. Trumpets were used to sound warnings, to give direction to soldiers to battle, to announce the entrance

of royalty, and to announce coming events.

- 1) Numbers 10:1-10: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward. When ye blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey: they shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations. And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I am the LORD your God."
 - 2) Hosea 5:8: "Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin."
 - 3) Joel 2:15: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly."
 - 4) Amos 3:6: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?"
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 14:7-9: "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air."
 - 6) Ezekiel 33:3-4: "If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head."
- c. The first four trumpets produce adverse effects on the natural world; the last three produce adverse effects on the lives of men. Any explanation of these is generally unsatisfactory, but it can be safely concluded that they represent warnings and judgments of God against the wicked. To apply these judgments as physical calamities which befell the Roman Empire fits.
 - d. The earth, sea, fresh water, and heavenly bodies were the classifications ancient people used of the natural world. The destruction of a third of these is not to be understood as literal, but rather as judgment against a large part—the destruction described would not be universal, but partial.
 - e. Rome fell due to its internal rottenness, invasions from without by her enemies, and from natural disasters and calamities.
2. Verse 7: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."
 - a. When the first trumpet sounded, hail and fire mingled with blood were cast upon the earth, affecting a third of the trees and all green grass. Try to visualize the sight and sound of this furious judgment as described by John!
 - b. This symbolism is similar to the plagues sent on Egypt: "...hail, and fire mingled with hail, very grievous" (Ex. 9:24).
 - c. "The burning of a third part of the earth and the trees and all the grass seems to indicate suffering and destruction among the earth-dwellers, the world of the unregenerate in which the seat of world powers operate. 'A third part' suggests a large portion, but not total destruction; life is still possible. God created the good earth for man's benefit and use, and out of it his life is sustained. But man has misused the earth, and it is now affected by sin; it has become a partial waste and his enemy. This principle is expressed over and over by the prophets of the Old Testament (e.g., Jer. 7:20; Zeph. 1:2f; Nah. 1:6, et al.). The judgment is against the wicked and upon the realm in which the unregenerate find

their life and objects of worship. Living only for the material and physical, theirs is a life spent in rebellion against God and the spiritual. With the destruction of that for which man lives, his pride is humbled" (Hailey, p.219). The passages Hailey referred to are these:

- 1) Jeremiah 7:20: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched."
- 2) Nahum 1:6: "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him."
- 3) Zephaniah 1:2-3: "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD."

d. The Pulpit Commentary gives these observations:

- 1) "The first four are marked off from the last three (as in the case of the seals) by distinctive features. The first four refer to the natural life, while the last three are connected more closely with the spiritual life of man. The first four are connected and interdependent; the last three are distinct and more detached. The last three are specially marked off by the announcement of the angel in ver. 13. And there followed hail and fire mingled with blood....There is an evident likeness between the judgments of the trumpets and the plagues of Egypt. The resemblance is only general, but it serves to corroborate the belief that the trumpets declare God's judgments on the world, not the trials of the Church....The question next naturally arises—What are the judgments referred to, which are thus to afflict the ungodly while leaving the righteous unhurt; and when and how they are to take place? The answer evidently is—All troubles of the wicked, which are the consequence of misdoing, whether these troubles overtake them in this life or in the life to come....
 - 2) "Just as the seal visions were found to relate to the trials of God's people in all time, and the fulfilment is not completed by any one event or series of events, so now the seer is called upon to return, as it were, to his former starting point, and follow out a new path, where he would find displayed the troubles which have afflicted or shall afflict the ungodly. It is very doubtful how much of the imagery used in this series of visions is to be interpreted as applying to some definite event, and how much is to be considered merely as the accessories of the picture, necessitated by the employment of the symbol, and not needing particular interpretation. It is possible that the seer intended first to set forth the judgments which were to descend on those powers which, at the time of the vision, were pressing so heavily upon Christians, and among which the Roman empire held the prominent place...[PC Study Bible].
3. Verses 8-9: "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed."
- a. The second trumpet sounded; in the vision that followed, a mountain was cast into the sea; one third of sea creatures and ships perished. Rome was a great sea power and thus this could be representative of some great blow or series of blows directed against this part of her strength.
 - b. In the Old Testament prophets, the imagery of mountains was used to represent great cities and kingdoms. That being the case, as the following examples indicate, then the fiery mountain of John's vision could symbolize some great earthly kingdom, whose destructive power was to be unleashed as a judgment against the Empire of Rome. Jerusalem, which was situated on Mount Zion, is thus depicted as follows:
 - 1) Psalm 48:1-2: "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."
 - 2) Isaiah 41:15: "Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." [God promises Israel that they will be made strong, even able to assault the strength (the mountain) of their enemy].
 - 3) Amos 4:1: "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink." [Mountain is used to depict the strength of the wicked ones addressed].

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- 4) Jeremiah 51:25: "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the LORD, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain." [Babylon (vs. 1) is depicted as a destroying mountain].
- c. With this Old Testament usage of this symbol, we may look for the fulfillment of the judgment in some catastrophe which befell the Roman Empire. Those who subscribe to the early date for the writing of Revelation would apply the judgment to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. But Hailey gives this wise counsel: "The vision indicates judgment upon a worldly society when its center of power is cast down and its economy falls with it. To go beyond this broad application by designating a particular city is unwise, although this pattern fits both Rome and the entire empire when they fell. The description reveals a general corrupt condition and its consequences, which could involve any society" (Hailey, p.220).
- d. Barnes offers these comments on the passage:
- 1) "A mountain is a natural symbol of strength, and hence becomes a symbol of a strong and powerful kingdom; for mountains are not only places of strength in themselves, but they anciently answered the purposes of fortified places, and were the seats of power. Hence, they are properly symbols of strong nations....
 - 2) "A mountain in a blaze; that is, with all its woods on fire, or, more probably, a volcanic mountain. There would perhaps be no more sublime image than such a mountain lifted suddenly from its base and thrown into the sea....The symbol employed here would denote some fiery, impetuous, destructive power. If used to denote a nation, it would be a nation that was, as it were, burning with the desire of conquest—impetuous, and fierce, and fiery in its assaults—and consuming all in its way.
 - 3) "[Cast into the sea]....As to the fulfillment of this, or the thing that was intended to be represented by it, there cannot be any material doubt. It is not to be understood literally, of course; and the natural application is to some nation, or army, that has a resemblance in some respects to such a blazing mountain, and the effect of whose march would be like casting such a mountain into the ocean. We naturally look for agitation and commotion, and particularly in reference to the sea, or to some maritime coasts....
 - 4) "[And the third part of the sea became blood] Resembled blood; became as red as blood. The figure here is, that as such a blazing mountain cast into the sea would, by its reflection on the waters, seem to tinge them with red, so there would be something corresponding with this in what was referred to by the symbol. It would be fulfilled if there was a fierce maritime warfare, and if in some desperate naval engagement the sea should be tinged with blood....
 - 5) "The effect was as if one-third of all the fish in the sea were cut off. Of course this is not to be taken literally. It is designed to describe an effect, pertaining to the maritime portion of the world, as if a third portion of all that was in the sea should perish. The natural interpretation would be to apply it to some invasion or calamity pertaining to the sea—to the islands, to the maritime regions, or to commerce. If the whole description pertains to the Roman empire, then this might be supposed to have particular reference to something that would have a bearing on the maritime parts of that empire.
 - 6) "[And the third part of the ships were destroyed] This also pertains to the same general calamity, affecting the commerce of the empire. The destruction of the 'ships' was produced, in some way, by casting the mountain into the sea—either by their being consumed by the contact with the burning mass, or by being sunk by the agitation of the waters. The essential idea is, that the calamity would be of such a nature as would produce the destruction of vessels at sea—either naval armaments, or ships of commerce" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
4. Verses 10-11: "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."
- a. The third trumpet sounded: this judgment affected the fresh waters; many died from drinking the waters made bitter. Wormwood is a general name for a class of plants known as artemisia; which was
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characterized by a bitter taste. God's judgment would be bitter.

- b. "An interpretation of what John saw is helped by looking at Isaiah's description of the king of Babylon's fall, 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star [Lucifer, KJV], son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations' (Isa. 14:12). The prophet further described this boastful one as seeking to ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars of God, and make himself like the Most High, 'the man that made the earth to tremble' (Isa. 14:13-17). Anyone seeking such an exalted height is bound to fall, and as a fiercely burning torch he will work havoc among men. He shall, however, be extinguished....
 - c. "'And the name of the star is called Worm-wood,' a bitter wood mentioned a number of times in the Old Testament, usually in connection with the consequences of idolatry. God warned the people of Israel that their turning to idols would bear the fruit of wormwood (Deut. 29:18); for as a divine chastisement he would feed the idolaters of his people with wormwood and give them water of gall to drink (Jer. 9:15); the prophets who would lead them into idolatry would share the same fate (Jer. 23:15). In their unfaithfulness to God, the idolatrous judges in Israel turned away from him and served idols, perverted principles of right judgment, turned 'justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth' (Amos 5:7; 6:12).
 - d. "Wormwood and gall aptly symbolize calamity and sorrow and bitterness of life. The fall of this star, Wormwood, caused a third of the inland waters to become wormwood, that is, charged with trouble, sorrow, and death....Pride and arrogance, which are part of idolatry and rebellion against God, are destined to fall, carrying misery and sorrow with them. When men prefer the bitter waters of idolatry to the fountain of the living water, they will receive these bitter waters with the fatal consequences which follow" (Hailey, pp.221f).
 - e. No nation or individual has a monopoly on pride. Nebuchadnezzar was afflicted with it; he was taught the error of his way: "All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Dan. 4:28-37).
 - f. Jewish leaders through the centuries were often afflicted with pride (cf. Matt. 23). The Roman emperors were smitten with this spiritual disease—even to the point of thinking they were divine beings, worthy of worship. The popes make a show of humility, but they demonstrate their pride thereby—they proudly receive the adoration of their fawning subjects! The judgment of our text exposes the danger of pride, arrogance, and rebellion against the Almighty.
5. Verse 12: "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise."
- a. The fourth trumpet had an effect on the sun, moon, and stars. The Old Testament uses references to these heavenly bodies to describe important people, rulers, and governments:
 - 1) Genesis 37:9-10: "And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold,

I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"

- 2) Isaiah 13:10: "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine."
 - 3) Isaiah 34:4: "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree."
- b. "Throughout the Old Testament, light from the sun, moon, and stars signifies salvation, well-being, happiness, truth, wisdom, and joy. The fading of light in the removal of these heavenly bodies symbolizes judgment from God (Isa. 13:10; Joel 3:15; Amos 8:9). In describing the moral decay and physical destruction of Jerusalem the prophet cried, 'I beheld the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and the heavens, and they had no light' (Jer. 4:23). And in lamenting the fall of Pharaoh and Egypt, Ezekiel says, 'And when I [Jehovah] shall extinguish thee, I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. And all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord Jehovah' (32:7-8)" (Hailey, p.222).
 - c. "These symbols of joy and wisdom are ashamed at earth's wickedness, and in the vision of a third of them are smitten, indicating a partial judgment meant to serve as a warning to the ungodly. God's word is a lamp (Ps. 119:105), giving light and understanding (Ps. 119:130) which is the basis of all true wisdom (I Cor. 2:6-13). It seems, therefore, that the darkness in John's vision indicates a lack of understanding and insight on the part of those who direct human affairs. In ancient times God took away the wisdom of Judah's wise men (Isa. 29:14) and destroyed the wise men and their understanding out of Edom (Obad. 8; Jer. 49:7). No specific people or time is indicated in this vision, making general its application as were the first three. Before total darkness engulfs any society, God sounds a trumpet warning to that society. He sends minor judgments which mark the beginning of that society's destruction unless repentance turns the course of its destiny. These four trumpets call for the reformation, not the destruction of mankind" (ibid., pp.222f).
 - d. This vision could therefore be given in reference to the overthrow of rulers or governments, who will not give up their rebellion against God. It is entirely a fitting application to see the decline and defeat of the Roman Empire in the pictures of John's vision.

D. Revelation 8:13: The Herald of the Woes Yet to Come.

1. Verse 13: "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" (KJV).
 - a. The ASV gives this rendering: "And I saw, and I heard an eagle, flying in mid heaven, saying with a great voice, Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to sound."
 - b. The King James says "angel" while the American Standard Version says "eagle." In describing Jerusalem's overthrow, Jesus spoke of eagles (vultures) gathering around the carcass of Judaism (Matt. 24:28). [Whether we take the being as an angel or an eagle, the point is still the same].
 - 1) Hosea 8:1: "Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law."
 - 2) Habakkuk 1:8: "Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat."
 - c. In our view, the reference of this passage is to the downfall of the persecuting opponent of the saints—the Roman Empire. What is said could be more general, denoting other powers who stand opposed to the will of the Almighty.
 - d. As Jerusalem was overthrown when the Roman army, with their ensign of the eagle at their head, brought their might against the holy city, so the enemies of God's cause would meet with certain destruction. This was true with the unbelieving Jews, who opposed the gospel; it would be no less true

with the Roman Empire, which opposed the Lord's church.

2. "[Woe, woe, woe] That is, there will be great woe. The repetition of the word is intensive, and the idea is, that the sounding of the three remaining trumpets would indicate great and fearful calamities. These three are grouped together as if they pertained to a similar series of events, as the first four had been. The two classes are separated from each other by this interval and by this proclamation—implying that the first series had been completed, and that there would be some interval, either of space or time, before the other series would come upon the world..." [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
 3. "The eagle was noted for its strong wings (Exod. 19:4; Rev. 12:14), but Scripture also emphasizes the keenness of sight with which the eagle 'spieth out the prey' (Job 39:29), and the swiftness with which it swoops down upon it (Job 9:26). In warning against impending judgment, Hosea cried, 'Set the trumpet to thy mouth. As an eagle he [the enemy] cometh against the house of Jehovah' (Hos. 8:1). Habakkuk described the horsemen of the invading Babylonians by saying, 'They fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour' (Hab. 1:8). The disasters now to come upon the earth are heralded by the voice of this eagle as it cries, 'Woe, woe, woe.' This takes the form of an ominous warning set forth in the trumpets which follow" (Hailey, pp.223f).
 4. Here is a warning of even greater woes yet to come!
- E. Comments by Ray Summers on the First Four Trumpets (pp.156f).
1. "All these are pictures of natural calamity as an agent of destruction against Rome, the enemy of Christian people. One of the main things that led to the breaking down of the Roman Empire was a series of natural calamities causing disaster over the empire: earthquake, volcanic eruption, floods, etc. Many such things had happened within the memory of John and his readers. God used such environmental phenomena to present his revelation of destruction to their enemies. A few years before this writing Mount Versuvius had erupted (August, A.D. 79) pouring forth a fiery flood which engulfed Herculaneum and Pompeii and many other small villages with a horror long remembered by all in that country. The younger Pliny, writing to Tacitus, told some of the horrors of the event which took the life of his distinguished uncle, Pliny the naturalist. Ashes from the burning mountain fell on ships far out to sea and upon the distant shores of Egypt and Syria. Pliny relates that there was first an earthquake followed by the eruption which sent an avalanche of fire down the mountainside into the sea. Many who eluded the streams of lava were suffocated by the sulphurous fumes which reached far away. The sky was darkened so that Pliny said, 'It is now day elsewhere, but there night blacker and thicker than all nights.'"
 2. "At another time the island volcano Santoria had erupted, giving the suggestion of a burning mountain. Fugitives told how fiery blasts destroyed vegetation, how sulphurous vapors killed the fish in the sea, and how the waters were turned red like blood. Such things were in the consciousness of John's readers. Doubtless God gave his revelation through things they would understand. Thus is he saying to them, 'I have the means of destroying your enemies.' And by just such things he called those enemies to repent and turn from their evil."
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REVELATION 9

The Sounding Of The Fifth And Sixth Trumpets

A. Revelation 9:1-12: The Sounding of the Fifth Trumpet.

1. Verses 1-3: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."
 - a. The star is identified as a person—to him was given the key to the bottomless pit (pit of the abyss—ASV). The bottomless pit is Satan's place.
 - b. The pit was opened and smoke arose so thick that the sun and the atmosphere were darkened. Out of the smoke came a great swarm of locusts possessing the power as that of scorpions.
 - c. We must keep in mind that the things being described are not to be understood as literal beings and actual events. We are not to look to history for some occasion when these events literally took place. Instead, we need to realize that the visions represent activities occurring among sinful men, activities that are symbolized by these monstrosities.
2. Verses 4-6: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them."
 - a. These locusts were given orders not to hurt the grass, trees, or any green thing, but only those men who did not have the seal of God in their foreheads. These were not to be slain, but only tormented for five months (the length of a locust plague).
 - b. This is not a literal locust plague for these pests do not ordinarily eat flesh but vegetation; here they are forbidden to afflict vegetation, but men. Those afflicted would be so tormented that they would desire death but would not find release.
 - 1) Exodus 10:15: "For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."
 - 2) Joel 2:3: "A fire devoureth before them; and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them."
 - c. The "locusts" would not harm those the Lord had sealed. "The distinction made here between the sealed and those not sealed is further proof that the number one hundred and forty-four thousand represents the saints on earth at any point in time, and not a special group of saved persons in the final day. As the people of God escaped certain (if not all) of the plagues of Egypt (Exod. 8:22; 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23), so now the sealed of God escape the deception and delusion that torture those who reject the truth, for 'the Lord knoweth them that are his' (II Tim. 2:19)" (Hailey, p.228).
3. Verses 7-10: "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months."
 - a. These "warrior locusts" are described as horses armored for battle; they wore crowns as of gold on their heads; their hair was like women's hair (note: the hair makes women distinctive); their sound was as the sound of many chariots rushing into battle; they had stings like scorpions; and had power to inflict their pain for five months (a short time, relatively).
 - b. "Upon their heads rested 'as it were crowns like unto gold.' This is the only place in the Book of Revelation where the victory crown (staphanos) is used of any other than Christ and the saints; and even in this instance these are not crowns of permanent victory or of genuine gold, but 'as it were

- crowns like unto gold.’ The victory of wickedness is only an imitation of the genuine; it is never lasting or true. The locusts’ terrifying appearance and their crushing conquest will not last for ever. Their human faces indicate intelligence and show that these terrible inflictions were brought about by deluded and deceived mankind whose intelligent wills are in rebellion against God. Their spiritual faculties have been befogged by the cloud of spiritual falsehood, guile, and deceit turned loose on the earth by the evil one” (Hailey, p.230).
- c. It is obvious, even from a casual reading of the passage, that John is not describing real entities. He used the term “like unto” and “as” several times.
4. Verses 11-12: "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter."
 - a. Their king was the angel of the bottomless pit whose name was Abaddon (Hebrew), or Apollyon (Greek). The name means “Destruction” (Hebrew) and “Destroyer” (Greek). This “king” is appropriately named.
 - b. These terms appear also in these passages:
 - 1) Job 26:6: "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."
 - 2) Job 28:22: "Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears."
 - 3) Job 31:12: "For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase."
 - 4) Psalms 88:11: "Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?"
 - 5) Proverbs 15:11: "Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?"
 - 6) Proverbs 27:20: "Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied."
 - c. The judgment described under the fifth trumpet was the first of the woes predicted in Revelation 8:13: "And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!" Two more are yet to come.
 5. These descriptions are to be understood as symbolical language. What is symbolized by the locusts which arose from the pit and led by one named Destruction, a name associated with the devil?
 - a. The continuous historical view applies this vision to the rise of Mohammed; others views apply it to the barbarian hordes which invaded Rome:
 - 1) Alaric led the Visigoths in 400-410.
 - 2) Gaiseric and his vandals came in 455.
 - 3) Atilla the Hun ravaged Italy in 451.
 - 4) Odoacer (another barbarian) was crowned king of Italy in 476.
 - b. Brother Wallace applies this vision to an invasion of Judea by Rome.
 - c. Others view this vision as symbolic of a hellish spirit which is spread abroad over the earth.
 - d. Another view says that the decadence of the ancient Roman world is being described, and that God would use this internal spiritual rotteness to bring about the downfall of those who were oppressing his saints. This is the view adopted in this study.
 6. The first four trumpets described the judgment to come upon various aspects of Rome’s far-flung empire. Historical evidence shows that their Empire fell partly because of natural calamities. But internal spiritual rotteness and corruption contributed very greatly to their demise as an empire, also.
 - a. The emperors lived licentious lives; they were among the most corrupt, immoral people ever to live. They practiced fornication of every kind, committed murder, tortured their victims, had many slaves. One of them gave a big banquet at night and used the burning bodies of Christians to illuminate the festivities. They had a barbaric brand of sports—gladiators fighting to the death; vicious chariot races; forcing Christians to face ravenous lions. The people were very much like their rulers. [See under the introduction some of the details of their corrupted lives].
 - b. In the ruins of Pompeii are to be seen murals depicting all kind of sinful behavior, preserved through more than nineteen hundred years, to the shame of those decadent people.

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- c. The situation in the Roman Empire got so evil that the people became cynical toward life. They had tried everything sinful to fulfill their evil desires and found no lasting pleasure; they had nothing to live for and nothing to die for; suicide was common. This part of Revelation 9 is an extraordinary scene designed to prick the curiosity of the readers; the scene depicted never did and never will literally occur. The description is given to emphasize the whole ungodly spiritual condition of the Romans—their sins and their extravagance. Nero was homosexual—he married a young man publicly and took him on a tour. Rich men would dissolve pearls and mix them with wine, and serve to their guests. Wealth was so plentiful that it meant nothing; neither did human life. Our sinful society is nothing in comparison. Their sinfulness was indescribable, so John draws a picture of indescribable beasts to show the terrible conditions that were then prevalent. Their horrible nature could not otherwise be adequately pictured.
 - d. God would use this internal decay to bring about their downfall. They had utterly rejected the living God, tried to force Christians to revile Christ, and persecuted even to death those who followed the Lord. In every way they tried to destroy the church from the face of the earth. A concerted effort was made to destroy the Bible.
 - e. Christians were warned to have no part with this corrupted world.
 - 1) Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 3) 1 John 2:15-17: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - f. Faithful Christians would not be hurt by this corruption which afflicted Rome. Christians need material goods to survive physically, but even if we lose our wealth, we still have something to live for and to die for. A Christian might live beside a Roman citizen, suffer the same problems, but have an entirely different attitude—the Roman would be in despair; the Christian would still have his faith.
 - g. Locusts in those days were deemed a very great disaster; thus as pictured here would describe to the readers then a horrible scene. The horrible picture described was the awful spiritual condition of the people of the time. God could not allow such sin to go unpunished. The following remarks were made by Gus Nichols, a great preacher of the gospel of the preceding generation; they were made in a lecture at Memphis School of Preaching in 1971. More than thirty years have passed since these statements were made; the world Brother Nichols described was not nearly as wicked as the one in which we now reside. This makes his remarks even more poignant:
 - 1) "We are living in a time when the world needs the gospel more than anything else.... We don't need wealth and other things very much, but we need God.... It makes me rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory when I think of the sacrifices that are being made by those who are here to study the Bible for two years, day and night—to study the Bible. It's a wonderful work. When I think of the teachers and others that are working day and night and overtime, in order to impart their knowledge to somebody who can pass it on to the third generation, that we spoke about last night. You know there is the [generation of] Moses and the [generation of] Joshua, but that third generation didn't get it. And so, let us remember that we are over in the Joshua period of the church, so to speak, and if we don't pass it on to the next generation, then our children and grandchildren will suffer terribly."
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- 2) "Jesus is sure to come, not in the very distant future, if our world continues to grow worse. It can grow worse more rapidly than you have imagined. Sometimes nations go into atheism almost instantly, as with Darwin. They have the denominational preachers capable of putting atheism over, and liberalism and everything that is equal to atheism. They've got the talent, they've got the money back of it, they've got the plants. Denominationalism now is liberalism, largely, and they have largely given up the facts of the gospel and the Bible as we know and love it now. Think what a tremendous force for evil there will be when the religious people of the earth line up with the irreligious and the atheists, and begin to fight the church and the word of God, and take that which has been accepted, the theory of evolution, which is now an accepted 'science' by those who have left science and have gone over into the realm of philosophy and have begun to philosophize; because evolution is not a science; it is a theory in the realm of philosophy, instead. But when they delude the whole mass of our people upon the earth, it might be that if the world did stand a thousand years, that so few would get to heaven in that time that it would not justify the many that would be born and go to hell.
- 3) "Jesus said in Luke 18:8: '...When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?' God did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until there were just so few righteous people till they couldn't find ten. He did not destroy the world with the flood in Noah's day until there were few that were left that were righteous. Eight souls. If the time comes when this world is used for nothing but an incubator into which children are born by the millions and millions and millions, to grow up and to influence other people to sin, and to rear children that will sin, and to go to hell, and take all to hell with them who have been under their influence, God will not let this thing stand!
- 4) "I think I know God. I have been studying his word, and thinking about him and his attributes for now 64 years; carefully studying it. I think I know he is too good to let this world stand for no purpose other than to populate hell. He certainly would not do it! I am confident, therefore, that we are living in serious times.
- 5) "I would to God that we had thousands of schools like this, instead of so few. And that the churches would wake up, and encourage men, and send them, bear their expenses, and help them so that they will not suffer too much in the fiery trials as they are getting through these two years. When you go out to preach the gospel, you may have some hardships while you are getting settled and getting started, but they will all be good for you. Remember Peter says, that the trying of our 'faith is more precious than gold...though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory...' (1 Pet. 1:7-9).
- 6) "We do not see Jesus as yet; we can't endure except as seeing him when we are not. Like it is said of Moses, that he endured as seeing him who is invisible. He endured his trials and hardships as though he could just look up and see God any time he needed encouragement and strength. We need to be close to God like that, if we can be, as it were, seeing him day by day, because we will sometimes have no one else on whom we can lean for comfort and courage. Let us be of good courage then and remember that the field is the world, sow the seed, and sow as much as we can....
- 7) "Remember that, 'They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him' (Psalm 126:5,5)."

7. God would use three instruments to bring about Rome's downfall.

- a. The first, pictured by the first four trumpets, were natural calamities that weakened the Empire.
- b. The second, pictured by the fifth trumpet, was their internal corruption.
- c. The third, pictured by the sixth trumpet, would be the assaults from without.

B. Revelation 9:13-21: The Sixth Angel Sounded his Trumpet.

1. Verse 13: "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates."
 - a. When the sixth angel sounded, John heard a voice from the altar telling this angel to loose the four angels which were bound at the river Euphrates.

- b. "In the language used here there is an allusion to the temple, but the scene is evidently laid in heaven. The temple in its arrangements was designed, undoubtedly, to be in important respects a symbol of heaven, and this idea constantly occurs in the Scriptures....The golden altar stood in the holy place, between the table of show-bread and the golden candlestick....This altar, made of shittim or acacia wood, was ornamented at the four corners, and overlaid throughout with laminate of gold. Hence, it was called 'the golden altar,' in contradistinction from the altar for sacrifice, which was made of stone....On its four corners it had projections which are called horns (Ex 30:2-3), which seem to have been intended mainly for ornaments....When it is said that this was 'before God,' the meaning is, that it was directly before or in front of the symbol of the divine presence in the most holy place. This image, in the vision of John, is transformed to heaven. The voice seemed to come from the very presence of the Deity; from the place where offerings are made to God.
- 1) "....The meaning is, that the effect of his blowing the trumpet would be the same as if angels that had been bound should be suddenly loosed and suffered to go forth over the earth; that is, some event would occur which would be properly symbolized by such an act.
 - 2) "...The general meaning here is, that in the vicinity of the river Euphrates there were mighty powers which had been bound or held in check, which were now to be let loose upon the world. What we are to look for in the fulfillment is evidently this—some power that seemed to be kept back by an invisible influence as if by angels, now suddenly let loose and suffered to accomplish the purpose of desolation mentioned in the subsequent verses. It is not necessary to suppose that angels were actually employed in these restraints....
 - 3) "[Which are bound] That is, they seemed to be bound. There was something which held them, and the forces under them, in check, until they were thus commanded to go forth. In the fulfillment of this it will be necessary to look for something of the nature of a check or restraint on these forces, until they were commissioned to go forth to accomplish the work of destruction.
 - 4) [In the great river Euphrates] The well-known river of that name, commonly called, in the Scriptures, 'the great river,' and, by way of eminence, 'the river,' Ex 23:31; Isa 8:7. This river was on the east of Palestine; and the language used here naturally denotes that the power referred to under the sixth trumpet would spring up in the East, and that it would have its origin in the vicinity of that river. Those interpreters, therefore, who apply this to the invasion of Judaea by the Romans have great difficulty in explaining this—as the forces employed in the destruction of Jerusalem came from the West, and not from the East. The fair interpretation is, that there were forces in the vicinity of the Euphrates which were, up to this period, bound or restrained, but which were now suffered to spread woe and sorrow over a considerable portion of the world" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
2. Verses 15-16: "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."
 - a. These four angels were loosed; they were prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year to slay the third part of men. A great army of horsemen numbering 200,000,000 was seen by John. In regular formation they would be a mile wide, 85 miles long [Summers, p.159).
 - b. "And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men....Each knew his appointed time. Four is the number used to denote universality in things of this world (see on Rev 4:6). The number, therefore, seems to imply that the power of the angels is of universal extent. The third part are destroyed; that is, a great part, though not the larger (cf. Rev 8:7, et seq.)....The symbol is, no doubt, chosen to signify power, of which horsemen or cavalry are an emblem. Were two hundred thousand thousand; or, twice myriads of myriads (cf. Jude 14-16, which is a quotation from Enoch; also Dan 7:10). The number is, of course, not to be taken literally, but as signifying an exceeding great multitude....He states this, since so vast a multitude would be innumerable" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 3. Verses 17-19: "And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths."

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- a. The riders had breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; the horses had heads like lions; out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. The fire, smoke and brimstone slew a third part of men. Their power to harm was in their mouths and in their tails which were like unto serpents (and had heads).
 - b. “And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them....The description intensifies the terrible nature of the vision, and it is doubtful whether these details should be pressed to a particular interpretation. If they bear any meaning at all, they seem to point to the doom in wait for the wicked, whose portion is fire and brimstone (cf. Ps 11:6). And the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone; proceedeth fire, etc. (Revised Version). Here, as in the preceding clause, the intention is evidently to enhance the terrible appearance of the vision....The horses, in accordance with a well-known poetic figure, are said to breathe out ‘fire and smoke.’ Brimstone is mentioned in addition, in order to set forth plainly the fact that their acts are directed against the wicked (cf. Gen 19:24; Job 18:15; Ps 11:6; Ezek 38:23; Isa 30:33; Luke 17:29). Lions' teeth are mentioned in the description of locusts, with the same purpose (ver. 8)....
 - 1) “By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths; by these three plagues (as in Revised Version).... ‘The third part’ again a large, but not the largest, part of mankind (see on Rev 8:7). The locusts were forbidden to kill (ver. 5); these horsemen are permitted to do so. Each judgment of the trumpet visions appears to increase in severity.
 - 2) “We may here see portrayed the terrible and destructive character of the results of sin. Such results are experienced to the full by the third part of men, the large class who ‘repent not of their murders, nor of their sorceries,’ etc. (ver. 21)” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
4. Verses 20-21: "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."
- a. Those who were not slain by these plagues repented not of their evil, but continued to worship devils and idols; nor did they repent of their murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts.
 - b. “And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues; the rest of mankind (Revised Version). That is, the two thirds (ver. 18)....Mankind must be taken to mean the worldly only. Of the ungodly, some are killed (the third part), the rest yet do not repent. The vision is not concerned with the fate of the righteous. Yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. ‘The works of their hands’ refers to idolatry, as shown by the succeeding words. This verse begins to prepare us for the seventh judgment. Men will not repent; therefore the last final judgment becomes necessary. The absurdity of idolatrous worship is frequently thus set forth by Old Testament writers (cf. Ps 115:4; 135:15; Isa 2:8; Ezek 22:1,4; Hos 13:2). See also the description in Dan 5:23 which seems to have suggested the wording of this part of the vision. It has been well remarked that in this verse mention is made of sins against God; in the following verse man's sins against his neighbours are detailed...” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. The passage does not address the state of the faithful saints—only the fate of the unrighteous is being delineated. It seems terribly strange that the wicked will not open their eyes to spiritual reality! Every accountable person can know whether his life is what it ought to be. Even those who deny the very existence of God are without excuse (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 14:1).
 - 1) Romans 1:18-20: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."
 - 2) Romans 1:22-26: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of
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- their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature."
- 3) Romans 1:28-32: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
- d. The sin described is idolatry. All kinds of evil conduct was connected with the worship of idols. It was sinful of itself, and it promoted other forms of sin. "The folly of sacrificing to idols is set forth in Revelation as John scathingly says, 'which can neither see, nor hear, nor talk.' This, too, is reminiscent of the Old Testament Scriptures where God repeatedly warned His people against idolatry, spelling out the lifeless impotence of idols and testifying to the people that all who worship such objects will become like them (Deut. 4:28; Ps. 115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa. 44:12-20; cf. Also Dan. 5:23)" (Hailey, p.238).
- 1) Deuteronomy 4:28: "And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell."
- 2) Psalms 115:4-8: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."
- 3) Psalms 135:15-18: "The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them are like unto them: so is every one that trusteth in them."
- 4) Isaiah 44:9-20: "They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together. The smith with the tongs both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea, he is hungry, and his strength faileth: he drinketh no water, and is faint. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"
- 5) Daniel 5:23: "But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the

vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified."

5. The explanation, as indicated above, is found in the assaults made against Rome by enemy armies. Two other significant views:
 - a. The continuous historical view says reference is to the Turkish expansion in the 11th century.
 - b. Brother Wallace says the Roman invasion of Palestine in 70 A.D. is meant.
 - c. The Parthians were a powerful enemy of Rome, and may have been the ones who would bring the judgment upon the Empire.
6. The Euphrates River was the ancient eastern boundary of the Jewish Empire (2 Sam. 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21). The four angels are pictured as coming from this locality. The ancient enemy of Israel in Old Testament times was Babylon, which was centered in the Euphrates River valley. John's readers would be able to see in this symbolism a picture of a powerful enemy, coming from without, bent on destruction. This invading horde was not coming against the church, but against the enemy of the church—Rome. It was coming, not entirely by its own volition, but as an instrument in God's hands to punish a wicked people who would not repent of their idolatry, murder, etc.
 - a. John used the idea of boundaries to suggest that this blow against the church's enemy would come from without, thus would be foreign forces. This brings to light the third cause of Rome's fall:
 - 1) Natural calamities.
 - 2) Internal rotteness.
 - 3) Foreign invaders. Reference is probably not to any particular invader; they came against Rome in wave after wave beginning in the first century. After the Parthian army defeated the Roman army, other nations realized Rome was not invincible. The attacks began in earnest in the second century, became more numerous in the third century, and by the fourth century the Roman army had grown weak and its soldiers undisciplined; the Empire was ripe for overthrow. The Roman soldiers could see that their earlier conquests gave wealth to the powerful people back home; after a while there would not appear to be anything important enough to fight for. The internal corruption of the people would demoralize the common soldiers. The soldiers would also indulge in the common vices which in turn would erode their discipline, fighting spirit, and physical strength.
 - b. Information about the Parthians:
 - 1) "Parthia proper was a small territory to the Southeast of the Caspian Sea, about 300 miles long by 120 wide, a fertile though mountainous region, bordering on the desert tract of Eastern Persia.
 - a) "Not long after, the power of Rome came into contact with Armenia and Parthia. In 66 BC when, after subduing Mithridates of Pontus, Pompey came into Syria, Phraates III made an alliance with him against Armenia, but was offended by the way in which he was treated and thought of turning against his ally, but refrained for the time being. It was only a question of time when the two powers would come to blows, for Parthia had become an empire and could ill brook the intrusion of Rome into Western Asia. It was the ambition and greed of Crassus that brought about the clash of Rome and Parthia. When he took the East as his share of the Roman world as apportioned among the triumvirs, he determined to rival Caesar in fame and wealth by subduing Parthia, and advanced across the Euphrates on his ill-fated expedition in 53 BC. The story of his defeat and death and the destruction of the army and loss of the Roman eagles is familiar to all readers of Roman history.
 - b) "It revealed Parthia to the world as the formidable rival of Rome, which she continued to be for nearly 3 centuries....Antony's attempt to subdue them proved abortive, and his struggle with Octavian compelled him to relinquish the project. The Parthians were unable to take advantage of the strife in the Roman empire on account of troubles at home....Each had learned to respect the power of the other, and, although contention arose regarding the suzerainty of Armenia, peace was not seriously disturbed between them for about 130 years, or until the reign of Trajan....
 - c) "The contest with Rome over Armenia was settled in the days of Nero in a manner satisfactory to both parties, so that peace was not broken for 50 years. The ambition of Trajan led him to

disregard the policy inaugurated by Augustus....After the conquest of Dacia he turned his attention to the East and resolved on the invasion of Parthia....He subdued Armenia, took Upper Mesopotamia, Adiabene (Assyria), Ctesiphon, the capital, and reached the Persian Gulf, but was obliged to turn back by revolts in his rear and failed to reduce the fortress of Hatra. The conquered provinces were restored, however, by Hadrian, and the Parthians did not retaliate until the reign of Aurelius, when they overran Syria, and in 162 AD Lucius Verus was sent to punish them. In the following year he drove them back and advanced into the heart of the Parthian empire, inflicting the severest blow it had yet received. It was evident that the empire was on the decline, and the Romans did not meet with the resistance they had experienced in former times. Severus and Caracalla both made expeditions into the country, and the latter took the capital and massacred the inhabitants, but after his assassination his successor, Macrinus, fought a three days' battle with the Parthians at Nisibis in which he was worsted and was glad to conclude a peace by paying an indemnity of some 1,500,000 British pounds (217 AD)" [International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by Biblsoft].

- 2) "Parthia, ancient empire of Asia, in what are now Iran and Afghanistan. The Parthians were of Scythian descent, and adopted Median dress and Aryan speech. They were excellent horsemen and archers. In battle, mounted Parthians often discharged their arrows back toward the enemy while pretending to flee; this is the origin of the phrase 'a Parthian shot.' Parthia was subject successively to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians under Alexander the Great, and Seleucids. About 250 BC the Parthians succeeded in founding an independent kingdom that, during the 1st century BC, grew into an empire extending from the Euphrates River to the Indus River and from the Oxus (now Amu Darya) River to the Indian Ocean. The main Parthian cities were Seleucia, Ctesiphon, and Hecatompylos. After the middle of the 1st century BC Parthia was a rival of Rome, and several wars occurred between the two powers. In AD 224 Parthia was conquered by Artashir I, king of Persia and founder of the Sassanid dynasty" (Encarta).
- 3) "Parthia, in the mind of the writer of the Acts, would designate the great empire the Parthians built up, which extended from India to the Tigris and from the Chorasmian desert to the shores of the southern ocean. Hence the prominent position of the name Parthians in the list of those present at Pentecost. Parthia was a power almost rivaling Rome—the only existing power that had tried its strength against Rome and not been defeated in the encounter. The Parthian dominion lasted for nearly five centuries, commencing in the third century before Christ. The Parthians seized Jerusalem in 40 B.C., and Rome made Herod king of Judea at that time to check the formidable westward push of the Parthian Empire" [The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
- 4) "Free Parthians amused themselves with hunting, ate and drank abundantly, and never went on foot when they could ride. They were brave warriors and honorable foes, treated prisoners decently, admitted foreigners to high office, and gave asylum to refugees; sometimes, however, they mutilated dead enemies, tortured witnesses, and corrected trifling offenses with the scourge. They practiced polygamy according to their means, veiled and secluded their women, severely punished the infidelity of their wives, but permitted divorce to either sex almost at will. When the Parthian general Surena led an army against Crassus he took with him 200 concubines and a thousand camels for his baggage. All in all the Parthians impress us as less civilized than the Achaemenid Persians and more honorable gentlemen than the Romans. They were tolerant of religious diversities, allowing the Greeks, Jews, and Christians among them to practice their rituals unhindered....On the death of Vologases IV (A.D. 209) his sons Vologases V and Artabanus IV fought for the throne. Artabanus won, and then defeated the Romans at Nisibis. Three centuries of war between the empires ended in a modified victory for Parthia; on the Mesopotamian plains the Roman legions were at a disadvantage against the Parthian cavalry" (Will Durant, Caesar and Christ, pp.529f).
- 5) "The Parthian Empire lasted until about A.D. 224. The Parthians built a large empire across eastern Asia Minor and southwest Asia. During the last 200 years of their rule, the Parthians had to fight the Romans in the west and the Kushans in what is now Afghanistan. Civil wars erupted in the Parthian Empire. In about A.D. 224, a Persian named Artashir overthrew the Parthians and seized the Parthian Empire. After more than 550 years under other rulers, Persians again ruled

Persia” (World Book).

- c. The material loss due to natural calamities would make the Romans sick at heart; but their spiritual corruption was the real cause of the fall of their empire. These were manifestations of God’s wrath which had the purpose of bringing about repentance, but they would not repent. The saints could take courage from these descriptions. "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).
 - d. “This completes the three instruments. Running like a thread through the entire work by Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, is the truth that three great things combined to overthrow the Roman Empire. They were partly working in John’s day. The three were natural calamity, internal rottenness, and external invasion. All these are symbolized in Revelation as instruments ready for God’s use to rescue his people. Natural calamity (flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption), internal rottenness (a long line of corrupt rulers), and external invasion (from new and old enemies) combined to overthrow what appeared to be so invincible.
 - 1) “Verses 20 and 21 indicate that such judgments as the above were judgments on the world power, not on the Christians. The Christians might suffer from them but not in judgment. They may be a part of their trial as they mix with the world during their earthly pilgrimage, but trial is not judgment.
 - 2) “The vision is given as a means of reassurance to the Christians to help them see that Rome will never triumph over Christianity. The judgments were to be sent as punitive measures on the wicked oppressors and as a call to repentance. This is indicated when we see in these verses that the rest of the men, those not injured by the plagues, refused to repent and turn from their evil: idols, murders, sorceries, thefts, and fornications. Still after the sixfold judgment they continued in their evil ways. Nothing would make them repent. Nothing is left for them except the still heavier judgments of God” (Summers, pp.159f).
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REVELATION 10

The Little Book

A. This Is Another Interlude Coming Between the Sounding of the Sixth and Seventh Trumpets.

1. A similar interruption occurred between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals. In each case two consolatory visions are given. Here, the first consoling vision is in chapter ten; the second is in 11:1-13. These two visions contain two symbols each: The angel standing on the earth and the sea plus John eating the little book; the measuring of the temple and the story of the two witnesses. Revelation 7 contains the consoling visions between the opening of the last two seals.
2. The purpose of the interruptions is to offer comfort and encouragement to the Christians. In the first interruption (Rev. 7), which followed the judgment scene of Revelation 6, the saints were consoled by (1) the vision in which they were sealed with the seal of God, and (2) by the heavenly scene in which those who were faithful are pictured as being in heaven before God's throne. In the latter interruption, another set of two visions is given for the purpose of consoling the suffering saints.
3. Suppose we (Christians) were living in America and our country was persecuting us like the Romans did our brethren then. God could use a corrupt system like Communism or Islam to punish America and thus bring relief to his people. Information about this upcoming punishment would be a source of encouragement to us, in order for us to successfully endure the persecution we were undergoing. We would be interested in the future welfare of ourselves, our families, and the cause of Christ. Prophetic information regarding the final outcome of the struggle would be needed for our consolation and encouragement. Just so with the case of our brethren in the first century [at that time, inspiration was still in progress and miracles were being wrought]. If these things are going to affect Rome so severely, how would it affect Christians? If the judgment indicated would finish Rome, would it also be the end of Christianity? It would not!

B. Revelation 10:1-11: The Little Book Episode

1. Verses 1-3: "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices."
 - a. John saw, as this vision unfolded, another strong angel, clothed with a cloud, with a rainbow upon his head, coming down from heaven. His face is likened to the sun and his feet unto pillars of fire. But one of the most impressive parts of the scene is the little book he held open in his hand—it must have great importance. After setting his right foot on the sea and his left on the earth, he raised a great shout; then came the great voices of seven thunders.
 - b. A very impressive scene is thus introduced. The description of the angel is given for effect—it contains two similes and two hyperboles.
 - c. The importance of the message (indicated by the open book) is shown by the angel situated on the sea and land—something with an application to all mankind.
 - d. The number seven carries the imprint of perfection and completeness; the wrath depicted would be full. Thunders are used in Revelation as precursors of divine wrath.
 - 1) Revelation 8:5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - 2) Revelation 11:19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail."
 - 3) Revelation 16:18: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."
2. Verse 4: "And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."
 - a. John was about to write down the things uttered by the seven thunders, but an unidentified voice from

heaven told him not to write this. John had been ordered to write the things he was to see (1:11), but the things spoken by the thunders were not to be recorded; the specifics were not to be given; no more warnings would be offered. The thunders not only made a noise, but spoke an intelligible message.

- b. "Throughout the Apocalypse we find frequent mention of a voice, without any definite statement as to the possessor....Here it seems best to identify the 'voice from heaven' with that of Rev 1, where it is probably Christ himself (see on Rev 1:10). Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not (cf. Dan 12:4, 'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end;' also Acts 1:7, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power;' also Rev 22:10, 'And he saith unto me. Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand'). As stated in the note on ver. 2, not all God's purposes are revealed. Here we have a positive indication that some truths are withheld. It is useless to speculate on the nature of that which is purposely concealed from us. The probable conclusions which we may deduce are well put by Alford: 'From the very character of thunder, that the utterances were of fearful import; from the place which they hold, that they relate to the Church; from the command to conceal them, first, encouragement, that God in his tender mercy to his own does not reveal all his terrors; secondly, godly fear, seeing that the arrows of his quiver are not exhausted, but besides things expressly foretold, there are more behind not revealed to us'" [The Pulpit Commentary, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
3. Verses 5-7: "And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) ASV: "And the angel that I saw standing upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that are therein, and the sea and the things that are therein, that there shall be delay no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then is finished they mystery of God, according to the good tidings which he declared to his servants the prophets."
 - 2) NJKV: "The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised up his hand to heaven 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, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."
 - b. The mighty angel of verse 1 spoke, swearing by the Almighty that "time" should be no more but should be concluded as he declared to the prophets. Time (delay—Matt: 24:48 (ASV): "My lord **tarrieth**"). The things to come would not be delayed. The text expresses a strong affirmation that God would not delay, but would surely bring the punishment promised in the trumpet visions. The things God has promised will not be delayed. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1).
 - 1) NT:5549: "chronizo (khron-id'-zo); from NT:5550; to take time, i.e. linger: KJV—delay, tarry" [BibleSoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance].
 - 2) NT:5550: "chronos (khron'-os); of uncertain derivation; a space of time (in general, and thus properly distinguished from NT:2540, which designates a fixed or special occasion; and from NT:165, which denotes a particular period) or interval; by extension, an individual opportunity; by implication, delay" [ibid.].
 - c. The natural calamities began in earnest shortly before the end of the first century (Rev. 8); the evil effects of the internal corruption of the empire (9:1-12) would soon come to fruition; and the foreign invaders would not be delayed in bringing to bear their destruction (9:13-21). These are prophetic statements but given in apocalyptic language; no specific details are given, but the definite destruction of the church's enemies is outlined; it will be sure, definite, and final; Christians will be vindicated,

justified and rewarded for faithfulness.

- d. What is the mystery? Who are the prophets?
 - 1) Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." God's kingdom would stand; the others would fall.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Before the papacy arose, the Roman Empire must first fall. When the events of the seventh trumpet were completed, the end of the Empire will have been assured.
 - 3) "Finished" [assured]—in God's mind the deed was already accomplished. Before Jericho was delivered into Israel's hands, God stated that it was already theirs: "And the LORD said unto Joshua, See, I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, and the mighty men of valour" (Josh. 6:2). Finished: "NT:5055 teleo (tel-eh'-o); from NT:5056; to end, ie. complete, execute, conclude, discharge (a debt): KJV—accomplish, make an end, expire, fill up, finish, go over, pay, perform" [Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance].
 - 4) The mystery includes information about the destruction of Rome as per Daniel 2:44-45: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."
 - 5) Hailey suggests that the "mystery was God's plan for human redemption, conceived in his mind, after the counsel of his will, and summed up in Christ (Eph. 1:9-11; 3:8-11)....This mystery was something that man could not know until it was revealed. In the gospel Christ was being preached, 'according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, is made known unto all nations unto obedience of faith' (Rom. 16:25-26). This complete fulfilling of God's mystery and its revelation was about to be finished. To finish (from teleo) means 'to bring to an end, complete something...to carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill' (A.& G; so Thayer and Vine); hence, that purpose which the prophets looked forward to and the apostles preached was about to reach the completion of its fullness—it would not terminate, but be carried out in its entirety" (pp.245f).
4. Verses 8-10: "And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."
 - a. The voice from heaven instructed John to take the little book; the angel told him to eat the book, which

would be sweet to the taste but bitter in the belly. To eat the book means to learn and assimilate the message, thoroughly mastering its meaning. To receive the revelation was pleasant, but when he had to preach it, it was not pleasant. There is delight in being entrusted with the word of God, but it is not so delightful to preach its hard sayings. To study the Bible is pleasant, but to stand before people who need it but do not want it is not very pleasant. No preacher enjoys taking the brethren to task, exposing sin, calling for repentance.

- 1) 2 Timothy 2:1-4: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:2-5: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
- b. John would find the reception of the revelation a pleasant thing but would not enjoy it so much when he presented these dire woes before men. It can be unpleasant in consequence when the truth is presented. As John now sees the significance of the visions, what great suffering and tragedy is about to come, then he could see what an unfortunate future awaited the enemies of God!
 - c. "From a close study of the entire context, it appears that the content of the book has to do with matters of sorrow and woe—this is true in Ezekiel 2:8ff. When Ezekiel had swallowed the book, he was required to utter lamentations and woes upon ancient Israel. So with this book, whatever it contained it was a message which meant sorrow for John as he delivered it. It appears, therefore, that the message was rather general: woes upon men under God's judgment for having rejected him, woes upon Christians in the hands of their enemies, woes upon the church in conflict with the great world-power Rome, woes upon Rome and her great destruction. Perhaps it is a combination of all these things since he was to prophesy to 'many peoples and nations and tongues and kings'" (Summers, pp.261f).
 - d. There is a parallel usage of this figure in Ezekiel:
 - 1) Ezekiel 2:1-10: "And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."
 - 2) Ezekiel 3:1-3: "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."
5. Verse 11: "And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."
 - a. Parallel translations:
 - 1) ASV: "And they say unto me, Thou must prophesy again over many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."

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- 2) NKJV: "And he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."
- 3) ESV: "You must again prophesy about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."
- b. John is told that he must prophesy again before many people, nations, tongues, and kings. Before [epi]: "as to, concerning" (Berry, Thayer, p.234; cf. ASV, margin). The passage is not saying that John must go and prophesy in the presence of the people indicated; but rather that he was to prophesy again "concerning" kings, etc.
- c. John has been prophesying about kings (but has not named any), people (but has not identified them by name), of languages (but has not specified what they are), and of nations (but has not given the name of any of them). This is the nature of apocalyptic literature.
- d. John's work was not finished yet: he must again prophesy concerning the people indicated. Even though he has assimilated the book, his job is not over. "Again" [palin]: "joined to verbs of all sorts, it denotes renewal or repetition of the action" (Thayer, p. 475). [Some use this point to assert that Revelation 12-22 is a repeat in different symbols of the things symbolized in the first 11 chapters].
6. More about the little book episode from Hailey:
- a. "Some have concluded that it is the open Word of the gospel and that within it there is the sweet and the bitter of its message—both salvation and judgment. However, the sealed book of chapter five contained God's purpose and salvation, set forth in the gospel, and consequences and judgment that would follow. Also, the similarity between Ezekiel's 'roll of a book' in which were written 'lamentations, and mourning, and woe' (Ezek. 2:1), and that which John was to eat, shows that it is unlikely that this little book was the gospel.
- b. "John's previous prophecies (chapters 1—10) had been of hope and assurance to the saints and of judgment upon the world of the wicked. To this point specific forces of evil have not been identified. Probably the fresh charge to prophesy concerning 'peoples and nations and tongues and kings' refers to the prophecies of chapter 11—22, the second section of the book. In it we shall find that judgments of strong secular powers, religious forces, and worldly seductive influences, together with the victory of God's people over all these antagonists, occupy the attention of the seer with more specific application. We believe this to be the significance of the seer's eating the little book, and of its sweetness and bitterness. It was sweet to learn that God's cause would be victorious in His saints, but it was bitter to prophesy of their suffering and of the destructive judgments which would befall the wicked world" (p.248).
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REVELATION 11

The Interlude Continues and The Seventh Angel Sounds

A. Revelation 11:1-2: The Measuring of the Temple.

1. What is to become of God's faithful people during the period of great trials and judgments? The 144,000 who were numbered and sealed in Chapter 7 are now represented as a measured temple of worshipers, separated from the world and under divine protection (Hailey). They are also described under the symbol of "holy city."
2. "Because John is told to rise and measure the temple, some writers conclude that the Jewish temple was yet standing, indicating that John wrote before its destruction, in A.D. 70. However, it must be kept in mind that this is a vision, and that in a vision an object can be seen, whether or not it actually exists. The Greek word here for temple is the sanctuary (naos) and not the temple (hieron) with its buildings, courts, and porches (cf. John 2:14). Since so much of the image in John's visions reflect the early period of Hebrew national history, it is possible that the sanctuary of the Old Testament tabernacle is before him. That sanctuary had only one court, with the altar and ark of the covenant within it; as reflected in the Book of Hebrews, the tabernacle was a type of the church" (Hailey, pp.249f).
3. Verse 1: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."
 - a. John is given a reed (a measuring rod) and told to measure the temple, the altar, and the worshipers. This reference to the temple has given rise to the view that the Jewish temple was still standing in Jerusalem, and thus that John wrote Revelation before A.D. 70. But in the symbology of Revelation, an object can be represented in a vision whether or not the item pictured actually exists. Remember Revelation 1:1: signify (the same word is used elsewhere):
 - 1) Revelation 1:1: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John."
 - 2) John 12:32-33: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." [The reference to "lifting up" denoted crucifixion].
 - 3) John 18:31-32: "Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." [When the Lord spoke of being crucified, he thus implied that he would be executed by the Romans, not by the Jews, who used stoning as their means of execution].
 - 4) John 21:18-19: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." [By his statement, Christ showed Peter that he would be martyred].
 - 5) Acts 11:27-28: "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." [The prophet revealed by his prophecy that a great drought and famine would befall the earth].
 - 6) Acts 21:10-11: "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." [Agabas, by binding his own hands and feet with Paul's belt, signified the arrest of the apostle in Jerusalem].
 - b. The Greek word for "temple" here is naos ("sanctuary") and not hieron ("temple"—John 2:14). The Jewish temple ceased to be "the temple of God" when the Jews rejected Christ: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would

I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matt. 23:37-38).

- 1) The Old Testament tabernacle (and later, the temple) was a type of the New Testament church. The temple of God here is a reference to the New Testament church.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 6:16: "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."
 - c) Galatians 6:15-16: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - d) Ephesians 2:20-22: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."
 - e) Ephesians 3:21: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - f) Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."
 - g) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - h) 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
 - i) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
- 2) The measuring was for the purpose of giving the Lord's church special care and preservation during the ongoing troubles. The symbol of measuring depicts God's full knowledge of his own. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, **The Lord knoweth them that are his.** And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).
4. Verse 2: "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."
 - a. John was told to omit measuring the outer court: the court of the Gentiles. The tabernacle had only one court (Ex. 27:9); Solomon's temple had several courts (1 Kings 6:36; 7:12; 2 Chron. 4:9; Jer. 36:10); Herod's temple had several courts, the great outer court was known as the "court of the Gentiles" because it was open to everyone. Gentiles were not allowed beyond a certain point under the penalty of death.
 - b. The temple of this vision is pictured as having a single outer court, which was not to be measured: it was to be left out and cast away from God's protection. It was left to the Gentiles (the heathen, pagans). The tabernacle had only one outer court, and is evidently the image John sees in the vision.
 - c. The Gentiles would tread the holy city under foot for 42 months. Seven is said to be the number of perfection; half of seven (3½, 42 months) would be an incomplete or indefinite number. For an indefinite period of time the Gentiles would tread under foot the holy city. The figure has changed from the temple to the holy city.
 - d. The holy city of this passage represents spiritual Jerusalem (the church). The Gentile nations (the Roman Empire) would oppress the holy city for an indefinite period of time. But God here vows to protect the church (his temple, the holy city), seeing that it would survive being trampled under the foot of the persecutor.
 - e. The 1260 days of verse 3 represents the same indefinite period of time. Forty-two months, of course,

has 1,260 days (with each month having thirty days).

B. Revelation 11:3-13: The Two Witnesses.

1. Various views by commentators:
 - a. Futurists say that two literal men are meant who will come toward the end of time.
 - b. Historists say that the two witnesses are the Old and New Testaments, and the 1260 days are 1260 years of the dark ages from the third century to the reformation.
 - c. Bro. Wallace's preterist view is that the prophets of the Old Testament and the New Testament apostles are the 2 witnesses, and the 1260 days represent the time of the Roman siege of Jerusalem.
2. These views would offer little or no comfort and encouragement to the first century saint to whom it was initially addressed. If our contextual view is correct, Revelation was intended to be a source of comfort and encouragement to the suffering saint of that time; and that we must look to the context of that time in order to find the key to the meaning of the symbology of the book. The brethren then would have little interest in some apostasy hundreds of years in the future; what they needed and wanted was a message of hope and consolation to assist them in getting through the terrible tribulations they faced daily. The criterion in every attempt to rediscover John's message must be, What did this message mean to Christians in John's day? (Cf. Summers).
 - a. One view of this section is that it represents an assurance God is giving the church then that their work and suffering for Christ were not in vain.
 - b. The two witnesses may simply represent the militancy of the church—the saints collectively and individually doing the job Christ gave them to do.
 - c. Another view is that the two witness may be the apostles of Christ and the prophets of the New Testament era (Eph. 3:5). Another view is that the Jewish and Gentile Christians are these witnesses.
 - d. Whatever their identity, the following information regarding witnesses is significant: Two or three witnesses were required to establish a charge against someone.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 17:6: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 19:15: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."
 - 3) Matthew 18:16: "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 5:19: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses."
 - e. There is greater strength in two than in one; the Lord sent the disciples out by twos.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."
 - 2) Mark 6:7: "And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits."
 - f. These two points indicate why there were TWO witnesses.
3. Verse 3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."
 - a. The two witnesses were given power from the Lord to prophesy for 1260 days, an indefinite period of time. Their work would be done in sackcloth—a term indicating suffering and sorrow. These witnesses are simply the saints of that era doing their work of preaching the gospel. Their work had to be done under trying circumstances, for there was much opposition.
 - b. Barnes provides these ideas about the two witnesses:
 - 1) The word "two" evidently denotes that the number would be small; and yet it is not necessary to confine it literally to two persons, or to two societies or communities. Perhaps the meaning is, that as, under the law, two witnesses were required, and were enough, to establish any fact (notes on John 8:17), such a number would during those times be preserved from apostasy as would be sufficient to keep up the evidence of truth; to testify against the prevailing abominations, errors,

- and corruptions; to show what was the real church, and to bear a faithful witness against the wickedness of the world. The law of Moses required that there should be two witnesses on a trial, and this, under that law, was deemed a competent number. See Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16; John 5:30-33. The essential meaning of this passage then is, that there would be "a competent number" of witnesses in the case; that is, as many as would be regarded as sufficient to establish the points concerning which they would testify, with perhaps the additional idea that the number would be small.
- 2) There is no reason for limiting it strictly to two persons, or for supposing that they would appear 11 in pairs, two and two; nor is it necessary to suppose that it refers particularly to two people or nations. The word rendered "witnesses" - *marturi* - is that from which we have derived the word "martyr." It means properly one who bears testimony, either in a judicial sense (Matt 18:16; 26:65), or one who can in any way testify to the truth of what he has seen and known, Luke 24:48; Rom 1:9; Phil 1:8; 1 Thess 2:10; 1 Tim 6:12. Then it came to be employed in the sense in which the word "martyr" is now to denote one who, amidst great sufferings or by his death, bears witness to the truth; that is, one who is so confident of the truth, and so upright, that he will rather lay down his life than deny the truth of what he has seen and known, Acts 22:20; Rev 2:13. In a similar sense it comes to denote one who is so thoroughly convinced on a subject that it is not susceptible of being seen and heard, or who is so attached to one that he is willing to lay down his life as the evidence of his conviction and attachment. The word, as used here, refers to those who, during this period of "forty and two months," would thus be witnesses for Christ in the world; that is, who would bear their testimony to the truth of his religion, to the doctrines which he had revealed, and to what was required of man—who would do this amidst surrounding error and corruption, and when
 - c. The Pulpit Commentary offers this view:
 - 1) "The vision is evidently founded on that in Zech 4, where it is emblematical of the restored temple [The restored temple of Ezekiel is a figurative depiction of the Lord's church, the kingdom of God—bw], which only in the preceding verse (Rev 11:2) is a type of the elect of God's Church....
 - 2) "The Apocalypse continually represents the Church of God, after the pattern of the life of Christ, in three aspects—that of conflict and degradation; that of preservation; that of triumph....
 - 3) "It is not probable that two individuals are meant; for (a) as we have shown throughout the Apocalypse, the application is invariably to principles and societies, though this may include particular applications in certain cases; (b) it is inconceivable that Moses and Elias, or any other of the saints of God, should return from Paradise to suffer as these two witnesses; (c) our Lord expressly explained the reference to the coming of Elias, and declared that he had already come; and (d) there seems no more reason for interpreting these two witnesses literally of two men, than for interpreting Sodom and Egypt in their ordinary geographical signification in ver. 8.
 4. Verse 4: "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."
 - a. The two witnesses are described as two olive trees and two candlesticks (lamp stands). The olive tree furnished the oil that was burned in the lamps. Thus, these witnesses are represented as bearing light for a world in darkness.
 - b. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks. The 'two olive trees' and the 'two candlesticks' are here identical.... These are identical so far as being God's witnesses; the Church derives her stores from the Word of God, the light of the Word of God is manifested through the Church. Standing before the God of the earth; the Lord of the earth (Revised Version). The participle is masculine, though the preceding article and nouns are feminine, probably as being more in keeping with the masculine character under which the two witnesses are depicted. Perhaps he is described as the 'Lord of the earth,' since the witnesses are to prophesy before all the earth (cf. ver. 9 and Matt 24:14)" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 5. Verses 5-6: "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These 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."
 - a. These witnesses possessed power during this phase of their work. They could defend themselves with power; they could cause the rain to be stayed and turn water into blood. In the days of Elijah God held

back the rain at the request of that great prophet (1 Kings 17:1; Jas 5:17-18). God caused the waters of Egypt to be turned into blood in the days of Moses (Ex. 7:20-21). Elijah called down fire from heaven to devour certain enemies (2 Kings 1:10-14). Hail accompanied with fire was one of the plagues brought against Egypt by Moses (Ex. 9:22-26); and fire consumed 250 men who joined with Korah's rebellion against Moses (Num 16:31-35).

- b. These two witnesses would possess power to prevail against their opponents. "Because ye [unfaithful Jews] speak this word, behold, I will make my words in thy [Jeremiah's] mouth fire, and this people [unfaithful Jews] wood, and it shall devour them" (Jer. 5:14). It is evident that these plagues and judgments given through the two witnesses were not literal, for no such things were literally done by Christians. The point is that God would make sure that their work succeeded. The power was spiritual.
 - 1) Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) Acts 8:1: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 5) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - 6) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - c. The persecution of the church simply increased their zeal, and caused Gentiles to be more receptive to the gospel. God was able to accomplish his aim of bringing down the Roman kingdom by his spiritual kingdom: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
6. Verses 7-8: "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."
 - a. They would finish their testimony; then the beast from the bottomless pit would ascend, make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. Their dead bodies would lie unburied in the street.
 - b. The Roman Emperor is the beast; the city where the witnesses would be slain is likened unto Sodom (the epitome of evil, filth) and Egypt (the symbol of bondage); where the Lord was crucified: the authority behind the crucifixion of Christ was Rome.
 - 1) Christ was crucified at Jerusalem, but it was by the authority of Rome [through its legally appointed governor—Pilate] that he was executed.
 - 2) Some might claim that this is an obvious reference to Jerusalem, thus the city was still standing, and that the proper interpretation of Revelation is to assign its message to the destruction of Jerusalem. But we remember that the items we encounter in the book are symbolic. Jerusalem here represents something else, and is not Jerusalem itself. The identity of the city was thus described to prevent the enemies from knowing John was speaking of Rome.
 - c. The Roman persecution of the church would appear to be on the verge of destroying it from the earth. Seemingly, their cause was destitute and hopeless—as though it were dead. The power of Rome had

been manipulated to bring about the death of Christ; this same power was now being used voluntarily and even happily against the Lord's church. There were various reasons why the might of Rome was brought against Christianity.

- 1) Christians had used the power of the gospel and, in special cases, supernatural powers, to assault the wickedness and sin of the majority. The truth hurt—it was therefore hated and opposed.
 - 2) At the first, the Roman world viewed Christianity as merely a branch of Judaism; since Judaism was an accepted religion in the empire, so the church was allowed to exist without Roman opposition. But when the truth began to be more fully understood, the religion of Christ was not extended official recognition as an acceptable religion—being a new religion, it did not have the sanction of Roman law. When Rome conquered a nation, they permitted the established religions of that nation to remain intact; they did not permit the establishment of any new religion. This was the charge Paul and Silas faced in Philippi: “And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely” (Acts 16:20-23).
 - 3) Requiring the people of the empire to pay homage to Roman gods and to worship the emperor as a divine being, was the method the Romans used to identify loyal subjects; those who refused to offer this worship were considered rebels—and rebellion was quickly and ruthlessly punished. Faithful Christians could not worship an idol or a man. They were treated as traitors and enemies of the empire.
- d. “The beast makes war with the witnesses, overcoming and killing them; but this is not done until they have finished their testimony. Although the witnesses were opposed, beaten and driven from place to place, the gospel was preached ‘in all creation under heaven’ in the apostolic age (Col. 1:23), confirmed by God through the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:19f), and written for posterity (I Peter 5:12). The beast could not thwart the advance of God's purpose to reveal the truth; for though he killed the witnesses and sought to destroy their work, by then it was too late” (Hailey, pp.256f).
- 1) 1 Peter 1:21-25: “Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
 - 2) Jude 3: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”
- e. The enemies of the church were successful in killing the apostles of Christ. According to uninspired records, they all died violent deaths (except John). James was slain in Acts 12. The inspired prophets of the New Testament met with similar treatment. Stephen did (Acts 7). The inspired preachers filled the prophetic office, since they were God's spokesmen. But the more the enemy persecuted the saints, even killing many of them, the gospel had an even greater impact on society.
- 1) Colossians 1:5: “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.”
 - 2) Colossians 1:23: “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”
 - 3) Romans 10:13-18: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias
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- saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”
- f. “The ‘great city’ [in Revelation] is always Babylon, the world city, referred to ten times as ‘great’ (14:8; 16:19; 17:5, 18; 18:2, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21). Neither does it represent literal Jerusalem, as some hold; it is parallel with Isaiah’s world-city” [Isaiah 24-27] (Hailey, p.257).
 - g. “Though the Church be apparently destroyed, she is not really dead, but will rise again. As our Lord, after finishing his testimony, completed his work by his death and subsequent ascension, so the time will come when the Church shall have completed all that is necessary, by offering to the world her testimony, and shall then be so completely rejected as to appear dead. Her enemies will rejoice, but their time of rejoicing is cut short (see below).
 - 1) “After three and a half days comes her vindication, and her enemies are struck with consternation ...The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them; the beast that cometh up out of the abyss. The article points to the beast which is described elsewhere in the Apocalypse (Rev 13:1; 17:8), and which is mentioned here by prolepsis [in anticipation]....The beast is Satan, perhaps manifested in the form of the persecuting world power (see on Rev 13:1)...The beast ascends out of the abyss for a brief reign upon the earth, and is ‘drunken with the blood of the saints,’ as described in Rev 17, but he ascends only to go into perdition (Rev 17:8).
 - 2) “It is well to remember that the whole vision is symbolical. The intention is to convey the idea that the Church...will experience opposition from the power of Satan, which will wax more and more formidable as time goes on, and result in the apparent triumph of the forces of evil. But the triumph will be brief....
 - 3) “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified....’The great city’ is referred to in Rev 16:19; 17:18; 18:10-19. Its signification is always the same, viz. the type of what is ungodly and of the world, and it is always consigned to punishment. Jerusalem, the type of what is holy, is never thus designated. Here we are plainly told the spiritual, that is, the symbolical nature of the designation. Sodom and Egypt are chosen as the type of what is evil (cf. Deut 32:32; Isa 1:10; Ezek 16:46; 20:7, etc.).
 - 4) “It was in this city, that is, by the influence of this world power, that the Lord was crucified. In describing the fate of the Church, John seems to have in mind the life of Christ. His witness, the opposition he encountered, his death for a brief time at the completion of his work, his resurrection and ascension, and triumph over the devil, are all here reproduced. ‘The bodies lie in the street’ symbolizes, according to Jewish custom, the most intense scorn and hatred” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
7. Verses 9-10: "And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth."
- a. The people of different nations (within the Roman Empire) would see their dead bodies for 3½ days—a short period of time. The period described would be the time when the enemy thought Christianity would be totally destroyed.
 - b. The reference to the four groups [people, kindreds, tongues, and nations], who would see these dead bodies, suggests that the scene depicted has a far wider range than a local city and two unburied men. It follows that the two witnesses were not two individuals, and the city was not only one city; rather, the view is much broader. The time factor would be too short, and one local site too small, for “people and kindreds and tongues and nations” to behold the dead bodies.
 - c. The passage paints a powerful picture of the contempt the pagans had for the church of our Lord and his gospel. The bodies of his people would be left unburied; and the pagans, perceiving that they had triumphed over Christ, would rejoice and congratulate each other over their good fortune.
 - d. In the eyes of the enemy, Christianity appeared to be on the verge of complete destruction. Even some of the brethren might get the same idea. But the lesson of the Book of Revelation is that ultimate

victory will be won by the Lord; his people will be the triumphant ones—in the final evaluation.

8. Verse 11: "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."
 - a. But the witnesses revive—Christianity survived. The church could not be utterly destroyed. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31; cf. Rev. 6:10).
 - b. In the second century, the church rebounded; Paganism faced its greatest loss for they saw the church endure even against painful persecution; many Pagan temples went out of business because the church had done its job (cf. Acts 19:21-41; 17:16-34). "Pliny in his epistle to Trajan (Ep. X, p.96), half a century later, spoke of deserted temples, worship neglected, and hardly a single purchaser found for sacrificial victims" (Burton Coffman, Commentary on Acts, p.374). [See below for the full letter].
 - c. Verse thirteen depicts the great blow suffered by the Pagan enemies of the church. Constantine later saw the fruitlessness of opposing the church _____ and made it a political ally.
 - d. When Christianity began to _____ overwhelm the pagan religions, they began to ease up in their confront-ation with the church: "They gave glory to the God of heaven."

PLINY, LETTERS 10.96-97

Pliny to the Emperor Trajan:

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

Trajan to Pliny:

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind

of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

9. Verses 12-13: "And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." [This passage naturally divides itself into three parts]:
 - a. Verses 4-6: This depicts the period when the gospel was preached with remarkable success. This was symbolized by the two witnesses which operated by divine power. During this period of time, the apostles were empowered to work miracles; nothing seemed to be able to stand in the way of the spread of the gospel (cf. Acts; Mark 16:15-20).
 - b. Verses 7-10: This describes the period when a secular power arose which sought to crush the church and its work. This power (imperial Rome) was successful temporarily. At the time Revelation was written, the church was going through this critical stage. It appeared that the enemies would be able to crush Christianity and then rejoice over their victory. The beast (symbolizing Rome) made war against the two witnesses and put a stop to their remarkable work. These two were slain and, to heap further shame upon them, their dead bodies were left unburied in the street that the people might gape at them. The world against which the two witnesses (the church) had born testimony rejoiced over the fact that these were no longer able to afflict them with their preaching. This picture aptly fits the situation under persecution.
 - c. Verses 11-13: This pictures the period of the further progress of the gospel and thus shows that the enemy of the church had not considered the power of God which was with the church. His power caused the Roman Empire to come crashing down (eventually) and enabled the gospel to have free course in the world, unhindered by open opposition. This is shown by the resurrection of the two slain witnesses. During this indefinite period while these witnesses lay dead, there was much trouble and turmoil for the Lord's people. But after the "resurrection," even the enemies had to admit that divine power must have been behind their resurgence. Thus verse 13—many were led to accept the gospel then [i.e., many gave glory to God].

C. Revelation 11:14-19: The Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet.

1. Verse 14: "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."
 - a. The woes referred to were directed against the enemies of the church, not against the church. The first woe is identified in Revelation 9:12; the second woe was described in the verses above (the earthquake); the third is about to be described.
 - b. The period of time indicated by the 42 months apparently covers the time from Nero's persecution of the church to the early part of the fourth century (when the Edict of Toleration was announced, removing persecution and extending official recognition to the church); this was a period of about 200-300 years.
 - c. "It should be remembered that when the woes were introduced by the cry of the eagle that it was said, 'Woe, woe, woe, for them that dwell on the earth' (8:13). In response to the prayers of the saints, fire was poured out upon the earth (8:3-5), and the trumpets sounded, bringing judgments upon the earth. The judgments against the earth give assurance to the saints that evil will be defeated and truth will be victorious. If the interpretation of 10:7 and 11:1-3 is correct, the third woe does not usher in the final judgment, but signals the completion of God's mystery which was looked for and sought by the prophets. This conclusion is further supported by the word 'quickly' (tachy), which means 'without delay, quickly, speedily' ..." (Hailey, p.261).
2. Verse 15: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."
 - a. Following this indefinite period of time (the 42 months) would be a time of golden opportunity for the church to do a great work; open persecution ended; it was free to preach the gospel without official opposition. However, as history shows, the church went into apostasy—despite many earlier warnings, including:

- 1) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."
- b. The Lord provided the opportunity for a great work to be done by the church; it was not his fault if the church did not remain faithful; many converts were made following the end of persecution and thus the Lord could describe this initial success.
- c. "Dark days have been experienced, but Christ was victorious. In the conflict between the Christians and the world, beginning with chapter 12, there will be experienced darker days. The outcome of the struggle is announced before the beginning of the conflict is pictured; the outcome is victory for Christ" (Summers, p.166).
- d. "The usurper of power over God's creation was now cast down, and the power of rule is in God's hand where it rightfully belongs. The victory of Christ and his witnesses accomplished the defeat of the world and its powers. This conflict will be the major theme of the next section of the prophecy. The sounding of the seventh trumpet serves as a prelude to what follows, as the opening of the seventh seal served as a prelude to the sounding of the trumpets" (Hailey, p.262).
3. Verses 16-17: "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."
- a. The 24 elders represent the redeemed from the Old Testament and the New Testament. They ascribe to God all the glory and honor he deserves.
- b. "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned...We, as the representatives of the church ... acknowledge thy goodness in...delivering the church from all its troubles, and having conducted it through the times of fiery persecution, thus establishing it upon the earth. The language here used is an expression of their deep interest in the church...."
 - 1) "[O Lord God Almighty] Referring to God all-powerful, because it was by his omnipotent arm alone that this great work had been accomplished. Nothing else could have defended the church in its many trials; nothing else could have established it upon the earth.
 - 2) "[Which art, and wast, and art to come] The Eternal One, always the same....The reference here is to the fact that God, who had thus established his church on the earth, is unchanging. In all the revolutions which occur on the earth, he always remains the same. What he was in past times he is now; what he is now he always will be. The particular idea suggested here seems to be...that he was the same God who had early promised that it should ultimately triumph; he had carried forward his glorious purposes without modifying or abandoning them amidst all the changes that had occurred in the world; and he had thus given the assurance that he would now remain the same, and that all his purposes in regard to his church would be accomplished. The fact that God remains

- always unchangeably the same is the sole reason why his church is safe, or why any individual member of it is kept and saved. Compare Mal 3:6.
- 3) “[Because thou hast taken to thee thy great power] To wit, by setting up thy kingdom over all the earth. Before that it seemed as if he had relaxed that power, or had given the power to others. Satan had reigned on the earth. Disorder, anarchy, sin, rebellion, had prevailed. It seemed as if God had let the reins of government fall from his hand. Now he came forth as if to resume the dominion over the world, and to take the scepter into his own hand, and to exert his great power in keeping the nations in subjection...” [Barnes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
 - c. Under Patriarchy, God had ruled among men by dealing with certain heads of families. Under the Mosaic Dispensation, he had ruled over his selected nation (Israel), through which he would send the Messiah into the world. Under the Messiah, God rules over all those throughout the world who obey the gospel of Christ. His spiritual kingdom now extends over the earth, residing in the hearts and lives of all who submit to the law of Christ and are thereby translated into the kingdom.
 - 1) Luke 17:20-21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - d. The Lord had warned the brethren in Pergamos that he would come and make war against those who would not repent (Rev. 2:16); he had promised the saints in Philadelphia that he would come quickly to aid them in their needs (Rev. 3:11); he stated his vow at the close of the book that he would come quickly (Rev. 21:7,12,20) [this last reference is the Second Coming]. “From these promises it may be concluded that His now having come is not the final coming when judgment would take place and eternal punishment and rewards be meted. The earth had been made to tremble; the things earthly had been shaken that the things which were unshakable might remain (Heb. 12:27f). The kingdom of prophecy was now a definite realization among men (Dan. 2:44; 7:13f), for at the defeat of His enemies God had taken His power and rule over the world” (Hailey, pp.262f).
4. Neither God nor Christ changes.
 - a. Malachi 3:6: "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."
 - b. Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
 - c. James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 5. Verse 18: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."
 - a. Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 have a bearing on this passage. The nations in their wrath tried to break asunder the bond between God and his Son by putting the Son to death. But the Lord set Christ upon his holy hill of Zion by raising him from the dead and exalting him to his own right hand (Ps. 2:3-6; Acts 4:25-26; 13:33). Heathen forces continued to set at naught God’s counsel by setting their hand against his church and his truth, but again their defeat is assured. In Daniel’s vision of the beast that made war against the saints and prevailed against them, the time came for judgment to be given on behalf of the saints that they might possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:22). The sounding of the seventh trumpet seems to reveal the fulfillment of both the passage of Psalm 2 and Daniel 7 (cf. Hailey).
 - 1) Psalms 2:3-6: "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."
 - 2) Acts 4:25-26: "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ."
 - 3) Acts 13:33: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

- b. God would judge the dead.
- 1) He would condemn those who were dead in sin.
 - a) Ephesians 2:1: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.
 - b) Ephesians 2:5: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)."
 - c) Ephesians 5:14: "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."
 - d) Colossians 2:13: "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."
 - 2) Or he would judge (for the purpose of blessing) those who had died in the faith: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held" (Rev. 6:9).
- c. God would give reward: to the prophets, to the saints, to those who fear his name (small and great). This is symbolic of the triumph of Christianity over the enemy. The reference of this verse is not to the end of time and the final Judgment, but to the victory of the church over the oppressions of the enemy. Christians would now have the opportunity to promote Christianity without any great opposition. This privilege is a reward to a true child of God. One who does not enjoy spreading the gospel is not a true Christian. When a Christian cannot teach God's word, he suffers. Having freedom to worship is a reward; one who does not count it thus is not a true Christian; he would not be happy in heaven.
- d. God would destroy those who destroy the earth. "Destroy" (from diaphtherio) means to change for the worse, to corrupt (Thayer); to lay waste, make havoc of (Vine). Compare Acts 9:21; Galatians 1:13,23; Luke 12:33; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Corinthians 4:16. The idea is not to extinguish or bring to extinction. Those who corrupt the earth would be corrupted: wasted (judged, punished).
- 1) Luke 12:33: "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth **corrupteth**."
 - 2) Acts 9:21: "But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that **destroyed** them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man **perish**, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:5: "Perverse disputings of men of **corrupt** minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."
 - 5) Compare: "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it...But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:13,23).
6. Verse 19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."
- a. The presence of God among his people is shown. He never deserts his people: not in time of persecution, or in good times.
 - b. The church is the temple of God: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). [The temple (singular) is comprised of all the Christians; the temple is the church].
 - c. The ark of the covenant in the Old Testament was assurance to Israel of God's abiding presence with them. As long as Israel remained loyal, God stayed by them. Here this same picture is presented. This verse gives the ultimate assurance. It is part of the consoling visions introduced in chapter 10. Old pagan Rome would fall; its downfall was certain; but God would be with his faithful children.
 - d. "As a comfort to his people before the conflict begins, God reveals the ark of his covenant in the temple in heaven. This symbolizes the fact that God has not forgotten his people or his covenant with them. The church will be in conflict with the world, and satanic persecution will rage, but God's covenant with his people is secure; they will be victorious. This was a very encouraging way to introduce the conflict. Modern journalism uses the same method in relating the story of some great battle. A headline assures us of the victory of our army in some battle then the action is recounted in

detail. Many times it appears that the enemy has the upper hand and will win, but all the time we know that victory is ours because we have seen the headline announcing the victory. John used this method many times in Revelation—always very effectively” (Summers, pp.166f).

Summary of the Visions of Revelation 4-11

1. Revelation 4: God is on the throne; he is powerful, majestic, and knows all; he is willing and able to stand by his people; they have no reason to be terrified even though under siege by unbelieving enemies.
2. Revelation 5: An encouraging picture is given of the Redeeming Lamb; he is worthy; he willingly and ably takes action in behalf of his people.
3. Revelation 6: The opening of the six seals:
 - a. The first seal (white horse): represents the successful spread of the gospel in the first several years of the Christian era:
 - 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - b. The second seal (red horse): represents the first great wave of persecution against the church as a result of the saints' successful work of preaching and living the gospel:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
 - c. The third seal (black horse): represents the contrived economic discrimination brought against the saints by their enemies (cf. Rev. 2:18-29):
 - 1) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 2) Revelation 13:16-17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
 - d. The fourth seal (pale horse): probably represents a partial judgment of God against the oppressors of the church. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezek. 5:17).

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- e. The fifth seal (martyrs under the altar): represents the awful sufferings the saints were undergoing; they are pictured as crying out to God: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).
 - f. The sixth seal (earthquake, etc.): heavy judgment against the enemies of the church is depicted using Old Testament pictures. This judgment against the evil ones would be a day of deliverance for his people.
4. Revelation 7: An interlude giving two consoling visions of encouragement.
 - a. The sealing of the 144,000 represents God putting his symbolic mark on those who have his approval. God is thus telling his people that they will be delivered from the awful judgment described in Revelation 6:12-17; it answers the question of Revelation 6:17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - b. The innumerable host that is depicted in heaven around the throne. This symbolically pictures the ultimate, eternal victory the faithful are promised in heaven.
 5. Revelation 8: The sounding of the first four trumpets.
 - a. This event was preceded by the silence in heaven and the assurance that God hears and answers the prayers of his saints.
 - b. The first four trumpets represent various natural calamities brought against the enemies of the church (the Roman Empire): "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 6. Revelation 9: The sounding of the fifth and sixth trumpets.
 - a. The fifth trumpet: probably represents the internal corruption of Rome which God would also use in bringing about their downfall.
 - b. The sixth trumpet: the invading hordes which would bring the empire to its knees.
 7. Revelation 10-11: Another interlude giving more consoling visions.
 - a. The mighty angel with a message for all the earth.
 - b. The little book episode: a great work yet remained for John—but with bitter results.
 - c. Measuring the temple (the church) for providential protection.
 - d. The two witnesses (the church) would successfully do their work and would then be put to death (the cause would be hindered), but would be resurrected.
 8. Revelation 11:14-19: The sounding of the seventh trumpet; this is symbolic assurance given the church that God would not desert his faithful.
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REVELATION 12

The Woman and Dragon—The Spiritual War in Heaven

A. Revelation 12:1-6: The Woman and the Dragon Episode.

1. Some scholars divide the book at this point, making chapters 1-11 one unit and 12-22 another unit. Some claim that chapters 12-22 is simply a repeat of the things taught in the first eleven chapters. Ray Summers gives the following response to these points:
 - a. “It is true that the writer makes a new beginning at 12:1 but the reader was prepared for that by 10:11 where John was told that he was to prophesy many more things to many people. In the light of all the evidence, it appears best to see this as an integral part of the whole message. The seals lead to the trumpets. These in turn culminate in the appearance of a little book which contains the truth of judgment upon men. This message is to be delivered by the prophet. The characters here are essentially the same; the conflict is the same but is presented under a different aspect; the outcome is the same as has been indicated in the beginning. It is interesting to note that from here to the end of the book the action is much faster than heretofore. In climatic sequence judgment on Rome is followed by judgment on all evil. Finally the conflict emerges into complete victory for God and the forces of righteousness” (Summers, p.169).
 - b. The struggle coming up is between the woman and her offspring in opposition to the dragon and his allies (the first beast and the second beast). These characters must be identified in order for us to understand the message. This spiritual struggle described is rooted in God’s ancient warning to Satan:
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:21-28: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
2. Verses 1-2: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."
 - a. John saw a sign (semeion—a miraculous wonder): a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon as her footstool, and a crown of twelve stars on her head; she was with child and cried out in the travail of giving birth.
 - b. Whom did the woman represent? Various views that have been suggested:
 - 1) Some say that the woman represents the church. But this does not fit the pattern: this view would have the church producing Christ. The man-child brought forth is Christ as is indicated by verse five. The church did not produce Christ, but rather Christ brought the church into being.
 - 2) Some say that the woman represented the virgin Mary, who brought Jesus into the world by miraculous birth. But this view puts too much emphasis on Mary, and the description given does not fit her history: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon

- cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 12:13-17).
- 3) Some say the woman represents the whole Jewish nation from which Christ sprang. However, the Jewish nation rejected Christ.
 - 4) Another says that the woman represents the church and the man child represents the converts made by the church. But new converts are part of the church and are not a separate entity.
- c. Our view is that she represents the faithful people of the Jewish era, the remnant which remained loyal to God in Old Testament Israel. In support of this view, consider:
- 1) Micah 4:10: "Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." [The nation would be given up until the time that the remnant (the daughter of Zion) had brought forth him who would be the ruler in Israel (Mic. 5:2-3)].
 - 2) Micah 5:2-3: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel."
 - 3) Isaiah 66:7-8: "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." [The prophet speaks of the birth of the man child and the new nation that would come through him. It was through this faithful remnant that the man child was born and the new spiritual nation brought forth].
 - 4) However, the woman symbolized more than just the Old Covenant remnant. After bearing the man child she came to represent all of God's people, for children are those "that keep the commandments of God, and hold the testimony of Jesus" (Rev. 12:17).
 - a) Hebrews 9:15: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."
 - b) Hebrews 11:40: "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."
3. Verses 3-4: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."
- a. The vision described was seen in heaven—it is depicted from heaven's point of view. The dragon, the principle character in this part of the vision, was not in heaven, but was in the vision which was being seen in heaven. There is no doubt about the identity of this individual—he is called the "Devil" (verse 9).
 - b. Colors have come to be representative of certain emotions, dispositions, and events:
 - 1) Black—grief, sorrow, wickedness.
 - 2) White—purity, victory.
 - 3) Blue—calmness, happiness.
 - 4) Red—anger, bloodshed, evil (i.e., "scarlet" woman). This symbolic dragon is pictured as red, Satan was a "murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44).
 - c. Seven is symbolic of perfection. The seven heads of the dragon would symbolize the fullness of intelligence; the devil is a mastermind of craftiness and cunning:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his

- devices."
- 3) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
- d. Satan has fullness of power in his realm. The word "horn" is used in the Bible to represent power and might.
- 1) Deuteronomy 33:17: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 2:10: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 4:4: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - 5) Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."
 - 6) Ephesians 6:13-17: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- e. He is pictured as having seven crowns (diadems) on his heads. "Diadem" came to designate the royal headdress of monarchs, ornamented with gold and jewels. The word is used here to symbolize the unholy power possessed by Satan. His ungodly influence is described by the picture of him dragging away a third of the stars.
- f. He awaited the birth of the woman's child so that he could destroy it as soon as it was born. Satan knew from Old Testament promises that a great Personage was coming (Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Isa. 53). He did not know the details of God's plan; he thought he was sure to defeat God by putting his Son to death on the cross; little did he realize he was helping to fulfill God's plan. He began to try to destroy Christ through Herod the Great (Matt. 2:3,16-20); and at various other times during Christ's ministry (Luke 4:16-30; John 8:58-59; 10:31).
- 1) Matthew 2:3: "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."
 - 2) Matthew 2:16-20: "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life."
 - 3) Luke 4:28-30: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way."
 - 4) John 8:58-59: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.”

- 5) John 10:31: “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.”
- g. His fighting against the church was no less severe. The church has always faced extreme danger; it will never reach a time on earth when Satan will lessen his attacks against it. His assaults take various forms: in the early years he used physical force; he currently uses counterfeit messages of manmade churches to lessen the influence of the Lord’s church; and he has been successful many times by using the lusts and weaknesses of members to create trouble in the church.
 - h. The church in many localities in America is facing troubles. These include false doctrine, immorality, division, apathy, worldliness, ignorance of the Scriptures, and compromise. There is a decided lack of growth in places. Some congregations are baptizing only children of members. And many of the younger generation are weak, and not a few go into apostasy. There needs to be a great revival of knowledge, spirituality, and numerical growth. How can this be done? First, each of us must be certain we are what we ought to be. Then, we can look into our own family, and among our own circle of friends, and do what we can to impart a knowledge of the truth to them, and try to lead them to salvation by our godly influence.
4. Verses 5-6: "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."
- a. There can be little doubt about the identity of the man child brought forth by the woman. These verses describe Christ very plainly. The woman as described in verses 1-2 represents God’s faithful of the Old Testament era; in verse 6, she comes to represent God’s faithful of this age (the church). When Christ was exalted to heaven to sit on God’s throne, the church was scattered abroad, attacked by Satan on every hand; but God was sustaining it, and would do so for 1260 days (three and one half years—an indefinite period of time (half of the perfect/complete number seven). This corresponds with Revelation 11, where the same time is involved—a time of intense trial and persecution. This chapter thus far has beautifully described our first century brethren in their current situation. A sweeping survey of history is given, from the coming of Christ to the end of the period of harsh tribulation. In this process, encouragement and hope are given for ultimate victory.
 - b. The one brought forth by the woman is described as a son, a man child; this shows that he was no weakling. He would rule with a rod of iron. The destiny of all nations and every individual is in the hands of Christ.
 - 1) Psalms 2:6-9: "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
 - 2) Psalms 110:5-6: "The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries."
 - 3) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...."
 - c. The picture of the woman fleeing into the wilderness grows out of Bible examples:
 - 1) Moses fled into the wilderness, where God nurtured and sustained him, thus equipping him for the great mission of leading Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 4—15).
 - 2) Elijah fled into the wilderness to escape the wrath of Jezebel, coming to Sinai where he found protection and instruction (1 Kings 19).
 - 3) Joseph and Mary fled into Egypt to escape Herod’s wrath (Matt. 2)

4) Paul went into Arabia where was prepared further for his great work (Gal. 1).

B. Revelation 12:7-12: The Great Spiritual War.

1. A word of caution: "Let us settle firmly in our hearts, and stick to it consistently, that the Apocalypse is a book of spiritual cartoons, the pictures not in any case to be mistaken for the reality, no matter how vividly drawn. As already pointed out, the rest of this chapter, concerning the Radiant Woman, the Red Dragon, and their adventures, is clearly seen by all interpreters to be symbolic, although they do not agree on what is symbolized. Is it not, then, to introduce confusion into the interpretation to suppose that the apostle suddenly shifts from symbolism to reality when he tells of the war in heaven?" (Albertus Pieters, quoted by Hailey, p.273).
2. The context does not allow us to interpret this vision as descriptive of some literal war in heaven which resulted in the Devil and his angels being literally cast out of heaven. Rather, the war depicted is spiritual in nature, in keeping with the general theme of the book. Satan knew about God's plan to send the Messiah and tried continually to thwart that plan to keep it from fruition.
 - a. He had his disciple Cain to kill the righteous son of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4); but God gave them another son, Seth. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). He may have thought that Seth was the promised "seed" of the woman.
 - b. He enticed the descendants of righteous Seth to intermarry with the unrighteous descendants of Cain (Gen. 6), thus to pollute the race with sin and hinder God's plan. But Noah was just and perfect (Gen. 6:8-9). All the wicked descendants of Cain and Seth were destroyed in the flood.
 - c. The descendants of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (the sons of Noah) were mostly wicked. But Abraham was righteous and to him the promise was made: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - d. However, Sarah was barren, so it seemed that God's plan had reached a dead-end. Through the miraculous intervention of God, Sarah bore a son (Isaac).
 - e. It seemed that God played into Satan's hands when he told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (Gen. 22). But after proving Abraham's faith, a proper sacrifice was provided.
 - f. Then Isaac's wife Rebekah was barren, but when she finally conceived, two sons were born— Jacob and Esau. Jacob was chosen to be the line through whom the Messiah would come; Esau tried to kill Jacob, unsuccessfully.
 - g. The Egyptian Bondage and the difficulties of the wilderness wanderings were efforts (in part) by Satan to spoil God's purpose—but the Almighty prevailed.
 - h. God planned to send his Son through the lineage of David. Satan used Saul (1 Sam. 18), Athaliah (2 Kings 11), and Israel and Syria (Isa. 7:6-14) in attempts to destroy David and his seed. God saw that these attempts failed.
 - i. He tried to destroy all of the Israelites through Haman's vengeful efforts, but God brought Esther to a position of influence to intervene (Esth. 4).
 - j. When Christ was born, Herod attempted to destroy him but failed (Matt. 2).
 - k. Attempts were made on the Savior's life before he could conclude his work, but each failed. When he was crucified, Satan no doubt thought he had finally prevailed over God, but Christ arose from the dead!
 - l. Lying in the background of Revelation 12:7-12 was the foregoing struggle between God and Satan.
3. An important struggle occurred while Christ was in the hades realm.
 - a. "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12:29). This is a reference to the Savior's struggle with Satan: he was then casting out demons and was soon to enter Satan's very den at which time he would bind the devil. This binding took place when he overcame death.
 - b. Near the end of his earthly mission, the Lord said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince

- of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). Satan had nothing on the Lord by which to defeat him or to hold him in death.
- c. By his being raised from the dead, Christ "led captivity captive..." (Eph. 4:8). "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). He took a fleshly body "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14). It was not possible that Christ should be held by death: "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:54-56: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law." [Our own resurrection will be a victory over Satan].
 - 2) 1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."
4. Another tremendous struggle occurred when the church began its world-wide mission.
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Acts 8:1: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."
 - 2) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 3) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 4) Acts 28:22: "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - b. The church of the first century was in a life and death struggle against the devil and his agents. The brethren to whom Revelation was addressed were on the cutting edge of this fight. **This spiritual war between the church and sin is the war being depicted by the text.** This war will continue as long as there are any faithful saints left on earth.
 5. Verses 7-8: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."
 - a. This picture symbolized the conflict between truth and error; a literal war in literal heaven is not meant; the dragon was not in heaven. "Heaven" defines the battleground as spiritual, i.e., involving spiritual matters. Michael and his angels represent the faithful saints on earth struggling against the dragon and his angels, which are representative of the devil and his henchmen (pagan Rome and its pagan religions).
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 2) Ephesians 6:10-17: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take

- the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
- 3) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." [Here, the enemy had infiltrated the church and must be opposed].
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
- b. Our brethren ultimately prevailed. This victory was still in the future when John wrote, but it is so sure that John presents it as having already occurred. The victory they won resulted in the church being firmly planted on the earth, in the hearts of a very great many honest people. The powers of Satan did not prevail. The Lord won the initial battle when he arose from the dead. The saints won the next series of battles when they survived the persecutions of Judaism and Rome. Since then each generation of saints win battles as they faithfully obey the gospel, preach and defend the truth, and pass the pure gospel on to the next generation. Individuals fight battles as we personally struggle against the sinful influences that assail us.
6. Verse 9: "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."
 - a. The real identity of the dragon is presented. His ability to deceive the whole world is indicated: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19). We are not without knowledge of him, nor are we without power to resist his enticements.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."
 - 2) James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
 - b. He could not prevail in his conflict with Michael and was cast out into the earth. This is a figurative expression showing his loss of power and influence. He was using pagan forces as his instruments against Christianity. The time period involved primarily was that span of time in which Rome fought so viciously against the church. Again, the victory is presented as having already occurred since God had already decreed the final outcome. He would soon lose his primary weapon in his fight against the church—the evil power of the Pagan Roman Empire.
 - c. Daniel 2:44 predicted the ultimate demise of the Roman kings at the hands of God's spiritual kingdom. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 7. Verse 10: "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."
 - a. After the triumph, a great voice in heaven rejoiced in the victory of righteousness. It is not meant that salvation, power, and the kingdom had just come; salvation through Christ, the power of the gospel, and the authority of Christ had been exercised from the beginning of the Christian age. What is meant is that these were now more widely and easily available—following the eventual overthrow of the persecuting power.
 - b. The accuser was the dragon (Satan). The name Satan means "adversary" and the word devil means "accuser" or "slanderer." He is the enemy of God's people; he slanders and makes accusations against us before God (not necessarily in the very presence of God in heaven, but in the sight of God, he makes his accusations). His slanders would not be effective with God, for the Father knows our true situation. Rather, the slanders are those made (in God's sight) against us before the world.
 - 1) Romans 3:8: "And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you."

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- c. That Satan lost much of his former power was reason for rejoicing. The persecutions our brethren faced in the early part of the Christian era at the hands of pagan Rome have not been equaled in scope since then. Also, with the victory of Christ over the devil, Satan's power has been severely curtailed: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7). At one time, he could send his demons to take over men and control them against their will, but now he has power over us only to the extent that we allow him control.
- 1) Mark 9:17-18: "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not."
 - 2) Luke 9:38-39: "And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him."
8. Verse 11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."
- a. The brethren (saints) overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. They had been redeemed by that blood and stood approved before God by that blood.
 - 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 3) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - b. They never wavered in their loyalty; they did not even refuse to die for the truth.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 10:4: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds."
 - 2) Acts 20:24: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."
 - c. They won the victory by faithfulness to the gospel and through the proclamation and defense of the truth. This is still the formula for victory:
 - 1) Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."
 - 2) Galatians 2:4-5: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you."
 - 3) Ephesians 6:10-17: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 5) 2 Timothy 4:2-5: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And
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they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

- 6) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Cf. Matthew 4:1-11.
 - 7) James 1:21-25: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
9. Verse 12: "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."
- a. These words also came from the great voice of verse 10. The heavens and all created beings are called on to rejoice on account of the great victory. But then a woe is pronounced upon the earth and sea because of the devil who was cast down. Though his power has been greatly diminished and his ultimate defeat is assured, yet he maintained enough power to bring great problems upon mankind.
 - b. The inhabitants of the earth and sea probably are the citizens of the Roman Empire who would suffer immensely as a result of being instruments in the devil's hands. An extended application could be that though he lost much of his power in his struggles against Christ and the church, yet he retains enough strength to wreak havoc on the unsuspecting (2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). When he is defeated in one scheme, he transfers his efforts into another channel, just as evil rulers have commonly done.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - 2) 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."
 - c. He is industrious in his efforts because he knows his time is short. He knew the time he had to bring severe persecution against the church was limited; he also knows that the Judgment Day is coming, when he will be cast into the lake of fire prepared especially for him and his angels (Matt. 25:41-46; cf. Matt. 8:29).
 - d. Satan remains an extremely powerful foe, but we have a weapon with which he cannot contend—the word of God: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12; cf. Matt. 4:1-11; Eph. 6:10-17).

C. Revelation 12:13-17: The Dragon Persecutes the Woman.

1. This section of the chapter may simply be an expansion of verse six. Perhaps it also repeats the information of the first twelve verses, under a slightly different picture.
2. Verses 13-14: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."
 - a. There can be little doubt about the identity of the man child brought forth by the woman. These verses describe Christ very plainly. The woman as described in verses 1-2 represents God's faithful of the Old Testament era; in verse 6, she comes to represent God's faithful of this age (the church). When Christ was exalted to heaven to sit on God's throne, the church was scattered abroad, attacked by Satan on every hand; but God was sustaining it, and would do so for 1260 days (three and one half years—an indefinite period of time (half of the perfect/complete number seven). This corresponds with Revelation 11, where the same time is involved—a time of intense trial and persecution. This chapter thus far has beautifully described our first century brethren in their current situation.
 - b. It is obvious that the devil is pictured here as fighting against the church. The church is depicted as

having been given an eagle's wings with which to flee from her tormentor. In Israel's flight from Egypt, God said he had borne them on eagle's wings (Ex. 19:4). In this wilderness refuge, the woman is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, which corresponds to the 1260 days of verse 6. God's providential care for his people is pictured. Compare:

- 1) Exodus 19:4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 32:11: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings."
 - 3) Exodus 23:20: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared."
 - 4) Psalms 36:7: "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings."
 - 5) Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."
 - 6) Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."
- c. "Since the man child is beyond Satan's power to attack, the dragon seeks to hurt the child by persecuting the woman who gave him birth. This further confirms the view that the woman is spiritual Zion, the sum of God's people. Satan did not carry his war to the Jewish nation, nor to the Jewish remnant that had kept faith with God under the Old Covenant, but to the new spiritual Zion, the church. To persecute (dioko, used only here in Revelation), means 'to run after...to pursue (in a hostile manner)...hence, to persecute' (Thayer). Jesus had forewarned his disciples of such hostile pursuit when he said, 'If they [of the world] persecuted me, they will also persecute you' (John 15:20)" (Hailey, p.278).
- d. "The serpent is no match for the Lord, whose power has been demonstrated in the conflict revealed above; and now by that same power the Lord comes to the rescue of the woman. Interpretation of this part of the vision must be drawn from the account of ancient Israel's deliverance from Egypt. When Jehovah delivered his people from Pharaoh's threats of destruction, he said, 'I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself' (Exod. 19:4; cf. Deut. 32:11)...The Lord delivers, protects, and provides for his own; there is no point of weakness or failure on his part. The time, times, and half a time, is equivalent to the twelve hundred sixty days of verse 6....Through the wilderness is that place of withdrawal where God's people are protected and nurtured for a particular period (v.6), there is a sense in which they are ever in the wilderness, withdrawn from the world, protected and disciplined by the Lord; for we sit with him in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6), and our life 'is hid with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3)" (ibid. pp.278f).
3. Verses 15-16: "And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth."
- a. The earth is personified and offers aid to the woman by swallowing up the flood of waters which the dragon spewed forth. The earth was used in a literal sense during the wilderness experiences of Israel to swallow (in punishment) Korah and his rebels: "And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation. And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins. So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children. And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death

of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD" (Num. 16:19-30).

- b. The serpent (Satan) attacked her with a great flood of water which he spewed from his mouth. Compare Psalm 18:4, Isaiah 59:19, and Daniel 9:26—these use the symbology of a flood to depict persecution and destruction. But the flood sent against the church was swallowed up by the earth so that no harm came to the saints. God was seeing to it that his people were protected. The picture of the earth swallowing up the flood of water is incidental; it is part of the overall depiction of God's deliverance. The precise means of this protection is not delineated.
 - 1) Psalms 18:4: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid."
 - 2) Isaiah 59:19: "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him."
 - 3) Daniel 9:26: "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."
- c. "In verse 6 the woman was seen as she took her flight into the wilderness. She is fleeing the wrath of the dragon. She will be protected for 1,260 days or, roughly speaking, three and one-half years. The same idea is repeated in verse 14 in the symbol 'a time, times, and half a time,' or three and one-half times. Remember that in Jewish apocalyptic writings this was a number which symbolized indefiniteness, turmoil, trouble....In his efforts to destroy her, the dragon spits out a river to engulf her, but the earth swallows it up, and she is safe. The dragon is unable to destroy her..." (Summers, p.173).
4. Verse 17: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."
 - a. The dragon was very angry and made war with the remnant of the woman's seed. This remnant is described as those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Christ. The reference is to faithful Christians.
 - b. John T. Hinds saw in this passage a change in the tactics of the enemy against the Lord's cause. At the first, the church as a whole was attacked by paganism. "Failing to accomplish this result, the wrath and indignation of idol worshipers against the church would reach extreme limits. Satan being repulsed in his efforts to blot out the church as an institution changed his plans of attack. Evidently his method from that time on was to persecute the individual members of the church, here referred to as the 'seed' of the woman....This war was to be waged against 'the rest' of her seed—that is, against individual followers of Christ who were trying to keep faithfully the commandments of God; those who in persecutions would not deny Christ's words; those martyred because they would not renounce their faith" (p.187).
 - c. "The dragon was furious. He had been defeated in his effort to devour the man child, who was caught up to God and his throne; and he had failed to sweep away the woman when the earth swallowed up his river of lies and she escaped into the wilderness. Incensed by these two defeats, he turned on the woman's seed to do battle with them. 'The rest of her seed' are the saints. Jesus is 'the firstborn among many brethren' (Rom. 8:29), and 'is not ashamed to call them brethren' (Heb. 2:11). The rest 'that keep the commandments of God' are not Jews or followers of the Jewish law, but the faithful servants under Christ, the saints (14:12) who keep the commandments of the gospel....These are also to 'hold the testimony of Jesus,' both the truth to which Jesus bare witness (John 18:37), and their own testimony of faith in that truth, being willing to die for it if need be (20:4). These are they who now come under the destructive wrath of the dragon, but are assured of victory in Christ" (Hailey, pp.280f).
 - d. "It seems that the purpose of these symbols is to show John, and all who read and understand, the conflicts which have raged between righteousness and wickedness through the ages, and that God has protected his people and helped them to overcome the powers of Satan. Furthermore, they are intended to show, all who understand, the advantage of being in the service of Christ and under God's protecting seal" (W.S. Thompson, p.125).

5. In the Book of Revelation, we must keep in mind that the center of God's communication is not the Jews, but Christians; it is not the Mosaic System, but the Religion of Christ that is being described. The theories of the Millennialists place the emphasis on fleshly Israel, and fail to notice the fact that the Lord's church is now the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16; cf. Rom. 2:28-29).

REVELATION 13

The Two Beasts

A. Revelation 13:1-10: The Beast Out of the Sea.

1. Verse 1: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."
 - a. Many scholars identify this beast with the emperor, Domitian, during whose reign a beastly persecution was brought against the church. Daniel 2 foretold the establishment of God's kingdom and described the worldly power enthroned at that time (the Roman Empire). He predicted that God's kingdom would destroy this great worldly power: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:40-45).
 - b. The ten horns describe the earthly power possessed by the Roman rulers; the seven heads indicate the complete intelligence and wisdom these exalted rulers thought they possessed. The seven heads may carry the implication of survivability (cf. vs. 3), but the beast's fate was sealed—his longevity would be no more real than the mythical nine lives of a cat.
 - c. On the heads were the names of blasphemy, which show the irreverent attitude toward God the beast had. The Roman emperors, especially Domitian, took to themselves the titles and names of Deity. Under Domitian's rule, worship of the Emperor was widespread and enforced.
 - d. "Daniel 7 is probably the most helpful passage in interpreting John's use of 'the sea,' and the one upon which the vision rests....In his vision, Daniel saw the four winds of heaven as they broke forth 'upon the great sea. And the four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another' (7:2f). From the prophet's use of the word, it seems clear that the sea symbolizes the human societies or nations with their stormy upheavals, out of which the empires of earth arise. These four beasts were four great kingdoms which emerged from such upheavals. In Revelation, John refers to the sea: (1) literally, as a part of creation (5:13; 10:6; 14:7); (2) to describe the limits of the angel's voice (7:1-3); (3) symbolically, indicating God's transcendence (4:6; 15:2); and (4) to signify the whole of society known at that time (8:8f; 10:2, 8; 12:12; 13:1; 21:1)" (Hailey, p.283).
2. Verse 2: "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." "And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority" (ASV).
 - a. This description helps to show that this beast is the same as the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Daniel's vision is parallel to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2). The first beast of Daniel was the Babylonian Empire, the second was the Medo-Persian kingdom, the third was the Macedonian, and the fourth was the Roman Empire. The power and authority this beast of Revelation had was from the dragon (Satan). It must be remembered that all authority ultimate derives from God, thus Satan empowers evil men and governments only as God permits.
 - 1) John 19:11: "Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given

- thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."
- 2) Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
- b. Statements from Daniel 7:
- 1) Daniel 7:1-8: "In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon Daniel had a dream and visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matters. Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things."
 - 2) Daniel 7:9-12: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."
 - 3) Daniel 7:16-20: "I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."
 - 4) Daniel 7:21-28: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the
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time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter. As for me Daniel, my cogitations much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart.”

- c. “From the description of the beast in these two verses it seems beyond question that this beast out of the sea is the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7)....This vision of Daniel is parallel to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in which there are four kingdoms, the Babylonian being the first (Dan. 2). These four kingdoms, symbolized by the four beasts out of the sea, are the Babylonian of Daniel’s day; the Medo-Persian kingdom, which also came into power in Daniel’s lifetime (Dan. 10:1); the Macedonian, represented by the leopard, which fell into four parts after Alexander’s death; and the Roman, signified by the terrible beast. The beast of John’s vision is a synthesis, or an embodiment of Daniel’s first three, for as their dominion was taken away, ‘their lives were prolonged for a season and a time’ (Dan. 7:12); that is, each lived in spirit in the next until the climax was reached in the fourth beast. The belief that John’s beast is this fourth of Daniel’s vision, therefore the Roman Empire, is further confirmed by Daniel’s description, that ‘it had ten horns,’ as does the beast in John’s vision. Here is a plain introduction of the Roman Empire as an instrument of Satan’s diabolical and blasphemous power, cruelty, and opposition to God’s kingdom. In the mighty, worldwide Roman Empire was combined the tearing power of Chaldea (the lion), the crushing force of Medo-Persia (the bear), and the swift and ferocious character of Macedonia under Alexander (the leopard). This beast symbolized all the anti-God opposition by force that could ever be brought against the people of God, but to John and the saints to whom he wrote it definitely personified the empire of their day” (Hailey, pp.284f).
 - d. This terrible beast derived his power from the dragon (Satan). God gave the principle of civil government (Rom. 13:1-7), and when it is operated within the bounds of morality and justice, it is a great blessing to humanity. But civil government, like all other institutions and entities, can be subjugated to evil powers, and become a terrible scourge to humanity. This is what the Roman government had become—it was taken over by evil men, who received their impetus from satanic motives. Daniel reports that “the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will” (Dan. 4:32). Many rulers abuse their power for selfish and other sinful purposes, and must finally answer to the Almighty for their misuse of the reins of government.
3. Verse 3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."
 - a. One of the beast’s seven heads was mortally wounded but recovered, much to the amazement of the world. Many interpretations are offered by the commentators, but the best seems to be the one which identifies it with the death of Nero (the first emperor to persecute the church) and the resumption of persecution of the church under Domitian.
 - b. There was a current theory that Nero would rise from the dead and resume his evil reign. The death of Nero in A.D. 68 resulted in confusion and anarchy in the empire for two years. There was no official persecution of the church by the Romans from the death of Nero until 81 A.D., when it was resumed under Domitian. This is likely what is symbolized by the healing of the beast’s head; it would cause the world to be filled with awe and amazement.
 4. Verse 4: "And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?"
 - a. The unregenerated populace worshipped the dragon and the beast. The world followed the beast, giving homage to him. When one worships the wrong being, or offers false worship, that worship is in reality being rendered to Satan.
 - b. The Roman idols had never given anything in response to the adoration of the people, but now the

Emperor was displaying awesome power and gave wealth, glory and influence to many of the citizens. Men are prone to over-estimate the power of their great rulers. Hitler's awesome rule seemed invincible, but God had the final word.

- c. Regarding the death of Nero: "Hearing that the Praetorian Guard was ready to abandon Nero for proper remuneration, the Senate proclaimed Galba emperor. Nero put some poison into a small box and, so armed, fled from his Golden House to the Servilian Gardens on the road to Ostia. He asked such officers of the Guard as were in the palace to accompany him; all refused, and one quoted to him a line of Virgil: 'Is it, then, so hard to die?' He could not believe that the omnipotence which had ruined him had suddenly ceased. He sent appeals for help to various friends, but none replied. He went down to the Tiber to drown himself, but his courage failed him. Phaon, one of his freedmen, offered to conceal him in his villa on the Via Salaria; Nero grasped at the proposal, and rode through the dark four miles out from the center of Rome. He spent that night in Phaon's cellar, clad in a soiled tunic, sleepless and hungry, and trembling at every sound. Phaon's courier brought word that the Senate had declared Nero a public enemy, had ordered his arrest, and had decreed that he should be punished 'after the ancient manner.' Nero asked what this was. 'The condemned man,' he was told, 'is stripped, is fastened to a post by a fork passing through his neck, and is then beaten to death.' Terrified, he tried to stab himself; but he made the mistake of testing the poniard's point first and found it disconcertingly sharp. *Qualis artifex pereo!* He mourned — 'What an artist dies in me!' As a new day dawned he heard the clatter of horses: the Senate's soldiers had tracked him down. Quoting a verse of poetry—'Hark! Now strikes upon my ear the trampling of swift couriers'—he drove a dagger into his throat; his hand faltered, and his freedman Epaphroditus helped him to press the blade home. He had begged his companions to keep his corpse from being mutilated, and Galba's agents granted the wish. His old nurses, and Acre his former mistress, buried him in the vaults of the Domitii (68). Many of the populace rejoiced at his death and ran about Rome with liberty caps on their heads" (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, pp.283f).
- d. Durant gave this information regarding Domitian: "The revolt of Saturninus was the turning point in Domitian's reign, the dividing line between his better and worse selves. He had always been coldly severe; now he slipped into cruelty. He was capable of good government, but only as an autocrat; the Senate rapidly lost power under him; and his tenacious authority as censor made that body at once subservient and vengeful. Vanity, which flourishes even in the humble, had no check in Domitian's status: he filled the Capitol with statues of himself, announced the divinity of his father, brother, wife, and sisters as well as his own, organized a new order of priests, the Flaviales, to tend the worship of these new deities, and required officials to speak of him, in their documents, as *Dominus et Deus Naster*—'Our Lord and God.' He sat on a throne, encouraged visitors to embrace his knees, and established in his ornate palace the etiquette of an Oriental court....
 - 1) "Against this new development rebellion rose not only in the aristocracy but among the philosophers and in the religions that were flowing into Rome from the East. The Jews and the Christians refused to adore the godhead of Domitian, the Cynics decried all government, and the Stoics, though they accepted kings, were pledged to oppose despots and honor tyrannicides. In 89 Domitian expelled the philosophers from Rome, in 95 he banished them from Italy. The earlier edict applied also to the astrologers, whose predictions of the Emperor's death had brought new terrors to a mind empty of faith and open to superstition. In 93 Domitian executed some Christians for refusing to offer sacrifice before his image; according to tradition these included his nephew Flavius Clemens.
 - 2) "In the last years of his reign the Emperor's fear of conspiracy became almost a madness. He lined with shining stone the walls of the porticoes under which he walked, so that he might see mirrored in them whatever went on behind him....Like Tiberius he listened more readily to informers as he grew older; and as the delatores multiplied, no citizen of any prominence could feel safe from spies, even in his home....
 - 3) "Domitian made the mistake of frightening his own household. In 96 he ordered the death of his secretary Epaphroditus because, twenty-seven years before, he had helped Nero to commit suicide. The other freedmen of the imperial household felt themselves threatened. To protect themselves they resolved to kill Domitian, and the Emperor's wife Domitia joined in the plot. On the night before his last he leaped from his bed in fright. When the appointed moment came, Domitia's servant struck the first blow; four others took part in the assault; and Domitian, struggling madly,

met death in the forty-fifth year of his age and the fifteenth of his reign (96). When the news reached the senators they tore down and shattered all images of him in their chamber, and ordered that all statues of him, and all inscriptions mentioning his name, should be destroyed throughout the realm” (ibid, pp.292f).

5. Verses 5-7: "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations."
 - a. Four things are said to be given to this beast:
 - 1) He had a mouth to speak great things and blasphemies. Compare Daniel 7:8,20: "I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.....And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows."
 - 2) He had authority to continue for 42 months. The duration of the four parallel periods cited below is the same as in this verse.
 - a) Revelation 11:2: "But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months."
 - b) Revelation 11:3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."
 - c) Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."
 - d) Revelation 12:14: "And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."
 - 3) He possessed authority to make war with the saints (cf. Dan. 7:21, 25). The period of time referred to is the duration of the persecution the church of that era endured. God permitted this to continue only for a limited time.
 - a) Daniel 7:21: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them."
 - b) Daniel 7:25: "And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."
 - 4) He was given authority over every tribe, people, tongue and nation. This describes the Roman world. They considered their empire to be the civilized world; the Mediterranean Sea is so named because the Romans considered it to be "in the middle of the earth" (the earth they possessed).
 - b. "Domitian delighted in being looked upon as divine and in being so worshiped. To the Christian such homage was idolatry and an utter denial of faith in Christ. To the Romans the refusal to worship the emperor was a sign of disloyalty to the State and an act of treason. Emperor worship was forced upon the Christians as a test of their loyalty to the State. At first Christians were called upon to perform the ceremonies of loyal service and worship to the emperor—the placing of a pinch of incense upon the altar. To refuse was disloyal; to agree was to prove that one was not a Christian....
 - 1) "As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the 'praefectus urbi' for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for punishing people in the various cities over a province.
 - 2) "The group with the greatest authority was the concilia composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his

- worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and punished in various ways all who refused. Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty.
- 3) "All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom" (Summers, pp.92f).
6. Verse 8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
- a. The general population would worship the beast: all those whose names were not enrolled in the Lamb's book of life.
 - b. Christ, the Lamb, is said to have been slain "from the foundation of the world." His death on the cross was planned and intended from eternity (Isa. 53).
 - 1) Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - 2) Luke 22:22: "And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"
 - 3) Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."
 - 4) Acts 4:28: "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."
 - 5) Ephesians 3:11: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. Premillennialists, who insist that Revelation must be interpreted literally, deny that God planned for the death of Christ; they assert that he came to set up an earthly kingdom with his headquarters in Jerusalem, but that he delayed establishing the kingdom when the Jews rejected Jesus; they say that God then decided to set up the church instead, which required the death of Christ. The Bible shows consistently that the crucifixion of Christ was planned from eternity, and that the kingdom (which is the church) was set up on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
7. Verse 9: "If any man have an ear, let him hear."
- a. It is significant that this admonition is given again at this point. Perhaps it was placed here as a warning to the literalists and futurists with their sensational ideas.
 - b. Also, the responsibility is placed on the individual to hear what God says. It is not the obligation of God to give anyone directly a knowledge of his will—we must study and learn and apply it personally.
 - 1) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 3) Luke 8:11-15: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

- 4) Acts 2:36-41: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."
- 5) 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- 6) Hebrews 5:12-14: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
- 7) 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."
8. Verse 10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (KJV). "If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goeth: if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (ASV).
 - a. The people of the world who would imprison and slay the saints would face similar fates.
 - 1) Matthew 26:52: "Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - b. The saints were told not to resist captivity and the sword; in having this attitude they would be showing steadfastness and faith. A Christian is required to be obedient to civil rulers, except when that obedience would put them in disobedience to the will of God; in such cases, disobedience to civil authority would incur punishment from the government—saints are gladly to accept the consequences.
 - c. If we are guided by worldly wisdom, we might decide that it is foolish to oppose the power of the civil state when it decrees that we must compromise the gospel or be persecuted [perhaps imprisoned or slain]. To the worldly mind, it might appear wise to relax our faith. By so-doing, we would spare ourselves the immediate trouble—but ultimately we will have to answer to God. The short-term victory might soon be lost, and surely lost in the Judgment. We must maintain steadfastness, trusting God to provide the ultimate victory. The Christian's faith would be tested more than once; if he gives in once, he would have to continue giving in—or else be punished.
 - d. "In revealing the beast and his great power, John had shown the beast's ability to overcome the death-stroke (v. 3), his power to make war against the saints and to overcome them (v. 7), and the worship that would be given to him by the world (v. 8). How shall the saints react to this power and opposition? They were not to resist the civil powers (Rom. 13:2; I Peter 2:13), but were to fight against the powers of evil with spiritual weapons (II Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18). Nor were they to fear them that could destroy the body, but who had no power beyond that; they were to fear Him whose power extended beyond the body to include the soul (Luke 12:4f); for their victory would be in their faith (I John 5:4). This leads to the conclusion that John was writing of saints: if they follow the world's method of warfare by resisting the sword, they will suffer the world's consequence of such methods. Therefore, they are to accept captivity or the sword; in doing so they clearly demonstrate the patience (steadfastness) of the saints and their faith in God to give the victory in His own way" (Hailey, pp.291f).

B. Revelation 13:11-18: The Second Beast.

1. Verse 11: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and

he spake as a dragon."

- a. As the dragon (ASV) stood on the sea shore, the first beast arose out of the sea (13:1); the second beast now arises out of the earth. "It could be said the one was to serve as his right hand and the other as his left" (Hailey).
 - b. This second beast had the outward appearance of a harmless creature: he had two horns like a lamb. The little "nubs" of horns on a lamb are more cute than harmful. But when he spake it was like the voice of a dragon—authoritative and awesome.
 - c. A lamb is symbolic of religious sacrifice, thus this beast represents some sort of religion; since this beast spoke as a dragon, he is symbolic of some false religion:
 - 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
 - d. The preeminent false religion of the time was paganism. There was in the first century a Roman organization in Asia which was dedicated to forcing the citizens to worship the Roman Emperor. This organization, called the Concilia, was very powerful, having the authority of Rome behind it.
 - e. The second beast is inferior in authority to the first, since he operates by the authority of the first beast. This second beast is likely the concilia.
2. Verse 12: "And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed."
- a. This verse lends support to the view in the above comments. The first beast is most likely representative of Domitian, the Roman Emperor; the second beast caused the people to worship the first beast. This is precisely what the Concilia did. Beginning with Domitian's reign, the state religion was emperor worship. The Concilia was charged with enforcing emperor worship throughout the empire.
 - b. Remember the comments earlier quoted from Summers: "As the demand for emperor worship grew, Christians were outlawed as a body as soon as their adherence to the sect became known. Detailed methods were worked out to enforce the State religion and to punish the Christians. There was appointed an official body known as the 'praefectus urbi' for the enforcing of worship in each town. These were responsible for punishing people in the various cities over a province. The group with the greatest authority was the concilia composed of deputies sent from the various towns or divisions of a province. Their duty was to build images of the emperor, altars for his worship, and in every way sponsor the state religion and make it effective. They forced the people to worship the emperor, identified all who did, and punished in various ways all who refused. Many Christians were beheaded, some were exiled, and others had all their property confiscated and were reduced to poverty. All of this is perhaps reflected in Revelation 13:5. The purpose of Revelation is in the background of all that has been said as to the Christians, their condition, and their need. It is to show that so great a power as Rome was doomed to overthrow, that in the end the kingdom of God would triumph and Christ would reign supreme. It is to present a ringing call to maintain loyalty to the faith at all costs, even in the face of martyrdom" (Summers, pp.92f).
3. Verses 13-14: "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live."
- a. The second beast performed "great wonders" (signs) by which he was able to deceive many people. His wonders were "lying wonders." Compare:
 - 1) Matthew 24:24: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

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- 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."
 - b. The purpose of the true miracles which God wrought was to confirm the messages of his spokesmen.
 - 1) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 12:12: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:2-4: "For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - c. This evil beast used false signs in order to deceive the people. His signs were not genuine, for if God allowed Satan to deceive by genuine miracles he would thereby nullify his own witness to truth. The difference between true and false signs is illustrated in Acts 8:5-13: "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." Simon easily saw the difference.
 - d. Where that which is true is found, that which is counterfeit often appears. This is true of money, the Bible, Christ, the church, worship, and God.
 - e. This is the third time that mention is made of the deadly wound sustained by the first beast. This repetition indicates the importance of the fact. The first official persecution of the church by Rome occurred during Nero's reign. This persecution was halted following Nero's death in A.D. 68. It was resurrected under the reign of Domitian. This is very likely the significance of the healing of the deadly wound.
 - f. The second beast commanded that an image be made to the first beast by the people of the earth. This clearly serves to show that emperor worship is the point of the passage.
 - 4. Verse 15: "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed."
 - a. "Images were set up to make worship of the emperor easier (v. 14). This is a well-known fact in Roman history in the time of Domitian. When Trajan came to be emperor, he had many of the golden images melted and turned to better purposes. People who refused to worship the emperor Domitian were refused the privileges of buying and selling in the market places. This is reflected in verse 17. Those who did worship him received a mark upon their hand or forehead to indicate, according to the custom of some of the pagan cults, that the individual was an adherent of the particular deity" (Summers, p.175).
 - b. The second beast had power to give life (breath) to the image to cause it to speak, and cause those who would not worship the image to be put to death. The priests serving idols often used ventriloquism and smoke to deceive men into thinking the idol was alive.
 - c. The Concilia had power to put to death some who would not worship the emperor. Polycarp, an elder from Smyrna, was charged with being a Christian; he was given the opportunity to prove his innocence by reviling Christ; he refused and was burned to death. "Hadrian, a skeptic open to all ideas, instructed his appointees to give the Christians the benefit of every doubt. Being more religious, Antoninus allowed more persecution. At Smyrna the populace demanded of the 'Asiarch' Philip that he enforce
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the law; he complied by having eleven Christians executed in the amphitheater (155). The bloodthirst of the crowd was aroused rather than assuaged; it clamored for the death of Polycarp, a saintly patriarch of eighty-six years, who was said in his youth to have known John. Roman soldiers found the old man in a suburban retreat, and brought him unresisting before the Asiarch at the games. Philip pressed him: 'Take the oath, revile Christ, and I will let you go.' Polycarp, says the most ancient of the Acts of the Martyrs, replied: 'For eighty-six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?' The crowd cried out that he should be burned alive" (Durant, Caesar and Christ, p.648). Polycarp was executed.

- d. How was the beast able to give life to the image? "Was it through ventriloquism and other magical arts? Or was it the function and obligation of the commune to make the Caesar-worship live and speak the mind of the empire? This latter seems to be more plausible. The power of death for those who refused to pay homage to 'Augustus and Rome' rested in the magistrate and religious hierarchy. This put the Christian in the position where he must confess either Christ or Caesar as Lord, thus choosing between immediate death and a few added years of life before eternal death. This same spirit continued to live and find expression in the apostate churches of later years" (Hailey, p.295).
 - e. "The symbolism is most probably derived from the heathen oracles. This beast is permitted to give life, to impart spirit to the image; that is, he gives it an appearance of reality which a mere image could not possess. This is the dangerous power of self deceit. If men would face the naked truth, stripped of plausible arguments and specious resemblances, they would see that there was no reality in the ideal which they place before their minds, and their worship of which is prompted by love of the world, and the denial of God's power. Together with the attempt to deceive men into worshipping the image, is offered the alternative of death, or, should we not say, apparent death? It is only self deceit which makes men imagine that the alternative to an acceptance of the sovereignty of Satan and the world is death. No doubt many Christians in John's time were thus beguiled. They deceived themselves by imagining that they must either conform to the heathen practices required of them, or suffer death; those with clearer mental vision saw that the threatened death was in reality life" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
5. Verse 16: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."
 - a. This second beast had authority to require all to receive a mark in their forehead or on their right hand. As God had symbolically sealed his people with a mark on their foreheads, so the beast imitates this by requiring all to indicate their allegiance to him by a mark. Was the seal literally made on their hands or foreheads? Or is this another symbol? There is no reason why we should suppose this was an actual brand in the flesh of the individual, although in ancient times such is known to have been done.
 - b. "As the seal which God caused to be placed on the foreheads of his subjects was not physical but a spiritual recognition of devotion to Him, it is best to think of the mark of the beast as the stamp of paganism impressed upon the character and conduct of idolaters. The boycott of Christians and the idolatry of pagans could indeed be maintained without a literal visible sign, for the Christian's character and life caused the world to boycott him" (Hailey, p.296).
 - c. The prescribed mark was intended for everyone, regardless of their status in life, economically or socially. A powerful penalty was imposed on anyone refusing the mark.
 6. Verse 17: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
 - a. As a further means of forcing allegiance to the first beast, no one was permitted to buy or sell unless he had the mark. This offers some confirmation to our view of the third seal: "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" (Rev. 6:6).
 - b. Economic discrimination is a very powerful means of forcing obedience. It has been used by many evil governments through the centuries. Stalin starved millions in the Ukraine, as a means to subdue and punish.
 - c. "The manner in which this was fulfilled in the early ages of the Church is sufficiently notorious. Then faithfulness to the cause of Christ frequently meant banishment from friends, kindred, and home. John himself was feeling the effect of this at the time when he wrote these words in exile at Patmos. So, at

the present day, the Jews regard as an utter alien any one of their number who embraces Christianity” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].

7. Verse 18: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six."
- The verse expresses divine wisdom and could be understood. What is to be counted is the number of the beast; attention is focused on the number. It is easy to turn a name into a number, but to turn a number into a name is difficult. In ancient languages a letter was often used also as a number as in Latin: V = 5; X = 10; C = 100.
 - One prominent interpretation of 666 is that the reference is to Nero Caesar, which in the Greek is Neron Kaisar. Translated into Hebrew, and letting the letters represent their numeric value, one arrives at the desired number. "From early Christian history men have been counting the name of the beast to determine his identity. One of the most frequently used theories....reduces 'Nero Caesar' to the Hebrew consonant equivalent 'Nron Ksr' and adds up the numerical equivalent for each letter" (Summers, p.175). However, the vowels are dropped and only the consonants are counted [NRON KSR]:
 - The figure reached:

LETTER	NUMBER
N	50
R	200
O	6
N	50
K	100
S	60
R	200
TOTAL	666

- In the Greek language (in which John wrote) the letters add up to 1005. In the instances where John referred to a Hebrew word, he took pains to designate them as Hebrew words (Rev. 9:11; 16:16). **He made no such effort here, so there is no reason for such manipulation of the text.**
 - Revelation 9:11: "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."
 - Revelation 16:16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon."
- Another major theory is to equate the name of the first Latin ruler (Lateinos) with the number 666. Using the Greek letter evaluation system, it works out nicely: L (30), A (1), T (300), E (5), I (10), N (50), O (70), S (200) = 666. Those who take this view apply the number to the Latin Church. An objection to this is, of what significance would this information have for the persecuted saints of the first century? The Roman Catholic Church did not come into existence until 606 A.D.
- Another interpretation, using Latin letters, gives the following based on the Latin expression, vicarius filii dei ("in place of the Son of God"): V (5); I (1), C (100) A (0), R (0), I (1), U (5), S (0), F (0), I (1), L (50), I (10), I (1), D (500), E (0) I (1) = 666. Where there was no numerical value to a letter, it was made to equal zero. It is claimed that the pope has a crown with jeweled letters which spell out this Latin phrase.
- Ray Summers tells of a student in 1941 who worked out a system by which "Hitler" totals 666. The letter values were arbitrarily assigned. "Doubtless many people in the world at that time would have

subscribed to this interesting result! Unfortunately the student had no good reason for starting his evaluation at 100 rather than some other number. So it turned out to be only another mathematical mystery” (pp.176f).

- f. The following information is gleaned from Homer Hailey’s fine commentary on Revelation: The number is “the number of the beast,” apparently the first or sea-beast, for it was his image that was to be worshiped; it was not the number of an individual. When John adds, “It is the number of a man,” he omits the definite article before “man,” thereby indicating that he has no particular individual in mind. He is saying that the number represents that which is human; it is therefore a human number. Paul said of the gospel which he preached, “it is not after man” (Gal. 1:11), that is, it was not human in origin or substance.
- 1) “Since the Apocalypse abounds in the symbolic use of numbers which express ideas rather than persons or literal quantities, the same principle should be followed in the interpretation of this number. Throughout the book, ‘seven’ expresses the idea of perfection or completeness: the seven churches, seven horns, seven eyes, seven spirits, and so forth. So six, which falls below the sacred seven, can never be seven or reach perfection; therefore, it symbolizes the imperfect, that which is human and destined to fail. It is said that to the Jews the number six was an omen or symbol of dread and doom, so when it was tripled, 666, it represented the completeness of doom and failure.
 - 2) “In these comments it has been concluded that the first beast represented the Roman Empire in its powerful opposition to the kingdom of God. It epitomized the sum of all the world’s political opposition to God and righteousness for all time. It was further concluded that the second beast symbolized the pagan priesthood or commune of the emperor cult, backed by the political power of the empire; this also in turn generally represented all false religion since the fall of the Roman pagan system. It is now concluded that the number of the beast, six-six-six, stands for the complete and total failure of all human systems and efforts antagonistic to God and His Christ—all are doomed to ultimate and complete defeat and failure. This explanation is in harmony with the theme and purpose of Revelation” (pp.298f).
- g. The number “666” is a number, not a name; it is the number of man; the number represents the character of man, and not a specific name. The definite article “the” is not found in the Greek text before the term man, thus no specific individual is intended. It is easy to turn a name into a number, but it not so easy to turn a number into a name.

C. A Summary of Revelation 12-13.

1. The dragon, who is identified as the devil, arrays himself against the woman and her child. He fights with all his cunning, power, and evil.
 2. The first beast, which is representative of the wicked Roman Emperor, receives his evil power and motivation from the devil. He wreaks havoc on the church, and thunders forth blasphemies against God.
 3. The second beast is representative of the Roman Concilia, which receives its authority from the first beast—the emperor Domitian.
 4. It appears that there can be no hope for the saints: the devil with all his power is assaulting the kingdom of God; he is using the awesome might of the great and evil Roman Empire; there is a dedicated effort by the pagan religionists to destroy the church. The enemies seem to be invincible, but John next turns from this dark scene to present a scene which shows that the forces of righteousness will ultimately be victorious.
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REVELATION 14

Righteous Judgment and Victory

A. Revelation 15:1-5: The Lamb and the 144,000 on Mount Zion.

1. Verse 1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."
 - a. The Lamb is Christ; he is pictured as standing (cf. Acts 7:56), which indicates his interest in the state of the faithful. The 144,000 are pictured with him; each of these has the name of the Father inscribed on the forehead. These are the ones who were sealed in Revelation 7. Mount Zion symbolizes God's dwelling place. The Lord is described as standing when Stephen was being slain: "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7:56).
 - b. Zion is identified in the Old Testament with Jerusalem: "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David" (2 Sam. 5:4-7).
 - c. Out of Zion (Jerusalem) would go forth God's New Testament law (Acts 2):
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - d. Mount Zion (Jerusalem) is used in reference to the church: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:22-24).
 - e. Here the term is probably used in reference to heaven (cf. Rev. 21). But some scholars apply this passage to the church. Verse 3 lends support to the former view—that Heaven is meant: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth" (Rev. 14:3). The 144,000 of Revelation 7:2-8 describes the faithful saints on the earth; in this passage (14:4-5), the situation is in Heaven.
 - f. "There is no question as to the meaning of this symbol. It refers to the triumphant Christ. Following the dark and threatening scene of the last two chapters, the curtain is drawn aside to reveal the Lamb, safe on Mount Zion, with a perfect number (144,000) of his redeemed with him. These bear a mark of identity just as the adherents of the devil-emperor worship bore. The mark on their forehead is not an evil one but 'his name (the Lamb's) and the name of his Father.' This triumphant picture was one calculated to cause the hearts of the Christians to leap for joy. Their Redeemer-Lamb as their champion is marshalling a complete army of righteousness about the crest of Mount Zion" (Summers, p.180).
2. Verse 2: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps."

- a. An unidentified voice (possibly the combined voices of the 144,000, for “they” sang a song—verse 3) was heard coming from heaven. The voice is compared to the sound of many waters, the sound of a great thunder, and the sound harps playing. Note the word **as**. The voice had the mighty roar of a great waterfall, the power of thunder, and the sweet, melodious sound of harps.
 - b. The source of the voice is heaven; the people identified were with Christ on Mount Zion; therefore, Mount Zion must be heaven in this scene.
 - c. John compares the sound of the voice to the sound of many waters, a great thunder, and harpers harping with their harps—a strong, melodious, and soothing sound. "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and the voice which I heard was as the voice of harpers harping with their harps" (Rev. 14:2, ASV).
3. Verse 3: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."
 - a. “Those with the Lamb sing a song, a new victory song, the meaning of which can be known only by the redeemed with the Lamb. They are with him and victorious because they had kept themselves undefiled ‘with women,’ symbolic of freedom from the spiritual fornication of idol worship. ‘They follow the Lamb wherever he goes’—they have been and are absolutely loyal to him, ‘In their mouth was found no lie’—no denial of the supremacy of Christ. There can be no doubt about the outcome of the battle when the Lamb is thus pictured safe on Zion with a perfect number of the redeemed with him—they shall not fail; with him they are victorious” (Summers, p.180).
 - b. They sang as it were a new song. Evidently, the voice John heard (vs. 2) was singing the song mentioned in this verse. These 144,000 are not a group of special martyrs or special saints, but are representative of all the redeemed, as in chapter 7. Their ultimate victory is assured since they are pictured as being with the Lamb in heaven.
 - c. Only the 144,000 can learn the new song. There are some songs which the angels cannot properly sing: “I was sinking deep in sin,” for example.
 4. Verses 4-5: "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Several descriptions are given of the 144,000 in the context:
 - a. They were redeemed from the earth: thus they are not angels, but men (cf. vs. 3).
 - 1) Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."
 - b. They had not been defiled with women—they were virgins. This creates a major difficulty for those who try to make this number literal: if there will only be 144,000 people in heaven, then only men who have never married or committed fornication will make it. But the number is not to be taken as literal, and the virginity involved is not that of a physical nature. The 144,000 is representative of a large number and the purity is spiritual purity. Consistency does not permit the number to be literal and the virginity to be figurative. If one is literal, the other must be literal; if one is symbolic, the other must be symbolic.
 - c. They follow the Lamb—they are faithful servants: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:27-28).
 - d. These were the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb: this may mean that there would be others to be among their number, or it may simply be the way God chose to affirm his ownership of these who were redeemed. Israel was told to give to God the firstfruits of each year’s harvest—that part of the crop rightfully belonged to him. All those who are redeemed rightfully belong to God.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:16-17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God

- dwell in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." [This is a reference to the church as a whole; the "ye" is plural and the "temple" is singular—the many individual Christians comprise the one temple].
- 2) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." [This is a reference to individual Christians].
 - 3) 2 Timothy 2:19: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."
 - 4) Titus 2:11-14: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."
- e. In their mouth was found no guile (they did not deceive; they told no lies); they are without fault (there is no blemish on their souls). They do not utter any falsehood or error. They had refused either to deny the Lordship of Christ or confess Caesar as Lord. They were without spiritual or moral blemish.
- 1) Ephesians 5:25-26: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

B. Revelation 14:6-13: The Angels' Messages and a Word of Warning from Heaven.

1. Verses 6-7: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."
 - a. The first angel appeared with a message. "And I saw" introduces another phase of the vision. In the Revelation, John has seen several angels; here is yet another one, the last one being mentioned was in 11:15. This angel is said to have the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth.
 - b. This good news message [gospel] is that men are to fear God, give glory to him, and worship him who made heaven, earth, sea, and the fountain of waters. In the context of the first century, this was a call to turn from the worship of the emperor. Man's first obligation is to fear and worship God, regardless of the country where he lives, regardless of external circumstances, and regardless of persecution that may ensue his obedience.
 - c. This message was also one of warning about the coming hour of God's judgment. Is this the final Judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; 7:21-23; Heb. 9:27)? Or is it one of the limited judgments such as God has often brought against men and nations (Isa. 13; Luke 19:41-46; 1 Pet. 4:12-19)? Is this judgment only against Babylon (vs. 8) or one in which all will be judged? It is probably the judgment against Babylon (the Roman Empire). The judgment is pictured by the angel's words as having come.
 - d. Is this gospel the New Testament gospel? The gospel of Christ is to be preached to every person (Mark 16:15); it has been once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3); it has been deposited in earthen

vessels (2 Cor. 4:7); if an angel should preach any other gospel he is to be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9). This gospel is the gospel of Christ; the vision of the angel ("messenger") preaching the gospel from mid-heaven to all those who dwell on the earth is symbolic of God's messengers (his people) preaching the gospel to the whole world. Christians, not angels, are charged with the responsibility of preaching the gospel to the lost.

- 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Matthew 28:19: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
2. Verse 8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - a. Another angel (the second one in this series) appears announcing that Babylon has fallen. This connects with the preceding two verses and indicates the judgment named there is a judgment against "Babylon."
 - b. Here, the judgment has been consummated. Babylon fell because of God's judgment. God judged (condemned) her on account of the fact she made other nations drink of her evil. These subservient nations joined Rome in wickedness—they drank of her evil and therefore must also drink the wine of punishment. At the time the vision was seen by John, Babylon had not fallen; that fall was many years in the future. But when God decrees a matter, it is as if it has already been accomplished: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done" (Isa. 46:10). Years before ancient Babylon fell to the Medes, God said, "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: wail for her" (Jer. 51:8).
 - c. It is evident from Revelation 17:5,18 that the Babylon John described is pagan Rome. The message given by the angel is God's assurance that he will punish this great adversary and persecutor of his people. "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH....And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:5,18). She made all nations to partake of her punishment, due to the influence she exerted on them to join her in sin.
 - d. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem or Judaism has caused all men to go into sin? Was there any time when the Jews ruled the world (as the Babylonian Empire, the Medo-Persian Empire, the Grecian Empire, and the Roman Empire ruled)? This fact discourages the view that Revelation pertains primarily to the Jewish nation and its overthrow at Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.
 3. Verses 9-11: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."
 - a. The third angel gives strong warning against worshipping the beast and his image and receiving the mark of the beast. Those who do so must suffer a terrible penalty. He who worships the beast and the image (worships the emperor) will be made to drink of the wine of God's wrath. The wine drunk by the ancients was often mixed with water and spices; but this "wine" would be undiluted with mercy.
 - b. Brimstone: "Sulphur existed in Palestine in early times and was known by most of the ancient nations as a combustible substance. In the vicinity of the Dead Sea, even at the present time, deposits of sulphur are being formed. Blanckenhorn (Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins, 1896) believes that this formation is due to the action of bituminous matter upon gypsum, as these two substances are found associated with each other in this district. Travelers going from Jericho to the Dead Sea may pick up lumps of sulphur, which are usually incrustated with crystals of gypsum. Deut 29:23 well describes the present aspect of this region. That the inhabitants of the land had experienced the terrors of burning sulphur is very probable. Once one of these deposits took fire it would melt and run in

burning streams down the ravines spreading everywhere suffocating fumes such as come from the ordinary brimstone match. No more realistic figure could be chosen to depict terrible suffering and destruction. It is not at all unlikely that during some of the disastrous earthquakes which took place in this part of the world, the hot lava sent forth ignited not only the sulphur, but also the bitumen, and added to the horrors of the earthquake the destruction caused by burning pitch and brimstone. The figurative use of the word brimstone to denote punishment and destruction is illustrated by such passages as Deut 29:23; Job 18:15; Ps 11:6; Isa 30:33; Ezek 38:22; Luke 17:29; Rev 9:17" [James A. Patch, International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database, © 1996 by BibleSoft]. The use of fire and brimstone in punishment is not new. Compare:

- 1) Genesis 19:24: "Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."
 - 2) Jude 7: "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."
- c. Verse eleven is graphic in its description of the judgment against the ungodly—this is the final consequence of going against God—a reference to the final Judgment; the wording seems to make this conclusion clear, especially in view of verse 13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
- 1) Ezekiel 34:10: "Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."
 - 2) Matthew 18:8-9: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."
 - 3) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 4) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 5) Mark 9:42-48: "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 6) Luke 16:23,28: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom....For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."
 - 7) Revelation 20:10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
- d. But the victorious saints will ever be before the throne: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (Rev. 7:15).
4. Verse 12: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."
 - a. Jesus promised his disciples: "In your patience ye shall win your souls" (Luke 21:19, ASV).
 - 1) Luke 12:15,23: "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life

- consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth....The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."
- 2) Romans 5:3: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience."
 - 3) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - 4) Revelation 3:10: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."
 - 5) Revelation 13:10: "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints."
- b. The opposition of the beast which demanded that the Christians worship the emperor supplied the trial of faith which produced patience.
5. Verse 13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - a. The preceding messages of this section were delivered by angels; here a voice commands John to write an additional message. The speaker is not identified in the verse.
 - b. The first angel announced the everlasting gospel, called on men to heed its truth, and warned of judgment on those who rejected it. The second angel announced as an accomplished fact (because the outcome was so certain) the fall of Babylon (the Roman Empire). The third angel described the consequences to befall those who would worship the beast; they might extend their lives a little while, but horrible punishment awaited them.
 - c. This verse announces that, though one might lose his life for refusing to worship the beast, there was a glorious, restful life awaiting him in the beyond.
 - d. Blessedness (a state of happiness) pertains to those who die in a proper relationship with the Lord. They will be exalted into a heavenly joy. These are those of verse twelve.
 - e. The Lord adds an additional word of hope and assurance for future sufferers ("from henceforth"). The assurance includes all faithful saints in future generations. To die in Christ is not to lose one's existence.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:20-23: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 3) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."
 - 4) Revelation 7:9-17: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation

to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

- f. "Yea, saith the Spirit" identifies the message as coming from the Holy Spirit. The rest promised is from their present labors; the Lord will not forget their good works.
- 1) Matthew 25:34-40: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 1:3: "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."
 - 4) Hebrews 6:10: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
- g. "Revelation 14:13 contains several exciting spiritual truths. (1) It negates the false notion of 'soul-sleeping' after death, for these who have died in the Lord are said to be 'blessed.' The Greek word is makarios, and it means happy (cf. Acts 26:1; Romans 14:22). The saved dead are happy, and that implies consciousness....(2) Only those who die 'in the Lord' are happy. Connect that phrase with Romans 6:3,4 and Galatians 3:27, which passages show that one enters 'into Christ' at the point of his gospel obedience in baptism. (3) The happy dead are promised rest by the testimony of the Spirit—'yea, says the Spirit'—which indicates that the Spirit is a Person (not a mere force, as suggested by some cultists)....(4) The 'works' of the righteous dead follow them, i.e., such works are acknowledged and rewarded by God....In view of this, how can it be said that 'works' play no role in the divine plan of redemption?....Works commanded by Christ do not negate grace" (Wayne Jackson, Notes From the Margin of My Bible, pp.182f).

C. Revelation 14:14-20: Judgment is Pictured as Harvesting the Earth.

1. Verses 14-16: "And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."
 - a. The white cloud indicates purity on the part of the Judge. Clouds often symbolize the coming of judgment:
 - 1) God would come in judgment against Egypt riding on a swift cloud: "The burden of Egypt. Behold, the LORD rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it" (Isa. 19:1).
 - 2) He used a similar expression concerning his coming against Jerusalem: "Behold, he shall come up

- as clouds, and his chariots shall be as a whirlwind: his horses are swifter than eagles. Woe unto us! for we are spoiled" (Jer. 4:13). [This refers to Babylon's assault against Jerusalem in 606—586 B.C.].
- 3) Jesus would come against Jerusalem [in 70 A.D.] on the clouds of heaven: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.....Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 24:30; 26:64). This was a representative (non-literal) coming; he was present in the sense that these events were being done according to his design.
 - 4) His second coming will be with clouds:
 - a) Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - b) Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."
 - b. In this passage, Christ is pictured as coming in judgment on a white cloud. [The Russian Communists tried to make the Lord merely a visitor from outer space; they asserted that the clouds with which he left the earth (Acts 1:9-11) were actually the smoke and vapor from a spaceship blasting off!].
 - c. Compare this passage with Matthew 9:38: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."
 2. Verses 17-19: "And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God."
 - a. Other angels appear, also having sickles. Judgment is pictured. This symbol was used in the Old Testament to depict judgment: "Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).
 - b. The winepress of God's justice must eventually be felt by all evil men. The symbol of the winepress as a judgment grows out of the process of crushing grapes to force out the juice. The old method of pressing the juice from the grapes was for people to walk on the fruit. "All fruit of man's rebellion and sin against Him must be trodden under foot. The vine of earth and its fruit stand in contrast to the true vine and its fruit, which is borne to the glory of God (John 15:1-8)" (Hailey, p.315).
 3. Verse 20: "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."
 - a. The "city" here is probably spiritual Jerusalem (the church or heaven). Under Old Testament law, offenders were punished "without the gate." Those being punished were the enemies of the Lord.
 - b. The blood from this winepress extended 200 miles and up to the horses bridles. This pictures the gory completeness of Judgment. He humbled mighty Rome; and he will consummate all things in the final Judgment.
 - c. The millennialists have much trouble trying to fit this passage into their literal interpretation of Revelation. They cannot find a river that long in Palestine, and certainly cannot find one that flows with literal blood.
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REVELATION 15

The Seven Angels With Seven Bowls of Wrath

A. Revelation 15:1-2: Victory of the Faithful Symbolized.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."
 - a. Another sign: this is the third in the series of signs which John saw in heaven—the radiant woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3) are the earlier ones. This sign involves seven angels having the last plagues; the scene is described as great and marvelous.
 - b. Last—from teleo, meaning to finish, find consummation, reach perfection, to carry out, accomplish, perform, fulfill. In the judgments about to commence, God's wrath will reach its goal. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer" (Ps. 19).
 - c. In earlier visions the judgment of the wicked was contrasted with the victory of the saints:
 - 1) The sealing of the saints preceded the judgments of the seven trumpets (Rev. 7; 8:3-5).
 - 2) The vision of the redeemed on Mount Zion precedes the wrathful harvest (Rev. 14).
 - 3) Here, the victory of the saints is pictured before the seven bowls of wrath are poured out (Rev. 15, 16).
2. Verse 2: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God."
 - a. John saw a sea like glass mingled with fire. This is probably the same sea as the sea introduced in Revelation 4:6. In that passage, the transcendancy of God is being pictured; the sea helped describe the exalted nature of God over mankind by standing between God and man, making approach unto him seem impossible. But here the sea is described as being mingled with fire.
 - b. Does this fire represent the harsh judgment about to fall on the wicked? Does it represent the judgment about to fall on the world which, in general, would have an effect also on the saints? Or does it represent the fiery trials that the saints must endure before they can approach unto God? The latter seems more likely since those who stood on the sea were those who had obtained victory over the beast.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 3:12-15: "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:7: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of

Jesus Christ."

- c. They had won the victory of faith. They are pictured as having the harps of God—heavenly harps, which show their right to praise God.
- d. “These victorious ones stand by (such, probably, is the force of *epi*) the sea (see above and on Rev 4:6). The ‘harps’ are characteristic of the heavenly melodies (Rev 5:8; 14:2). This multitude has been before described in Rev 7:9. From his image; that is, from the temptation to worship the image” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

B. Revelation 15:3-4: The Victorious Saints Sing the Song of Moses and the Lamb.

1. Verse 3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - a. This is the song of victory (cf. Exod. 15). It can be sung only by the faithful. The song of Moses was the song sung after the crossing of the Red Sea. The song here will be sung by the faithful after overcoming the trials and temptations of this world.
 - b. Praise is directed toward the Almighty by these successful saints. They refer to him as “King of the saints” (margin: “nations or ages”). "Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee" (Jer. 10:7).
 - c. “The phrase, ‘singing the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb’ adds support to the position taken in 12:1, that the woman represents the faithful ones of the Old and New Testaments who become one in Christ. This is not to confuse the two groups, for they are clearly distinguished, but to unite them as one redeemed people. As God’s servant Moses delivered His people from an oppressive nation, so God’s Son, the Lamb, redeemed a people from spiritual bondage (cf. Heb. 3:5f). One conquered and delivered from the foe of physical bondage and tyranny; the other conquered the world and death, delivering from Satan’s power” (Hailey, p.320).
2. Verse 4: "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."
 - a. Because of his greatness, all should feel compelled to fear and glorify God.
 - 1) To “fear” him is to have reverence for God, to treat him with deference, and from this disposition to render obedience (Thayer).
 - 2) “Holy” is from *hosios*, and “signifies religiously right, holy, as opposed to unrighteous or polluted” (Vine). Compare Psalm 19.
 - b. When Christians were undergoing the harshest persecution, the pagan world would surely think they would be stamped out, but when they endured, the unbelievers would begin to think that there must be something worthwhile about Christianity.
 - c. In the final day, all will be brought into the Judgment, and will unfaithfully give praise to God: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). God’s righteous ways, the verdicts which he proclaims, and judgments which he executes, will be vindicated in history and eternity.
 - d. In time, before the evil empire of Rome fell, many would obey the gospel. In eternity, all will come to see the righteousness of God’s will.

C. Revelation 15:5-8: The Seven Angels With the Seven Plagues.

1. Verses 5-6: "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles" (KJV). "And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: and there came out from the temple the seven angels that had the seven plagues, arrayed with precious stone, pure and bright, and girt about their breasts with golden girdles" (ASV).
 - a. The temple of the tabernacle is the Holy of Holies in heaven, which was symbolized by the most holy place in the Old Testament tabernacle. In Revelation 11:19, the temple was opened so that a glimpse of God’s power and majesty might be seen; here it is opened that the seven angels might come forth.

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- b. These angels had the seven plagues with which to punish the earth. They were clothed in pure and white linen—their nature and their mission were pure and righteous. The ASV has a variation in the rendering of the passage. Ancient Greek texts vary; but the context favors the KJV rendering.
 - c. Other passages give glorious descriptions of heavenly beings:
 - 1) Matthew 28:3: "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow."
 - 2) Mark 16:5: "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted."
 - 3) John 20:12: "And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."
 - 4) Acts 1:10: "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel."
 - 5) Revelation 19:8: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
 - d. "These [the seven angels] who came out bearing the seven bowls had around their breasts a golden girdle such as that worn by the glorified Christ (1:13...). These golden girdles seem not to identify their work as priestly, but to signify that they were angels of high rank, entrusted with a solemn obligation" (Hailey, p.323).
 - e. Ancient Rome had trampled under foot the law of God and the people of God: they must pay the price as must all who do so: "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 9:17).
2. Verse 7: "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever."
 - a. In Revelation 5:8, the twenty-four elders and four living creatures had bowls full of incense; here the living creature gave seven bowls of God's wrath to the angels. They are soon to empty these bowls upon the earth. Whatever the judgments represented, they are ultimately God's punishment on wicked men.
 - b. The seven seals were to reveal, the seven trumpets to warn, but the seven bowls were to execute judgment. The number of the bowls indicate the completeness of the impending punishment.
 - c. "The Greek word for bowl (phiale), that is, a broad shallow vessel or deep saucer, occurs only in Revelation (twelve times), and is to be distinguished from the cup (14:10), which is exclusively a drinking vessel. The bowl is similar to some of the vessels used in Old Testament sacrifices and ritual" (Hailey, p.323).
 3. Verse 8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled."
 - a. The glory of God filled the tabernacle on its completion (Ex. 40:34-35); it likewise filled the temple when Solomon completed it (1 Kings 8:10-11).
 - 1) Exodus 40:34-35: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."
 - 2) 1 Kings 8:10-11: "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."
 - b. While God's glory was in these two Old Testament edifices, no one could enter. In our text, none could enter the temple of the vision until the plagues were finished. "This symbolized that the wrath of God was filled—and there was no room for intercession during this visitation of wrath. All this affords an easy transition over to the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath" (Summers, p.185).
 - c. "No intercessions can change the determinate counsel of God; but when it is fulfilled, we can then see clearly that which is now obscured" (Hailey).
 - d. The time will come when salvation from sin will not be available. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will
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pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil" (Prov. 1:20-33).

REVELATION 16

The Bowls Of Wrath Are Poured Out

A. Revelation 16:1: The Order is Given to the Seven Angels to Pour Out the Bowls of Wrath.

1. Before the bowls were emptied, John is shown the scene of victorious saints standing on the sea of glass, and hears them singing the song of triumph. This would give assurance and consolation to the saints on earth of their ultimate victory. With this assurance given, the time was come to give the pictures of the God's awesome judgments on the evil.
2. The pictures which are to be presented in the following verses depict swiftly executed wrath from God upon sinful man. In keeping with our original premise, that the events described in the symbols of Revelation have application primarily to the first century, the dire woes pictured here have their main fulfillment on wicked Rome. The Empire was still strong and in no apparent danger of falling, but this mighty and wicked nation was doomed. Rather than pertaining either to the end of time or events just prior to the end, the scene in this chapter deals with God's judgment against the dragon and the two beasts. But one cannot afford to be dogmatic in assigning specific meanings to these scenes.
3. There are similarities between these vials (bowls) of wrath and the trumpet plagues. They represent woes upon nature and man, and a part of their symbolism is parallel with the Egyptian plagues.
4. There are differences between the bowls and trumpets. The trumpet judgments call for repentance; the bowl judgments are the outpouring of judgment and punishment (there was no chance for repentance and therefore no hope of escape now). The trumpet judgments were partial (they affected only one-third part of their objects); but the bowl judgments are final (affecting the whole of the objects). The trumpet judgments did not affect man directly until the fifth trumpet; here man is affected directly from the first bowl.
5. After each bowl is emptied, the judgment increases until finally the imperial city is reached. The bowls are grouped in the following order: four, two, an interlude, and one [this was the same pattern in the seals and trumpets visions.
6. Verse 1: "And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth."
 - a. An unidentified voice gives the order to the seven angels to pour out their bowls of God's wrath; they had received these bowls from one of the living creatures: "And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 15:7).
 - b. "We have now the narration in full of the events of which Rev 15. has given us a summary. Out of the temple. The...shrine of God, mentioned in Rev 15:8, and which no one could enter; the voice must, therefore, be the voice of God himself. Saying to the seven angels (see on Rev 15:1). Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth; go ye and pour...." [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - c. Some commentators [Pulpit Commentary, e.g.] have concluded that, since the voice is heard coming from the sanctuary, that it is God the Father speaking. That it was a divine source is clear, but we are not told explicitly that it was the Father's voice. The authoritative directions are promptly obeyed.
 - d. "The trumpets shook the world-kingdoms in longer process: the vials swiftly and suddenly overthrow the kingdom of the beast who invested himself with the world-kingdom. The Egyptian plagues were inflicted with but a month between them severally (Bengel, referring to Seder Olam). As Moses took ashes from an earthly furnace (Ex 9:8), so angels, as priestly ministers in the heavenly temple, take holy fire in sacred vials from the heavenly altar, to pour down (cf. Rev 8:5). The same heavenly altar which would have kindled sweet incense of prayer, bringing down blessing upon earth, by man's sin kindles the fiery descending curse. Just as the Nile, ordinarily the source of Egypt's fertility, became blood and a curse through Egypt's sin" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].

B. Revelation 16:2: The First Bowl is Poured Out Upon the Land.

1. Verse 2: "And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image."

2. It did not scorch the earth as in the first trumpet, but fell upon men who had received the mark of the beast; the result of the judgment was that they now had grievous sores.
 - a. Noisome: this term is from kakos, most often translated “evil.” Thayer defines it as “troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful.” It is therefore bad or distressing.
 - b. Sore: this term is from helkos—an abscess or ulcer, a foul and angry sore (Arndt and Gringch). "And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (Luke 16:21). “Compare the phraseology of Ex 9:10. A noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. The counterpart of the sixth plague of Egypt” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - c. Only those are affected who worshipped the beast and bore his mark. “A noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image. The counterpart of the sixth plague of Egypt....It is impossible to say with certainty what (if any) particular judgment upon the ungodly is intended to be signified by John in this plague” [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 3. The sixth plague on Egypt is remarkably similar to this plague: "And the LORD said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. And it shall become small dust in all the land of Egypt, and shall be a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt. And they took ashes of the furnace, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses sprinkled it up toward heaven; and it became a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast. And the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils; for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians. And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken unto Moses" (Ex. 9:8-12).
 4. Pagan Rome had afflicted the saints severely; but now she was to suffer (Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 26:27). A similar judgment may be repeated from time to time in history, but to those John addressed, the judgment was against the Roman system of emperor worship—this is a reaping of the corruption which had been sown (Hailey, p.327).
 - a. Proverbs 16:27: "An ungodly man diggeth up evil: and in his lips there is as a burning fire."
 - b. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- C. Revelation 16:3: The Second Bowl of Wrath is Poured on the Sea.
1. Verse 3: "And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea."
 2. In the second trumpet judgment, a third of the sea became blood; here the entire sea was thus affected. In Revelation 13:1, the sea out of which the first beast arose was the whole of the corrupt Roman society; here as in Revelation 8:8-9, the sea symbolizes the whole evil society of man. This bowl of wrath brings into focus the utter putrefaction of a corrupted society.
 3. “Moses wrote that ‘the life of the flesh is in the blood’ (Lev. 17:11). Consequently, when life is gone, decay and rottenness set in until one returns to the dust from whence he came. This is the irrevocable judgment of God from the very beginning (Gen. 3:19). Likewise, when the spiritual quality of a society decays, like a sea of coagulated blood from dead men, it putrefies and rots, issuing a foul and obnoxious odor” (Hailey).
 - a. Compare the sinful state and ultimate punishment of Sodom, the Canaanites, Israel, Judah, Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre.
 - b. In such societies, morality declines to the lowest level; the family collapses, schools breed rebellion, business ethics decline, entertainment becomes base and violent, smut and filth become common. Consider the vulgarity of sculptures, murals, etc., in Pompeii, and in the Mayan civilization. When this occurs, the whole society strangles in its own blood and is suffocated by its own stench. Our society is well on the road to such an end as was suffered by many evil societies of history.
- D. Revelation 16:4-7: The Third Bowl is Poured upon the Rivers and Waters.
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1. Verse 4: "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood."
 - a. The fresh waters became blood when the third bowl was emptied. Compare this with the third trumpet where a third of the waters were affected; here the effect was on all the waters.
 - b. Compare it also with the first Egyptian plague: "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said. And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also. And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink; for they could not drink of the water of the river. And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river" (Ex. 7:20-25).
 - c. In the third bowl of wrath, even the underground sources of water were polluted. This symbolically portrays some awesome punishment from God upon wicked men; in the context of the first century, this wrathful penalty was to be on Rome. It is not important to try to find the exact event in history; it is important to see the overall effect of this calamity on a wicked society.
2. Verses 5-7: "And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."
 - a. An angel proclaims the righteousness of God in bringing this appropriate penalty on these evil people. God did not act unjustly in bringing about this punishment. By making them drink the blood he acted properly, for these evil men had earlier shed the blood of the saints. They had earned the penalty. Compare: "For the day of Jehovah is near upon all the nations: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy dealing [recompense, margin] shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the nations drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and swallow down, and shall be as though they had not been" (Obadiah 15-16, ASV).
 - b. The prophets are those of the New Testament era, for the Old Testaments prophets were long since gone from earth.
 - c. Verse five proclaimed the righteousness of God in punishing the ungodly; verse seven affirms the righteousness of the judgment itself.
 - 1) Revelation 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." "How long?" is being answered in the text. God would protect and provide for his own; he would properly punish the evil.
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

E. Revelation 16:8-9: The Fourth Bowl of Wrath is Poured on the Sun.

1. Verse 8: "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire."
 - a. The scene changes from rivers of blood to focus on the blazing sun which scorches men with its heat. Unlike the fourth trumpet, which caused the sun, moon, and stars to cease giving light, and unlike the ninth plague on Egypt, which produced three days of darkness (Ex. 10:21-23), this plague turned the sun into a source of brutal heat. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt. And

Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days: They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings" (Ex. 10:21-23).

- b. Psalms 97:3: "A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about....Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods." This principle of divine action was now being carried out. The sun is pictured as being an instrument of God for the punishment of wicked men.
 - c. "The men of John's vision were as the astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators of Isaiah's day, whom Jehovah challenged to stand up and save the people; but 'the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: It shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before' (Isa. 47:13f.); it would be the scorching heat of God's wrath. And again Jehovah warned the rebellious, saying 'Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that girdeth yourselves about with firebrands; walk ye in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of my hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow' (Isa. 50:11). In John's vision God is simply carrying out what he had proposed and done all along. In their effort to lead people astray these masters of deceit had even made 'fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men' (13:13); and now God responds with a scorching fiery judgment. In contrast to the condition of these, God's people who had suffered martyrdom at the hands of the heathen were where the sun should not strike upon them, nor any heat' (7:16)" (Hailey, pp.330f).
2. Verse 9: "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory."
 - a. When men go deeply into sin, their hearts become hardened against correction. These men would not admit their sin and repent. Rather, they went even deeper into rebellion, adding blasphemy to their spiritual crimes, and adamantly refused to give God the glory that properly belongs to him.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."
 - 3) Romans 1:21: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."
 - 4) Romans 2:4-11: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God."
 - 5) Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
 - 6) Revelation 13:1: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy."
 - 7) Revelation 13:6: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."
 - b. "Instead of recognizing their sin and repenting toward God, men added two additional crimes to their already sin-cursed lives: they blasphemed the name of God who had power over these plagues, and withheld from him the glory that is rightfully his due—they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks' (Rom. 1:21)....As Pharaoh had hardened his heart against God, so these also rebelled against

his efforts to soften them. Even the scorching heat of God's wrath could not mellow their obstinate hearts; rather it hardened them.... Their failure to repent indicates that in these plagues the final judgment has not been reached, for then is no opportunity for repentance. The final judgment is not intended to bring men to repentance, but this bowl should have. This completes the first section of the plagues involving earth, sea, inland waters, and sun" (Hailey, p.331).

3. "This is the first mention in the vials of men blaspheming. As with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the judgments of God, instead of awakening them to repentance, only serve to harden their hearts. This again occurs under the fifth and seventh vials. So also in the sixth trumpet, we are told, men repented not—a statement also made in the subsequent part of this verse. As before pointed out (Rev 13:1), the two things are identical; non repentance, continuance in the service of the dragon, is blasphemy against God; though we generally reserve the name 'blasphemy' for the open avowal of infidelity to God" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

F. Revelation 16:10-11: The Fifth Bowl is Poured on the Seat of the Beast.

1. Verses 10-11: "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."
2. This punishment was poured on the throne of the beast; the effect was to cause the kingdom of the beast to become darkened; great pain came upon the people of his kingdom so that they gnawed their tongues in agony; but in their hardness of heart, they would not repent.
3. This apparently describes a time when the emperor was losing his power; anarchy was reigning in the kingdom. They would continue to blaspheme God and would blame Christians for the trouble they were undergoing. Compare Acts 9:5: "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."
4. The trouble the wicked faced moved from the natural realm to the moral and spiritual realm. The throne of the beast was the seat of his authority, which he received from the dragon. The Lord called on sinful church members to repent in five of the seven letters; he caused the everlasting gospel to be preached to the men of earth (14:6-7), and sent plagues upon them to bring them to repentance that they might also escape the judgment and condemnation that were forthcoming. Only the faithful Christians would escape these; the worldly ones did not repent.

G. Revelation 16:12: The Sixth Bowl is Emptied on the Euphrates River.

1. Verse 12: "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."
2. The river was dried up and the way was opened for the coming of the great eastern armies upon the Empire. "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:13-21).
3. This opened the door for the invading armies to come in and take over the Empire. The reference to the Euphrates is not to be taken as a literal location but representative of a barrier or deterrent to invasion, which is now removed—its waters were dried up, allowing anyone who wished to cross easily.
4. "This river also figures in the sixth trumpet vision, and possesses the same signification in both places. It is the natural direction from which enemies arise; and it derives this signification from the fact that the enemies of the Jews often came from that direction. The next sentence leaves no doubt that this is the

meaning, and supports the view taken of Rev 9:14. It is to be noticed that, though the vial is poured out upon the Euphrates, it is not with the purpose of inflicting injury on the river, but upon the men who are thus laid open to the attacks of their enemies" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].

H. Revelation 16:13-16: The Battle of Armageddon.

1. This interlude is placed in the vision between the sixth and seventh bowls, just as there were interludes in the other visions.
2. Verse 13: "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."
 - a. The unclean spirits referred to issued from the mouths of the dragon, the beast (the sea beast of 13:1-8), and the false prophet (this would be the second beast, which arose from the land—Rev. 13:11).
 - b. These three unclean spirits which came forth are likened to frogs. In the plague on Egypt, frogs came in swarms (Ex. 8:1-15); but here these are only three in number. We are not told just how frogs were able to destroy Egyptians (Ps. 78:45). Frogs are thought of as unclean and loathsome; their croaking may symbolize confusion; under the Law, frogs were considered an abomination (Lev. 11:9-12).
 - 1) Psalms 78:45: "He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them."
 - 2) Leviticus 11:9-12: "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination unto you: They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that shall be an abomination unto you."
 - c. Because of the source and number of these three frogs, they are very unclean. "These three spirits represent the influences of the dragon, the first beast and the second beast....These influences are spiritually unclean, and suggest the loathsome Egyptian plague of the frogs; that is to say, their likeness to frogs consists in their common quality of uncleanness. Perhaps also there is a reference to their devilish origin, in which they resembled the unclean spirits so frequently cast out by our Lord while on earth" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
3. Verse 14: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."
 - a. The three frogs are further described as spirits of demons (not devils); these worked miracles (signs); these were false signs, since neither Satan nor his helpers can do genuine miracles (Rev. 12:1; 13:13-14; 2 Thess. 2:1-12). Jesus had warned against false prophets and false signs (Matt. 7:15-20; 24:24; cf. 2 Thess. 2:9; 1 Tim. 4:1). The objective of these unclean spirits was to gather the kings of the whole earth unto the battle of the great day of God. That battle is that of verse 16. John is seeing the mustering of forces here, and not the actual battle. The battle is fought in Revelation 19.
 - b. One view of the battle is that it pictures the wars in which Rome was weakened and which led to her eventual overthrow.
 - c. Others apply the battle to the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. "The verses that follow from thirteen to sixteen describe the gathering armies for the final battle in the overthrow of Jerusalem, with the spiritual overtones of the conflict between the forces of Judaism and heathenism on one side, and Christianity (the church) on the other" (Wallace, Revelation, p.341).
 - d. The continuous historical view applies this battle to the struggle between Catholicism and the Reformers (Luther, et al).
 - e. Another view is that the battle is one fought across the centuries between the forces of good and evil, which eventually will lead to the final victory of righteousness. "This battle is described in Rev 19:11-21....The great day is the last great judgment day. The battle referred to here, and described in Rev 19, and again in Rev 20:1-10, is apparently the battle which is being waged against God by the forces of evil all through the history of the world, from the fall of Adam until the last judgment day. This seems certain from the description given in Rev 19. and 20. How, then, can it be described as the 'battle of the great day'? Probably because on that day will occur the crisis, as it were, of the conflict;

on that day will the issue be plainly determined, and the struggle terminated. Though the battle is proceeding daily, there is little to remind us of it; the very existence of, and necessity for, such warfare is sometimes forgotten in the daily round of life: at the last day will be plainly exhibited the nature of the incessant hostility between God and the devil, and the power of the latter will be manifested only to be visibly shattered and finally destroyed" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].

- f. Another view is that the battle indicated will take place at the Second Coming of Christ when he will destroy his enemies (Rev. 19:15; 2 Thess. 2:8). The argument goes as follows: "In summation, our argument is arranged logically as follows: (1) The battle of Har-Magedon will occur when Christ comes to judge (Rev. 16:16; 19:11). (2) But he will judge at his Second Coming. (3) Thus, the battle of Har-Magedon will take place at his Second Coming. (1) The Har-Magedon war will take place when Jesus destroys his enemies with the breath of his mouth (Rev. 19:15; 2 Thes. 2:8). (2) But such will occur at his coming (parousia) (2 Thes. 2:1ff). (3) Therefore, Har-Magedon will occur—it is the punishment inflicted—at the Second Coming of the Lord. The materialistic, carnal concept of Har-Magedon is totally false, conflicting with the Bible frequently" (Jackson, ADL, pp.345f).
- g. The view held by many, which is manifestly false, is that at the end of time a great literal battle will occur in the valley of Megiddo in Palestine. This view is false, for when the Lord returns, the whole universe will be quickly destroyed and all humanity will be resurrected or changed, and brought into Judgment:
- 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:50-58: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 4) 2 Peter 3:8-14: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

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4. Verse 15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
- a. This gives a parenthetical statement; the speaker is unidentified by name, but whose identity is clear: "I come as a thief" could only refer to Christ. "In the midst of the scene of the gathering army and decisive battle, there is a parenthetical warning and exhortation to the saints not to be deceived or led astray by what is taking place. At both the beginning and the conclusion of the revelation the Lord said that He was revealing things which 'must shortly come to pass (1:1; 22:6), 'for the time is at 'hand' (1:3; 22:10). Therefore His coming in this instance is not at the end of time" (Hailey, p.335).
 - b. Also included is the third of the seven beatitudes of Revelation. The statement cautions the saints to be careful to be prepared lest they be found naked and shamed. This verse seems to place the context at the time of the second coming, however this thought is not out of place when used in connection with a limited judgment.
 - c. The saints are admonished to keep their garments—to make sure that they remain undefiled.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14-15: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."
 - 3) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
 - 4) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
5. Verse 16: "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon" (KJV). "And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon" (ASV).
- a. This is one of the most abused passages in the book and is made to teach that there is to be a physical battle involving all the forces of God fighting against all the forces of Satan in the physical valley of Megiddo (a small valley which in no way could contain the forces indicated). Most Bible students understand the word Armageddon [Har-Magedon—ASV] as a reference to Megiddo. This is probably the best understanding. Har-Magedon means "hill" or "mountain" of Megiddo. In John's day, the tell of Megiddo was about seventy feet high, justifying his description of it as a hill or mountain (Jackson, ADL, p.343).
 - 1) Esdraelon: [God sows]—the great plain loosely identified as the Plain of Jezreel, about 89 kilometers (55 miles) north of Jerusalem....The word Esdraelon is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Jezreel. Esdraelon is a triangular plain approximately 24 by 24 by 32 kilometers (15 by 15 by 20 miles) in size, bounded along the southwest by the Carmel Mountain range and on the north by the hills of Nazareth. The Plain of Esdraelon contains rich farmland because of the soil washed down into it from the mountains of Galilee and the highlands of Samaria. It is also the only east-west valley which divides the mountain ranges of western Palestine. Esdraelon has been the scene of numerous battles. Here Deborah and Barak were victorious over Sisera (Judg 4). Here, too, the Philistines were victorious over King Saul (1 Sam 31:1-3). In this valley the Egyptians mortally wounded Josiah, king of Judah, when he attempted to intercept the army of Pharaoh Necho (2 Kings 23:29)....[Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
 - 2) Megiddo: On the S. edge of the Esdraelon or Jezreel plain, the frontier of Issachar and Manasseh...commanding a pass from the N. into the hill country. Joshua (Josh 12:21) defeated its king, with 30 other petty chieftains, W. of Jordan. It was assigned to Manasseh, though within Issachar's limit, but they failed to drive out the Canaanites, and could only make them tributary (Josh 17:11-13; Judg 1:27-28; 5:19). "The kings of Canaan (Jabin and Sisera his captain) fought in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo" (namely, Kishon, or else a copious stream flowing down into Kishon) with Deborah and Barak. They assembled at Taanach and by the waters of Megiddo, but the battle was fought at Mount Tabor, for they "perished at Endor" (Ps 83:10), near Tabor.
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Barak would never desert the heights of Tabor to march 15 miles over a boggy plain and attack Sisera strongly placed on the low hills of Taanach. Jehovah "drew unto Barak Sisera, unto the Kishon" (Judg 4:7), i.e. unto the pools and springs of the Kishon at El Mujahiyeh, the "spring head" W. of Tabor. From the high ground of Tabor Barak rushed down on the foe, who first posted themselves at the foot of the conical hill on which Endor is, and thence ventured into the open plain S.W. of Tabor. "The waters of Megiddo" are the abundant springs which flow into the nahr Jalud, from what is now the Mujedda ruin in the Jordan valley (meaning "the grazing place," "cut down by sheep") at the foot of Mount Gilboa. Thus, "the valley of Megiddo" is that which leads down from Jezreel to Bethshean....At Megiddo was stationed one of Solomon's commissariat officers (1 Kings 4:12). Solomon "built," i.e. fortified, Megiddo as a commanding military portion (1 Kings 9:15). Here Ahaziah fled from Jehu, and died here (2 Kings 9:27), in the kingdom of Samaria (2 Chron 22:9)....Here godly Josiah (which see) fell in conflict with Pharaoh Necho (2 Chron 35:22-24; Zech 12:11)....[Fausset's Bible Dictionary, Electronic Database, © 1998 by BibleSoft].

- 3) Megiddo ("place of troops"): The valley of Megiddo was a part of the Plain of Esdraelon. It figured as a battlefield, and here Barak (which see) gained a notable victory over the king of Hazor, whose commanding general was Sisera (Judg 4:15). To this place Ahaziah king of Judah fled, and there he died (2 Kings 9:27). But the chief historical interest of Megiddo is concentrated in the death of Josiah. He endeavored to stop Pharaoh Neco of Egypt, while the Egyptian was passing through the glens of Carmel into the plain of Megiddo. He was defeated, as he fled was shot by the Egyptian archers and died on the road to Jerusalem (23:29-30; 2 Chron 35:20-24; Zech 12:11). In the last passage the mourning mentioned is on account of Josiah's death. Megiddo is marked by the modern site Tell el Mutesellim. It has been extensively excavated and forms one of the most important archaeological sites of Palestine....[The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. © 1988].
 - 4) Megiddo—a walled city in the Carmel Mountain range where many important battles were fought in Old Testament times (see Map 3, B-2). Megiddo was situated on the main road that linked Egypt and Syria. Overlooking the Valley of Jezreel (Plain of Esdraelon), Megiddo was the most strategic city in Palestine. All major traffic through Palestine traveled past Megiddo, making it a strategic military stronghold. Megiddo is first mentioned in the Old Testament in the account of the 31 kings conquered by Joshua (Josh 12:21)....During the period of the judges, the forces of Deborah and Barak wiped out the army of Sisera "by the waters of Megiddo" (Judg 5:19).... [Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers].
- b. Armageddon [Har-Magedon] most likely refers to Megiddo, a valley located in Palestine where many significant battles were fought.
- 1) Barak and Deborah were victorious over Jabin at this place: "The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money" (Judges 5:19).
 - 2) Gideon defeated the Midianites there (Judges 7).
 - 3) It was here that King Saul was defeated by the Philistines: "And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers" (1 Sam. 31:3).
 - 4) Ahaziah died of Jehu's arrow: "But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there" (2 Kings 9:27).
 - 5) Pharaoh-Necho defeated Josiah: "After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second

chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah" (2 Chron 35:20-24).

- c. It was famous for the many battles fought there; some scholars say more battles have been fought there than in any other location on earth. It would have an emotional appeal to the ancient Jews, somewhat like the Alamo, Pearl Harbor, or the Battle of the Bulge.
- d. John is not referring to an actual earthly location; he is not depicting a literal battle to be fought at the end of time. "The use of geographical points to emphasize spiritual truths is a common Biblical phenomenon. For instance, the Greek Gehenna, 'Hell,' relates to the Hebrew ge hinnom, which was the Valley of Hinnom, just south of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, when the Jews became involved in idolatry, they offered their children as burnt sacrifices there (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Later, because of these horrible pagan associations, the valley became the city dump, which was constantly burning. Thus because of its connection with pain, weeping, and burning, Gehenna became a symbol for the final punishment of hell. Certainly it would be absurd to contend that on the day of judgment, the wicked will be cast into the Valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem! Similarly, John, in the Revelation, frequently uses places as symbols of concepts. So Zion (14:1) and Jerusalem (21:1) are symbols of God's spiritual city, the church; Babylon is symbolic of apostasy and all that is opposed to God (14:8); Egypt and Sodom (11:8) represent oppression and wickedness; and Euphrates (16:2) was symbolic of the point of origin of (spiritual) Israel's enemies, etc. And it is within such a reference frame that 'mountain of Megiddo' is used" (Jackson, ADL, pp.343f).
- e. The Valley of Hinnom furnished the name of the place prepared for the devil and his angels. The valley of Megiddo of Old Testament renown is used in a similar fashion for the continuing battle between good and evil taking place during the Christian Age, according to the common view. This is a safe view of the battle, but it seems more in keeping with the context of the book to find the fulfillment in the overthrow of the corrupt Roman Empire (cf. Dan. 2).
- f. Hailey sees the battle as a reference to the downfall of the Roman Empire: "In view of these battles of historical significance [i.e., those Old Testament battles identified above] we conclude that John used the word symbolically to describe a great decisive spiritual battle between the army of Satan and the forces of God, which would determine the fate of each. This battle was fought and won by the Lord in the complete defeat of the Roman Empire and paganism behind which Rome threw its total power (see 19:11-21). To look for a physical military battle between human armies to be fought in northern Palestine at some future date is completely without scriptural support and foreign to the spirit and purpose of Revelation" (Hailey, pp.336-337). This contextual view harmonizes with the information provided up to this point by the apostle; it is a safe understanding of this highly symbolic spiritual battle.

I. Revelation 16:17-21: The Seventh Bowl is Poured into the Air.

1. Verse 17: "And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."
 - a. After this last bowl was emptied, a great voice out of the temple of heaven said, "It is done." This was the final installment of God's wrath. It "completes the gamut of natural elements: earth, water, fire (sun), and air. The disturbances that follow appear more severe than those before, though all are fearful and awesome" (Hailey, p.337).
 - b. It is obvious that "air" is a symbol, as it is in Ephesians 2:2: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." This prince is Satan; he is the god of this world: "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - c. "As the fifth bowl had been poured out on the throne of the beast, which was sorely affected, and the sixth bowl opened the way for the gathering of Satan's forces to the great war, being called by demon spirits, it is reasonable to conclude that the seventh bowl would affect the whole sphere of Satan's operation. Air would be an appropriate emblem of the prevailing influence or surroundings of the realm in which the wicked live, move, and breathe, being dominated by the devil. Thus the course of this world, which is itself evil, a life of trespasses and sin, ruled by the prince of its power, controlling his subjects by a spirit of rebellion and disobedience to God, is now brought under judgment" (Hailey,

p.337).

- d. The plagues are completed at this point. They have graphically depicted the outpouring of God's wrath upon sinful men, who operate in rebellion to his will. In our view, the wrath pictured is the punishment and destruction that was poured upon the cruel empire of Rome. To make a more general application to all evil would do no damage to the passage, but the context seems more likely to have application to the punishment and overthrow of Rome.
2. Verse 18: "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great."
 - a. Compare this with the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-19) and the opening of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:5). The opening of the seven seals concluded with thunders and voices and lightning and an earthquake; the sounding of the seven trumpets was concluded with these same four —with the additional feature of "great hail."
 - 1) Revelation 11:15-19: "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."
 - 2) Revelation 8:5: "And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."
 - b. "And now the seven bowls of the seven plagues are brought to a conclusion with the same four elements, with an added intensity, for the earthquake is 'a great earthquake,' and the hail is 'great hail' (v. 21). The earthquake is so great, so mighty, 'such as was not since there were men upon the earth.' This plague is earthshaking because of what is affected: Satan's own realm receives a devastating shock, together with the fall of Babylon and the empire over which she ruled. Since there had never been a greater realm than this present Babylon and the Roman Empire, there would never have been a greater earthquake than when it fell" (Hailey, p.338).
 3. Verse 19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."
 - a. If our conclusions are correct in the former cases, then this reference is also to Rome (and the empire she controlled). John saw the great earthquake and giant hailstones combine to dash Rome to pieces. "The great city" has appeared several times.
 - 1) Revelation 11:8: "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."
 - 2) Revelation 11:13: "And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven."
 - 3) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - b. The meaning of the division of the city is unclear. Ezekiel prophesied of Jerusalem's downfall at the hands of the Babylonians: "Thou shalt burn with fire a third part in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are fulfilled: and thou shalt take a third part, and smite about it with a knife: and a third part thou shalt scatter in the wind; and I will draw out a sword after them. Thou shalt also take thereof a few in number, and bind them in thy skirts" (Ezek. 5:2-3). A third part of his shorn-off hair and beard was to be burned in the midst of the city when it falls to the siege. The prophet is to burn the hair in the city as depicted on the brick (Ezek. 4:1-3), when the city is captured in his demonstration. Another third part of the hair he is to smite with a knife. The final third part was to be scattered in the wind.

The point of this demonstration is to depict graphically the fate of the people in the actual city of Jerusalem. A third of them will perish in the fire [plus famine and disease] when the city burns; a third part will be slain with the sword; a third part of them will be scattered among the pagan world. Verse twelve gives an explanatory note: "A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee: and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezek. 5:12). This depicted the total destruction of the city (in 586 B.C.); this could also be the meaning of John's description of the "Babylon" [Rome and its Empire] of our present text.

- c. This scene describes the disintegration of the pagan world. "The city is called to mind before the Lord, as Cornelius's alms 'were had in remembrance before God' (Acts 10:31). God now gives to her 'the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath,' that is, the hot burning anger of his wrath" (Hailey, p.339). He had promised to give this cup to the worshippers of the beast and his image (Rev. 14:10)—he now fulfills that promise.
4. Verse 20: "And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."
 - a. This is similar to the picture given under the opening of the sixth seal: "And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (Rev. 6:14). This catastrophe on "Babylon" described as the sudden removal of all of its islands and mountains. The imagery is vivid and breath-taking!
 - b. Again, Ezekiel used similar language in picturing the overthrow of the ancient city-state of Tyre: "Thus saith the Lord GOD to Tyrus; Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in the midst of thee? Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, and lay away their robes, and put off their broided garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling; they shall sit upon the ground, and shall tremble at every moment, and be astonished at thee. And they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it! Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure" (Ezek. 26:15-18).
 - 1) The destruction of Tyre would have adverse effects on others. Their trading partners would obviously be negatively affected. The Phoenicians had jealously guarded the locations of their distant trading fields, so those places would suffer when the Phoenicians stopped coming. They ruled the sea, and were a terror to anyone who sought to compete with them. The picture given of those adversely affected by the demise of old Tyre is that of mourning. The princes of the faraway places the Tyrians traded with are depicted as coming down from the throne and mourning the loss; they would clothe themselves in mourning attire, and sit on the ground, lamenting for Tyre.
 - 2) The apostle John is showing in our text that when this great catastrophe he describes takes place, there will be no place for refuge—all hiding places will be gone. The great world power of John's revelation is the corrupt empire of Rome. We remember the terrible period of the Dark Ages which followed the destruction of the Roman Empire! After that thousand years of darkness, did humanity begin the climb back toward January 3, 2020 moral and political sanity.
 5. Verse 21: "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great."
 - a. These were vastly larger than ordinary hail-stones—each stone weighed a talent. Hailey reports that a talent is estimated to have been between sixty and a hundred pounds, or more precisely between ninety and ninety-six pounds. Nothing on earth could long sustain the crushing blows these stones would inflict—they would crush whatever they hit. Such a weight falling from great heights would crush all humans upon whom it fell. God is the source of these hail-stones; his purpose is divine punishment upon the unrighteous. Of course, these hailstones are figurative, symbolic of great punishment brought upon the evil people of the context.
 - b. There are many Old Testament references to the use of hail as a means of punishment.
 - 1) Exodus 9:18-26: "Behold, to morrow about this time I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail, such as hath not been in Egypt since the foundation thereof even until now. Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall

- be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the LORD among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses: And he that regarded not the word of the LORD left his servants and his cattle in the field. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt, upon man, and upon beast, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt. And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail smote throughout all the land of Egypt all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail."
- 2) Joshua 10:11: "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword."
 - 3) Psalms 78:47: "He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost."
 - 4) Psalms 105:32: "He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land."
- c. The Lord had fought for Israel at Beth-horon by sending great stones from heaven upon the Canaanites: "And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword" (Josh. 10:11).
- 1) As the fleeing enemy descended from upper Bethhoron to lower Bethhoron, God sent great hailstones upon their host, which killed more than which died by the hand of the Israelite army.
 - 2) In delivering Israel from Egypt a generation earlier, God sent hailstones upon the land, killing man and beast alike (Exodus 9). In modern times, great hailstones the size of grapefruit have been documented. Even in a hailstorm which produces only small stones, tremendous damage is done. We are not told how large these hailstones were, but they were of sufficient size to kill thousands of soldiers who likely wore protective armor.
 - 3) Burton Coffman (Commentary on Joshua, p.110) told of a great hailstorm which hit our nation's capital in the early 1950s which rained down stones the size of grapefruit. Some of these stones were stored in freezers. Some of the larger ones were photographed, resting on the tops of four-inch wide tumblers.
- d. "Concerning those in Jerusalem who made lies their refuge and under falsehood hid themselves, the Lord said that hail should sweep away their refuge of lies and the flood would overflow their hiding place" (Hailey, pp.339f).
- 1) Isaiah 28:15-18: "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it."
 - 2) Ezekiel 38:22: "And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone."
- e. Here hail is used as a symbol of the destruction of God's Judgment. Instead of repenting, they blasphemed God because of the plague. Since man often is steeped in sin, God's judgments do not always bring repentance. These plagues did not complete the final judgment, for afterwards men were left who blasphemed God. The severest of divine judgments had been poured out, touching all phases

of Roman society and power; only the final Judgment, which will bring all evil to a total end, could surpass in intensity judgments such as these.

REVELATION 17

The Scarlet Woman and the Beast

A. Revelation 17:1-6: John Sees and Describes the Harlot.

1. Verse 1: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."
 - a. One of the angels, who had recently poured out a bowl of wrath, talked with John, inviting him to come see the judgment which was to be given the great harlot. The angel described her as sitting upon many waters. Verse 15 defines the meaning of the waters as symbolizing people, multitudes, nations and tongues; we are not left to wonder as to the meaning in this case. He tells us in verse 18 that the harlot represented "that great city," thus setting the picture of the chapter for us. To find the fulfillment of the symbols of this chapter, we are to look for a city which reigned over many people and kings.
 - b. It is common Old Testament terminology for a wicked city to be described as a harlot.
 - 1) Isaiah 1:21: "How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers."
 - 2) Isaiah 47:5-15: "Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst show them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know. Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee."
 - 3) Nahum 3:1-4: "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not; The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is none end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses: Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the wellfavoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts."
 - 4) Compare:
 - a) Jeremiah 2:20: "For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot."
 - b) Hosea 2:5: "For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done

- shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink."
- c) Hosea 2:12: "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them."
 - d) Hosea 9:1: "Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor."
 - e) Hosea 13:2: "And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves."
- c. Ancient Babylon was situated on many waters: "O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness" (Jer. 51:13). It was on the Euphrates River, and had many canals, dykes, and marshes surrounding the city, providing wealth and protection. Since the city of this chapter is called Babylon, the descriptions of its ancient namesake are also used.
2. Verse 2: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication."
 - a. The kings of the earth are the great ones who committed political, economic, and religious fornication with the harlot for the pleasures and rewards gained thereby. Not only were the kings involved, but also they that dwell on the earth. By yielding to the great city's desires, they purchased her favors.
 - b. These were all drunk with the wine of her fornication:
 - 1) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - 2) Isaiah 29:9: "Stay yourselves, and wonder; cry ye out, and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink."
 - c. John says the nations were drunk, but not literally; they were intoxicated with the strong drink of lust and the wine of power, riches, and conquest. Compare: "Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man, neither keepeth at home, who enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people.... Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" (Hab. 2:5,15).
 - d. The fornication was of a spiritual nature. Idolatry predominated in Rome and its empire. As already noted, the worship of the emperor was required—a worship that was utterly corrupt by God's standards. Idolatry also promoted sinful conduct of various stripes, including religious prostitution. This "lady" was also guilty of persecuting and slaying God's people.
 3. Verses 3-4: "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."
 - a. The angel transported John into the wilderness where he could see this great harlot. She is pictured as sitting on a scarlet colored beast which was full of names of blasphemy, and had seven heads and ten horns. Under the power of the Holy Spirit he was carried into the wilderness, as Ezekiel was: "And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy" (Ezek. 8:3).
 - b. "Wilderness" is used in a good and a bad sense in the scriptures:
 - 1) Psalms 107:33,35: "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground....He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings."
 - 2) Isaiah 21:1: "The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land."
 - 3) Isaiah 50:2: "Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my

- rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst."
- 4) Isaiah 51:3: "For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."
 - 5) Ezekiel 34:25-26: "And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing."
 - 6) Zephaniah 2:13: "And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness."
 - 7) Malachi 1:3: "And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."
- c. Therefore, a wilderness may be a place of peace and protection or it may be a place of desolation (Hailey). Because the woman in Revelation 12 is in the wilderness and now the harlot is in a wilderness, some think these two are connected—the former with the faithful church; the latter with the apostate element of the church. But the woman of chapter 12 and the harlot of chapter 17 are different:
- 1) One is pure; the other corrupt and fit for destruction.
 - 2) One belongs to God who loves her and protects her; the other belongs to the beast and kings of earth.
 - 3) One is clothed in fine linen (robes of righteousness); the other in purple and scarlet and is full of abominations (sensual, earthly splendor).
 - 4) The one is a holy mother; the other is a mother of harlots and abominations.
 - 5) The one is driven into the wilderness; the other is drunk with the martyrs' blood.
 - 6) One is protected by God; the other stands opposed to God and cannot claim his aid.
4. Verse 5: "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."
- a. The latter part of the passage is in capital letters for emphasis; they also indicate a quotation. This is similar to the sign on the Lord's cross: "And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matt. 27:37).
 - b. The name written on her forehead announces to all the identity of the woman: she is the mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth. Remember that John is not describing an actual woman, but a city (vs.18).
 - c. The word "mystery" is used in the New Testament to describe God's scheme of redemption, which was not fully revealed until after Christ and his apostles accomplished their work (Eph. 3:1-11). Paul could call this great plan a "mystery," for it dealt with information which no one could know until it was revealed by its Author. "Mystery" in Revelation 17:5 may be part of the harlot's name, and possibly suggests that, whatever mystery may have enshrouded this woman, it is now openly exposed. Verse 7 records the angel's intention of fully revealing the mystery of the woman.
 - d. "There seemed to have been a Roman custom whereby the prostitutes in the public brothels wore a frontlet on their foreheads giving their names. These were their identification marks as prostitutes" (James Meadows, ADL, p.182).
 - e. The harlot is Babylon the Great (Rev. 14:8; 16:19), which to John's readers would have been symbolic of Rome, their great persecutor. This spiritual harlot had offspring which partook of their mother's nature. Thus, Rome itself symbolically represents the world of lust and seduction (literal and spiritual).
5. Verse 6: "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration" (KJV). "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder" (ASV).
- a. The harlot was drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs; this blood is what was in the golden cup she held as noted in verse 4; the blood in verse 4 is called the "abominations and filthiness of her fornication," meaning that in her spiritual fornication she shed the innocent blood of God's people.

- b. In Revelation 18:24, it is reported that in her was found the blood of prophets and saints that were slain on the earth. In a figure of speech, therefore, she is described as being drunk on the blood of the saints.
- c. Tacitus (an unbelieving Roman writer) records that Christians were killed by the thousands in the most cruel ways. Rome was intoxicated with the joy of persecution and was, figuratively, drunk with the blood of the saints. In Annals 15:44, he wrote: "Such indeed were the precautions of human wisdom. The next thing was to seek means of propitiating the gods, and recourse was had to the Sibylline books, by the direction of which prayers were offered to Vulcanus, Ceres, and Proserpina. Juno, too, was entreated by the matrons, first, in the Capitol, then on the nearest part of the coast, whence water was procured to sprinkle the fane and image of the goddess. And there were sacred banquets and nightly vigils celebrated by married women. But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired. Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed."
- d. When John saw the woman, he wondered with great wonder; he was astonished at what he saw. He beheld her astride the scarlet-colored beast in the midst of the wilderness, seeing her in her true light. [Admiration in the KJV is rendered wonder in the ASV].
- e. The idea of someone being drunk on the blood of men was not new; some unknown ancient writer described the Roman emperor Tiberius with these words: "He is not thirsty for neat wine as he was thirsty then, but warm him up a tastier cup—the blood of murdered men."

B. Revelation 17:7-17: The Explanation of the Mystery of the Woman and the Beast.

1. Verses 7-8: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they beheld the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - a. The amazement John felt was known to the angel; the angel asked why he wondered, and stated the intention of revealing the mystery of the woman, the beast, the heads, and the horns.
 - b. This passage and the next three verses are among the hardest in the book to interpret. "John seems now to identify the beast with the emperor, for the empire is personified in its emperor. It is the beast who authorizes the persecution of the saints on whose blood the harlot was drunk" (Hailey, p.349).
 - c. This is the same beast as that which came up from the sea (Rev. 13:3), and suffered a mortal injury to one of its seven heads. In our view, this represented the death of Nero, who died in A.D. 68. It was he who raised the first official persecution against the church by Rome. Persecution ceased until A.D. 81, when it was revived by Domitian. There was a theory (called the Nero redivivus myth) being circulated following Nero's death, that that wicked and powerful emperor would revive from death and take up where he left off. This theory was of course false.
 - d. However, it appears that John is using this theory to identify to the first century saints just who he is talking about in this chapter, i.e., who is represented by the beast. This beast WAS, IS NOT, and is about to come up out of the abyss: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition. And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, they whose

name hath not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast, how that he was, and is not, and shall come" (Rev. 17:8, ASV).

- e. Nero was on the throne; he died; he was coming back. The saints would know that Nero was dead and gone and would not return. But the one coming from the pit would be after the nature of Nero. The emperor Domitian fits the mold; indeed, his attacks against the church far surpassed those of Nero. The beast of this chapter is the same beast that arose from the sea in chapter 13—Domitian. When he would come to the throne and renew Nero's persecuting ways, the people would be amazed:
 - 1) Revelation 13:3: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast."
 - 2) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - f. Symbolically, Nero was revived in Domitian; they came from the same mold. The pit (the abyss) is the realm from which the smoke and locusts came (Rev. 9:1-3) and over which Satan reigns (Rev. 9:11). The beast that made war with the witnesses came from there (Rev. 11:7). This is the source of the beast described in this chapter—he got his orders from Satan. The ultimate destiny of this beast is perdition—he will go to this state of ruin. While the men of the earth would marvel at the beast's revival, the saints would not be amazed, for they would know the ultimate doom of the beast.
2. Verse 9: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." [The angel provides further identification of the beast].
 - a. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The mind is composed of faculties to perceive and understand. One mind can communicate with another mind—using a message of words. When our mental faculties are combined with wisdom, insight into deep truths can be gained. Wisdom comes from God (Jas. 1:5), through his revelation (1 Cor. 1:6-8). By understanding God's purpose and actions set forth in the Bible, one may hope to understand what he is revealing through the angel to John here.
 - 1) James 1:5: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:6-13: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - 3) Ephesians 3:2-5: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."
 - b. The seven heads possessed by the beast are seven mountains where the harlot sat. The city of seven hills is of course Rome; it has gained fame thereby. But the seven mountains have a symbolic meaning—the next verse shows they represent seven kings: "And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18, ASV). The woman is identified in verse eighteen as a city—the city of Rome, if our reasoning is correct.
 - c. Kingdoms are depicted in the Bible as beasts; Daniel pictures the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome as four great beasts which came up from the sea:
 - 1) Daniel 7:3-4: "And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was

like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns" (Dan. 7:3-7). One was like a lion, another like a bear, the third like a leopard, and the fourth was dreadful and terrible.

- 2) The beast that John saw rise up out of the sea (Rev. 13:1ff) and the beast on which the harlot sat are the same; this beast represents Rome and its empire. John puts together in this one beast all the features of the four seen by Daniel. "For John the Roman Empire was so satanic and terrible that in itself is included all the evil terrors of the evil empires which had gone before. It was, as it were, the sum total of all evil" (Barclay, quoted by Meadows, ADL, p.185).
3. Verse 10: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space."
 - a. There are seven kings. The Roman emperors were Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, in this order. Julius Caesar, some of the scholars say, was not an emperor; the first real emperor is said to have been Augustus. Also, there were some usurpers to the throne who came in the midst of these seven, but they were minor characters and did not last long (Galba, Otho, Vitellius). Perhaps these are the seven kings indicated. But what is meant by the next statement? "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come."
 - b. William Hendricksen thinks the kings indicated represent the pagan kingdoms which were in opposition to God: Nimrod's Babylon (Gen. 10:8-11), Assyria, Neo-Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; the seventh, he says, is the collective title for all anti-Christian governments between the fall of Rome and the empire of Antichrist, which is the eighth. Others have suggested the same theory but with different kingdoms named. The difficulty with this interpretation lies with the seventh and eighth kings. Also, antichrist in the Scriptures is many, not one; it is not a reference to some specific individual, but to a class—unbelievers. The term is only used by John in his epistles:
 - 1) 1 John 2:18: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."
 - 2) 1 John 2:22: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."
 - 3) 1 John 4:3: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."
 - 4) 2 John 1:7: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."
 - c. Another view, advanced by Hailey, asserts that the symbolism of the passage would be understood by John's readers as describing Rome, but "the symbolism extends beyond this. The beast represented the total of forceful anti-Christian or anti-theistic opposition, and the harlot represented that which is lustful, enticing, and seductive—all that appeals to the flesh. The seven kings, therefore, were a symbolic number, representing all kings or kingdoms, past, present, and future that would oppose the kingdom of God. Each who would come would still be part of the seven" (p.351).
 - d. Brother Wallace's view is that Jerusalem is being discussed; he begins counting Roman rulers with Julius Caesar; this makes Nero (sixth in line) the emperor that **is**. This is one of the stronger arguments for the early date for the book.
 - e. Another view, the one which this study accepts, is that the Roman rulers indicated are Augustus (1st) through Titus (7th), with Domitian being number 8 (see verse 11). A difficulty with this view is to determine which five are not, which one now is, and who is the one not yet come. John is writing to hide the identity of the beast from civil authorities. If Domitian should read the Revelation, and knowing the line of the emperors, he would know that he was not the sixth. The saints would know

him however by the statement of verse 11. Thus Domitian is really the one who is, but is identified vaguely in order to protect the saints from any additional persecution.

- f. The one to come would continue only a short space.
4. Verse 11: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."
 - a. Other translations:
 - 1) "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven; and he goeth into perdition" (ASV).
 - 2) "The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the Eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition" (NKJV).
 - 3) "As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction" (ESV).
 - 4) "And the beast that was and is not, even he himself is an eighth, and is of the seven, and he goes to destruction" (English Study Bible).
 - b. The beast that was and is not (if our interpretation is correct) was Domitian; he is here called the eighth. This fits the order of emperors. His ultimate destiny is perdition. Thus John's readers would find a source of comfort and hope from these words.
 - c. Two other general views:
 - 1) The Pulpit Commentary views this as a general depiction of evil powers: "The absence of the article before... 'eighth,' shows that this is not the eighth in a successive series, in which the kings already mentioned form the first seven. The Revised Version probably gives the correct meaning, 'is of the seven;' that is, the beast himself consists of, and is formed by, what has been denoted by the seven kings. We have already interpreted the beast as the worldly power—Satan in his capacity of 'prince of this world.' We have also shown that the 'seven kings' describes this worldly power as it exists throughout all ages. This verse, therefore, sums up and reasserts briefly what has been already virtually intimated in the symbolism employed, viz. that the beast is the sum total of what has been described under the form of five kings, then one king, and then one king again (ver. 10). His final doom is also reasserted, 'he goeth into perdition' (cf. ver. 8 and Rev 19:20)" [Electronic Database, © 2001 by BibleSoft].
 - 2) Hailey also makes a more general application: "Probably the best solution to the problem is to adhere to the symbolic character of the book. Repeatedly John has used seven as the symbol for completeness or perfection, and ten for the fullness of power. The seven churches in chapter 1 were not literally seven congregations; they represented the church in its fullness....The same could be said of the seven spirits, the seven lamps, and so forth. When the book was read to the churches the members would have thought of Rome as they were told of the harlot, and of the empire when they heard of the beast on whom the harlot sat; in this their understanding would be correct. But the symbolism extends beyond this. The beast represented the total of forceful anti-Christian or anti-theistic opposition, and the harlot represented that which is lustful, enticing, and seductive—all that appeals to the flesh. The seven kings, therefore, were a symbolic number, representing all kings or kingdoms, past, present, and future that would oppose the kingdom of God. Each who would come would still be part of the seven. Although kingdoms arise out of the upheavals in the sea of society, their anti-God rulers originate in the abyss, the satanic realm. Each continues for a little while, then goes into perdition, which is the end of all who oppose God" (Hailey, pp.352f).
 - d. Summers agrees with our view. The angel "explains that the beast 'was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and to go into perdition.' This is a reflection of the Nero redivivus myth. The Roman Empire is thus pictured as personified in Domitian, the reincarnation of Nero. The empire is about to suffer destruction. The heathen world wonders at the history and progress of Rome. Those who are Christian do not wonder at her because they know she is doomed. Beginning with verse 9, the angel explains that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains; Rome was built on seven hills. They are also seven kings which have formed the basis of the great empire: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, and Titus. There is an eighth who is to have a part in this history, but he is one of the seven already mentioned—he was and is the reincarnation of the evil, persecuting work of Nero" (Summers, p.192).

- e. "After Nero's death in 68 A.D., a legend grew among the people that Nero was not really dead, but had gone to Parthia in the far east. The Romans believed that Nero would be resurrected in another emperor. The evil of the Roman Empire would be consummated and epitomized in this emperor. As confusing as this verse sounds to our ears, 'unaccustomed to apocalyptic language, it may well have conveyed the following to those who first read it: Nero is one of the five emperors already past, thus he is not now a threat, yet he will rise again to torment us.' Juvenal, the Roman satirist spoke of Rome's being 'enslaved to a bald-headed Nero' (Domitian was bald). Tertullian called Domitian 'a man of Nero's type of cruelty' and Eusebius repeated the same verdict" (Meadows, ADL, p.145).
- f. Summers offers the following interesting information about the time factor of Revelation:
- 1) The persecution of the Christians which is reflected in the book fits the Domitian period alone. There were several periods of persecution of a sort. Caligula (c. 41), the "mad emperor," carried on some religious persecution; Claudius (c. 52) drove the Christians from Rome because of their conflict with the Jews; Nero (c. 64-68) carried on intense persecution in Rome for reasons already cited [to place the blame for burning Rome on Christians]; very little persecution was carried on by Vespasian (c. 69-79); Domitian (c. 81-96) is the emperor who has gone down in history as the one who bathed the empire in the blood of the Christians.
 - 2) His persecution was for the purpose of enforcing emperor worship. Strange as the ascription of divinity to an emperor may seem to our thought, the religious conceptions of the ancient Gentile world presented no obstacle to such apotheosis [i.e., to deify]. Polytheism, with its gradation of rank among the divinities, made easy the deification of men whose office, power, or achievements so far surpassed the ordinary as to appear superhuman.
 - 3) Julius Caesar boldly claimed divine honor and placed his statue among those of the gods in the temples. August forbade the offering of divine honors to himself in Rome; yet he accepted the title "Augustus," hitherto the epithet of the gods, and in the provinces he sanctioned temples to himself in conjunction with the goddess Roma. The cult thus established continued through the following reigns, varying somewhat in the emphasis laid upon it according to the disposition of the respective emperors, but gradually becoming an essential factor in the imperial religious system.
 - 4) It is in the reign of Domitian that we reach an insistence upon emperor worship, who, because of his infamous career, failed to receive the honor of apotheosis from the Senate at his death, was strenuous in claiming divinity in his life; to his subordinates he became "deus et dominus." According to Suetonius, he began his letters, "Our Lord and God commands that it should be done so and so," and formally decreed that no one should address him otherwise, either in writing or by word of mouth. He had images of himself erected throughout the empire to make this worship more convenient....Pliny continues his discussion by stating that Domitian raised himself above all the other gods and chose for his statues the most hallowed sites in the temple and caused entire hosts of victims to be sacrificed for refusal to worship him.
 - 5) Hence, it is self-evident that, under Domitian, Christianity had to enter a struggle of life or death with the imperial power, which always claimed, even in the hands of the most discreet possessors, more than Christians could yield. A sharp collision was inevitable. The forms of punishment were many. Some were put to death, some were exiled, some were tortured into a confession of the divinity of the emperor, some had their property confiscated, some received combinations of these measures. All this is very plainly reflected in the book of Revelation.
 - 6) The major portion of this punishment fell on Asia Minor because that was the main stronghold of Christianity after A.D. 70. It is natural that since the majority of the Christians were there, the majority of the resistance to emperor worship would be there, and hence the brunt of the punishment would fall upon Asia Minor. This is reflected not only in the book of Revelation but also in other works concerning that period. Revelation was God's word of cheer to the Christians under these conditions [pp.83-85].
5. Verse 12: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast."
- a. The ten horns are ten kings; these would be representative of the lesser provinces and kingdoms under the domination of Rome.
 - b. These have no kingdom as yet; they merely receive their authority from or with the beast. Their

authority was limited in time and extent; they depended on the beast (the emperor) for the power they possessed.

- c. The power of these ten kings would be limited in time—only one hour (a relatively short time). When the beast lost his power, these ten kings would lose their power.
6. Verse 13: "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast."
 - a. The beasts and his associates are of one mind—they are united in their service to the dragon (Satan). There is strength in unity, even among those who are engaged in evil.
 - b. These with one accord give their strength and efforts in support of the beast and in opposition to the Lamb. This would not continue for long, however.
 - c. Christians are to be united if they are have the strength and influence to serve effectively.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."
 - 2) Philippians 1:27: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."
 - 3) Philippians 3:16: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."
 - 4) Acts 4:32: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."
 7. Verse 14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."
 - a. John is giving a preview of the battle and its ultimate outcome; victory is sure for the cause of Christ. In this the saints could take assurance and comfort.
 - b. The seeds of Rome's destruction had already been sown—the weaknesses in its very foundation: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. 2:40-45).
 - c. "This is also the assurance of victory for those who have identified themselves with Christ through their obedience and service in his kingdom....Those identified with Christ, and overcome with him, are 'called, and chosen and faithful.' This is in keeping with the teaching of our Lord, 'Many are called but few are chosen,' Matt. 20:16" (Thompson, p.183).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 1:24: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

C. Revelation 17:15-18: Further Identification of the Harlot.

1. Verse 15: "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."
 - a. The harlot is introduced as sitting on many waters; when John saw her she was sitting on the scarlet-colored beast; the angel here explains that the many waters represent the empire and the many ethnic groups and nationalities over which Rome ruled.
 - b. A major weakness of Rome was her inability to bring her conquered people into one cohesive power. "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (Dan. 2:42-43).
2. Verse 16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."
 - a. Those who loved the harlot would turn on her in hatred; this change would result in the destruction of the harlot. Rome had subjugated many nations, dominating and exploiting them. The time came when nations would switch their allegiance from Rome to another rising power. Finally, the western empire was cannibalized by the invaders and rebellious allies.
 - b. "Love among men or nations has often turned to hatred as intense as the affection it replaced. This change would result in the destruction of the harlot; she would be made desolate, stripped of her grandeur and wealth, her flesh eaten and consumed, and her remains destroyed by burning with fire. This is an example of evil's self-destruction. The principle of love being corrupted to lust and turning to hate, which in turn destroys, can be illustrated by nations today. As long as nations can get what they want from one another, they continue to commit economic and political fornication. But actually, nations and states hate all government, which is being destroyed by greed and lust. And so it is with individuals. First, allured by the world, they commit fornication with her. Then, realizing their delusion, they hate what they have done, but too late—they are irrevocably lost and destroyed" (Hailey, p.355).
3. Verse 17: "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."
 - a. They had been subject to the beast for a time, but God would bring about a change of attitude on their part toward the beast and harlot.
 - b. Compare:
 - 1) Judges 7:22: "And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Bethshittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abelmeholah, unto Tabbath."
 - 2) 1 Samuel 14:20: "And Saul and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture."
 - 3) 2 Chronicles 20:23: "For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another."
 - c. John reports that God put it into the hearts of these kings to fulfill his will. We are not privileged to know precisely how God exerted his power in accomplishing this, nor are we told how he did similar things in certain Old Testament cases.
 - 1) He reassured the Israelites that their Canaanite enemies would not bother their families or property when the men assembled at the tabernacle three times a year: "Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. For I will cast out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year" (Ex. 34:23-24). How did God keep the enemy from having the notion of launching an assault while the men were at worship? God would not permit this to happen; he does not specify how he would prevent this, but among the means was the terror God's mighty works in Israel's behalf would create in the hearts of her pagan neighbors. "And before they were laid down, she came up unto them upon the roof; And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the

- inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath" (Josh. 2:8-11).
- 2) "Scripture clearly reveals that throughout history God used men and nations to carry out his purpose. He could turn a nation to fighting within itself, as in the case of Midian during the time of Gideon (Judg. 7:22), and of the Philistines in the days of Saul (I Sam. 14:20). In the battle of Moab and Ammon against Mount Sier, God gave victory to King Jehoshaphat without Judah's army lifting a sword (II Chron. 20:23). God's objective in putting it in their (the kings') hearts to come to one mind was that his words of judgment against the harlot should be accomplished. Not a word failed—all came to pass" (Hailey, p.356).
 - 3) "And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said" (Ex. 7:13). God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart. If God did it directly by the use of his supernatural power, then the king had no choice in the matter. Therefore, he was not at fault for his refusal to let Israel go. Why, then, did God punish the man for not doing what he was powerless to do? God is infinitely impartial (Acts 10:34-35). He wills the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2:4-5) and desires that every sinner repent (2 Pet. 3:9). But he will not force any man to obey him (Rev. 22:17; Rom. 6:16-18; Heb. 3:7-15; Matt. 7:21-28). Neither will he force any man to disobey his will (1 John 3:4; Jas. 1:13-17). When God gave Pharaoh a demand the king did not want to obey, he hardened his own heart so that he would not take into account the significance of the miracle he had just seen. We can say that God hardened his heart only in this sense. But the magicians contributed to this hardening when they, by their trickery, produced serpents which seemed to annul the effect of Moses' miracle. But the king hardened his own heart for it was his choice whether to release Israel. If he did not have any choice, why did God send Moses and Aaron to make the request?
 - 4) God used Assyria, Babylonia, and other pagan nations in ancient days to punish the rebellious Israelites; these alien nations did not perceive that they were being used—they thought it was all their idea. God afterwards would punish these evil nations for their wickedness.
4. Verse 18: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."
- a. This statement should remove any doubt as to the identity of the harlot (Babylon). She is described as the great city that reigns over the kings of the earth. She is not the apostate church; she is Rome, the mistress of the nations. Is there any sense in which Jerusalem could be thus described? It does not seem possible. Jerusalem and all Palestine were dominated by Rome; Jerusalem did not reign over other kingdoms.
 - b. She symbolized the world of lust, seduction, and allurements of all that appeals to the flesh (Hailey). Two great enemies of the Lord's church are the world and false religion. Rome, with her great wealth and powerful pagan religions, sought to turn Christians from serving Christ to serving Rome.
 - c. "The ten horns of the beast represent the powers of the Empire. Her power was in her provinces, so this symbol which the angel identifies as 'ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast, for one hour' must refer to the vassal kings, rulers of Rome's provinces, who receive authority from Rome and enjoy this delegated authority for a very short time—'one hour.' They have only one thought, and that is to obey the Roman Empire which is personified in Domitian. That is the reason they have been so zealous to persecute the Christians. They war with the Lamb, but the Lamb is victorious because he is 'Lord of lords, and King of kings.' The time will come when these provinces will have their part in her destruction. This was one of the greatest fears that Rome had. Everywhere in the book of Acts there are indications of Rome's fear of any kind of turmoil and unrest which might possibly turn into a revolution. The chapter closes with the statement that the woman, the harlot who met this destruction, was the great city which lorded over the kings of the earth. The first triumph pictured to the Christians is the certain doom of imperial Rome" (Summers, pp.192f).

REVELATION 18

The Fall of the Harlot

A. Revelation 18:1-6: Babylon is Fallen.

1. Verse 1: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory."
 - a. Another installment in the fall of Babylon the great is given. If our assessment of chapter 17 is correct, "Babylon" is Rome. The ancient Babylonian Empire had fallen many centuries earlier [in 539 B.C.]. God had now made ready for the overthrow of the current evil oppressive nation, the Empire of Rome.
 - b. The angel is described as possessing "great power" (authority, ASV). A single angel is exceedingly powerful (cf. Isa. 37:36-38); because they are God's messengers, they act by his authority. "Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Armenia: and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead" (Isa. 37:36-38).
 - c. This angel's glorious presence "lightened the earth," indicating his greatness and the importance of his mission.
2. Verse 2: "And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."
 - a. This messenger announced with a powerful voice the coming demise of the wicked city. Compare:
 - 1) Revelation 14:8: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
 - 2) Revelation 16:19: "And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath."
 - 3) Isaiah 21:9: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."
 - b. He does not picture the details of its fall, but shows the results: it would become a habitation of demons, the hold [the prison] of unclean spirits, and a cage of unclean birds.
 - c. About 150 years before the fall of Old Testament Babylon, her demise was described prophetically: "And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (Isa. 21:9). Following its overthrow, it would not be inhabited by man but by "doleful creatures" and "owls."
 - 1) Isaiah 13:19-22: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged."
 - 2) Isaiah 14:4-23: "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon,

saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts."

- d. Old Testament descriptions of Babylon's fall are the background for this description of the fall of this later "Babylon."
 - e. A "hold" is a prison, a place of detention (Vine). Rome would become a hold for the vile creatures described in the verse. This picture is in stark contrast to the holy city (heaven) in Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
3. Verse 3: "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."
- a. The kings of the earth had committed fornication with this harlot; the merchants had grown rich through the "power of her wantonness" (ASV). The fornication was not literal, but symbolizes the unholy and vile alliance they had with pagan Rome.
 - b. Some earthly rulers, criminals, and some large companies today seek to gain riches and influence through corrupt means: illegal drug traffic, unscrupulous business practices, illegal arms, prostitution, industrial espionage, and a host of other evil or suspect practices.
 - c. But God will have the final word: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34). "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17).
4. Verses 4-5: "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."
- a. A call issues from heaven for God's people to separate themselves from Babylon, for them to have no fellowship with her sins, and thus receive not the plagues which she is to suffer. They were not being told to remove themselves physically from the city or empire—where could they go? But rather not to partake of her evil. Compare: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world" (1 Cor. 5:9-10).
 - b. God has often called for his people to be separate:
 - 1) Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I

- will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
- 2) Genesis 19:12-17: "And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."
 - 3) Exodus 3:20: "And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go."
 - 4) Jeremiah 51:45: "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the LORD."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
 - 6) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
- c. The saints then were not to be partakers of the evils of Rome; we today are to be separated from the evils of our society: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).
 - d. God had been longsuffering with pagan Rome (and with other sinful people); he has often given sinful men and women time to repent (Rom. 2:4; Rev. 2:20-22; 2 Pet. 3:8-10). When there is no repentance, the sentence God has decreed is carried out.
 - 1) Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
 - 2) 2 Peter 3:8-10: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - 3) Revelation 2:20-22: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."
 - e. God is not so far removed from earth that he does not see what goes on. He is fully aware of both the sinful and the righteous conduct on earth.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - f. The sins of Israel "reached up unto heaven" (2 Chron. 8:9; cf. Ezra 9:6). Righteousness in a nation will

bring blessings from God; when God's people are what they ought to be, they have a preserving influence on their nation (cf. Gen. 19; Matt. 5:13-16). How long our country will stand, be secure and prosperous, depends to a very great extent on us.

- 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 3) For lack of ten righteous souls, Sodom was destroyed: "And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake" (Gen. 18:32).
5. Verse 6: "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double."
- a. The order is given that this spiritual Babylon be punished double. She had been responsible for much harm, especially to the saints; she is now to suffer a double penalty.
 - b. The Psalmist pictured beforehand the cry of God's people held captive by ancient Babylon:
 - 1) Psalms 137:8: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us."
 - 2) Jeremiah 50:15: "Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her."
 - 3) But Babylon would have to face the consequences of her cruelty: "Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel" (Jer. 50:29).
 - c. As the ancient Babylon was to be properly and fully recompensed for its evil, so would also this spiritual Babylon.
6. Verse 7: "How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow."
- a. This spiritual harlot had become arrogant, had glorified herself, had grown wanton, had lived luxuriously. The harlot and Babylon of this context are the same—pagan Rome.
 - 1) "This city of Rome was powerful, proud, and prosperous. Moreover, both internal and external evidence establish a connection between Babylon and Rome. W.B. West presents a powerful case for Rome as the equivalent of 'Babylon' in the Book of Revelation: 'The Babylon of the Old Testament was the Rome of the New Testament, and Rome of the New Testament was the Babylon of the Old Testament....In the Sibylline Oracles we have Rome identified with Babylon and the Babylon identified with Rome. So the counterpart of Old Testament Babylon was New Testament Rome. She that sitteth upon many waters refers to the prominent location of the Roman Empire, around which were the Mediterranean, the Black, the Caspian, the Aegean and other seas.' Furthermore, Revelation 17:9 refers to the seven heads as seven mountains upon which the harlot is seated" (Clarke, B.J., *Spiritual Sword Lectures*, pp.471f).
 - 2) The Sibylline Books are a "number of oracular manuscripts consulted regularly by the ancient Romans and thought to have been written by the sibyl of Cumae." The sibyls were "certain women consulted as prophetesses or oracles by the ancient Greeks and Romans." (Webster, p.1322).
 - b. Similar descriptions were given by Old Testament prophets of ancient Babylon:
 - 1) Jeremiah 50:29: "Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that

- she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel."
- 2) Jeremiah 50:33: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast; they refused to let them go."
 - 3) Jeremiah 50:38-39: "A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation."
- c. Pagan Rome became the prime enemy of the church in the latter part of the first century. As Babylon of old suffered, so this spiritual Babylon would suffer; she had exalted herself and thought her might would ever protect her, but she did not reckon with the Almighty! Compare:
- 1) 2 Samuel 22:28: "And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down."
 - 2) Proverbs 11:2: "When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom."
 - 3) Proverbs 16:18: "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."
 - 4) Proverbs 29:23: "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."
- d. Old Babylon and others had also boasted:
- 1) Isaiah 47:7-8: "And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."
 - 2) Ezekiel 28:2: "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a God, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; yet thou art a man, and not God, though thou set thine heart as the heart of God."
 - 3) Daniel 4:30-37: "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."
- e. God had the final say with Babylon, he would have it with this spiritual Babylon, and he will have it with all others who follow in their unholy steps.
7. Verse 8: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."
- a. Because of the foregoing complaints made against the imperial city, therefore these plagues would befall her. "Where affluence and gaiety once held sway these three (death, mourning, and famine) would now prevail. The end comes to the great city, followed by mourning over the death and famine from the economic collapse, for 'she shall be utterly burned with fire'—totally destroyed (17:16)" (Hailey, p.636).

- b. This passage also contains ideas used in the Old Testament which described ancient Babylon's punishment. "But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments" (Isa. 47:9).
- c. The same God who brought ancient Babylon to her knees would do likewise to this spiritual Babylon. "Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (Rev. 18:8). The punishment is as sure as the power and resolve of the Almighty.

B. Revelation 18:9-19: Babylon's Bedfellows Lament Her Fall.

1. Verses 9-10: "And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."
 - a. Those who had put their trust in Rome would be filled with grief and mourning on seeing her demise. These mourners fall into three groups:
 - 1) Kings—verses 9-10.
 - 2) Merchants—verses 11-17.
 - 3) Seamen—verses 17-19.
 - b. Here the reference is to the lesser kings who followed mighty Rome. As long as Rome was powerful, they rode the crest of prosperity with her. But when Rome lost her influence, these who depended on her suffered also.
 - c. They would bewail her (kapto: "beat their breasts in anguish") as they watched her "burn," powerless to assist. They would stand afar off and raise up their mournful cries.
2. Verses 11-13: "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men."
 - a. Ezekiel used similar language to describe the fall of Tyre (26:1—28:19). The merchants lamented the fall of spiritual Babylon; they wailed because of the lost sales. "Merchants" (emporos) is used in reference to wholesalers (Hailey). "Merchandise" (from gomos) is used in the New Testament of the cargo of a ship (Hailey). Thus, the merchants had the misfortune of having plenty of goods, but no one to buy them.
 - b. The goods listed in verse twelve are mostly luxury items. Purple and scarlet were the colors of royalty; in Revelation 17:4, it was what the harlot was wearing. Silk probably came from China, which suggests the far extent of Roman trade. In the days of Tiberius, two men introduced a measure in the Roman senate which "decided that vessels of solid gold should not be made for the serving of food, and that men should not disgrace themselves with silken cloth from the east" (Tacitus, as quoted by Hailey). Later, these luxuries were in great demand, and contributed to Rome's downfall. "Thyime wood was an aromatic wood of beautiful texture, imported from North Africa and prized for its aroma and as a resource for making fine furniture" (Hailey). Affluent Romans sometimes dissolved pearls in bowls, and drunk the mixture.
 - c. Cinnamon was known to the Jews during the time of Moses: "Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels" (Ex. 30:23).
 - d. The items of verse thirteen were prized by the luxury-loving Romans.
 - 1) Fine food items were used in the great banquets and in sacrifices to the idols.
 - 2) The Roman military included horses and chariots. "Chariots" is from rhede, which denotes a four-wheeled wagon or carriage: they were costly. The two-wheeled vehicle of war is from harma (Acts 8:28-29, 38).
 - 3) Slaves (bodies) and souls of men were under their domination. Slaves were common, and were used in the ordinary work and in the arena as combatants. In 30 B.C., the estimated number of

- slaves in Rome is put at 400,000 (half the population), and 1,500,000 in Italy (Durant, Caesar and Christ, pp.332f).
- a) "...Though Christianity does not directly forbid slavery, which might then have incited a slave-revolt, it virtually condemns it. Popery derived its greatest gains from masses for the souls of men after death, and from indulgences purchased from the papal chancery by rich merchants in various countries, to be retailed at a profit (Mosheim, iii., 95, 96)" [Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - b) "The traffic in slaves was common in ancient times, as it is now. We know that this traffic was carried on to a large extent in ancient Rome, the city which John probably had in his eye in this description. See Gibbon, Dec. and Fall, vol. 1, pp. 25,26. Athenaeus, as quoted by Mr. Gibbon (p. 26), says that 'he knew very many Romans who possessed, not for use, but for ostentation, ten, and even twenty thousand slaves'" [Barnes' Notes, Biblesoft].
3. Verse 14: "And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all."
 - a. The descriptions given in the context indicate the harlot was not representative of some religious organization, but of a worldly-minded people. These people had lusted after the dainty and goodly luxuries, but these were now gone; they could find them no more.
 - b. America of our present time, is infatuated with luxury, pleasure, and ease. While many struggle to keep a roof over their heads and food on their tables, with scarcely nothing left for health care, many others enjoy far more than they need. Instead of placing trust in the Almighty, far too many place their trust in the almighty dollar! A story is reported from the sinking of the Titanic that illustrates the foolhardiness of trusting in material wealth. A lady, knowing the ship was about sink, rushed back to her cabin to take what she now viewed as valuable—a sack of fruit; she left behind a treasure of jewels.
 4. Verses 15-16: "The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"
 - a. The merchants, who had been made rich from their trade, would bewail Rome but would stand far off, not lifting a hand to help Rome in her death throes. They would bemoan the city which had boasted of such splendor. It seemed impregnable and indestructible; but it would fall, and with its fall, the ready market for the merchants would be gone.
 - b. "In 'one hour'—very quickly—plagues, famine, mourning, and death come to visit her, and she shall be utterly consumed. This is a picture of her destruction, but how about her allies? They are pictured as standing in two groups to mourn over her. Rome was built upon two things: territorial conquest and trade expansion. Thus do the two groups mourn because they go down with her" (Summers, p.194).
 5. Verses 17-18: "For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!"
 - a. The shipmasters, sailors, those who trade by sea—all stood off and cried over the fall of this great city. The fall of Rome would have a great effect on sea trade, for it was largely through shipping that the luxuries from afar were brought.
 - b. Compare with Ezekiel 27:32: "And in their wailing they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and lament over thee, saying, What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea?"
 - c. "First, the kings of the earth mourn because of her fall. These are her allies who, coming under her power, entered into her spiritual fornication and evil. They turn aside to weep and wail because of the sudden destruction to the great city. Second, the merchants of the earth lament over her destruction because now they have no market for their merchandise. There are about thirty articles of trade mentioned here. To create such a business the merchants have entered into the evil of the Empire. Now they fall with her. Nothing can be economically good if it is morally bad. The same fate awaits any nation guilty of the same sin. The merchants and the mariners who carry their wares stand far off, cast dust on their heads, and weep over such destruction of the city. The burning of Rome under Nero was a small matter compared to God's wrath against the entire Empire and allies. Doom comes to all. The curtain falls on the second triumph of the pageant. It is a desolate scene but one of rejoicing to the Christians as they see another indication of God's power and their certain rescue" (Summers, p.194).

6. Verse 19: "And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."
- a. Casting dust upon the head was a symbol of grief among the orientals.
 - 1) Job 2:12: "And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven."
 - 2) Ezekiel 27:30: "And shall cause their voice to be heard against thee, and shall cry bitterly, and shall cast up dust upon their heads, they shall wallow themselves in the ashes."
 - b. There is no evil in commerce and industry of themselves, for these are for the common good of us all. But the Romans had turned their wealth into a means of gratifying the lusts of the flesh. "A culture that worships commercial success will strike the sparks that ultimately will burn it to ashes" (Blackwood, quoted by Hailey, p.368).
 - c. Biblical principles apply to nations as well as to individuals.
 - 1) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
 - 2) Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."
 - 3) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 4) Luke 12:21: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."
 - 5) John 6:27: "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."
 - 6) 1 Timothy 6:10-17: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

C. Revelation 18:20: The Voice of Rejoicing.

1. Verse 20: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."
2. In the midst of this visionary scene of mourning and wailing, there came a voice exhorting God's people to rejoice. This is not meant to encourage happiness over the pain and hardship the wicked had to face, but a rejoicing over the defeat of evil and victory of righteousness. In chapter 11, the wicked rejoiced over the death of the two witnesses; now things had been set right.
3. Again, the question of Revelation 6:9-10 is answered. God does things in his own way and in his own good time; but he will certainly set things right; he will bless righteousness and punish unrighteousness: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

D. Revelation 18:21-24: The Silence of the Tomb.

1. Verse 21: "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."
 - a. A mighty angel cast a millstone into the sea as a visual demonstration of the fact that Babylon would surely be brought down. This scene shows that Babylon (Rome) was yet standing; it has been pictured as fallen in the preceding verses because its demise was so sure. It would fall because God had decreed it; therefore, the suffering saints could take heart: their enemy would be brought down, and the Cause for which the saints had been afflicted would be surely vindicated.

- b. “Though on a grander scale, this scene is reminiscent of Jeremiah’s instruction to Seriah to read the words of Babylon’s judgment in the ears of the people, then to tie a stone to the scroll ‘and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates: and thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise again because of the evil that I will bring upon her’ (Jer. 51:61-64)” (Hailey, p.370).
 - c. The great millstone cast into the sea would sink, thus representing symbolically, the certain overthrow of Rome. “The destruction of the imperial city of John’s day would be as complete as was that of the ancient Babylon in Jeremiah’s time” (Hailey, *ibid.*).
 - d. The thing to be destroyed was not the city itself, but the wicked, oppressing government, and the evil being done by the people. Although the city was sacked more than once, and many of its citizens were slain, the ravaged city remains; but its governing authority, the Empire of Rome, was destroyed, to rise no more. It has been commonly described as “the eternal city” (because it has survived the ages), but that is not due to any sacredness that pertains to it; one reason it has remained, with some of its ancient ruins still visible, is to declare for all to see that God meant what he said about destroying the might and glory of the Roman Empire.
2. Verses 22-23: "And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."
 - a. John emphasizes the silence and inactivity of the harlot city by showing what will not be heard or found there. These are symbolic pictures of the hardships and suffering God would bring on these evil people.
 - b. The sound of musical instruments would not be heard—these would now be silenced in imperial Rome.
 - 1) 2 Chronicles 29:25: "And he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by his prophets." [In the Old Testament, these instruments were associated with worship].
 - 2) Amos 6:5-7: "That chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed." [It was associated with revelry].
 - 3) Luke 15:25: "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing." [It was associated with joy and happiness].
 - c. No craftsman of whatsoever craft would be found, indicating the fall of business and the resulting hard times.
 - d. The voice of the mill would not be heard—thus the staff of life would be affected; this suggests famine which brings harsh suffering.
 - e. The houses of spiritual Babylon would be dark and have no lighting. Tacitus wrote, “As darkness approached, all the adjacent grove and surrounding buildings resounded with song, and shone brilliantly with lights.” He also wrote of how Nero burned Christians as a means of lighting his banquets.
 - f. The merrymaking of the wedding feasts would cease.
 3. Verse 24: "And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."
 - a. In this passage some reasons are given by John as to why the terrible hardships and desolation were to descend on spiritual Babylon.
 - b. Her merchants had made the accumulation of wealth and the luxuries it could provide their great goal in life. They had cast God and righteousness out of their hearts. Compare:

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- 1) Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."
 - 2) Proverbs 1:20-33: "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: She crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil."
- c. The harlot city had used sorceries (deceptions) to cause other nations to follow her evil ways. Rome has been immersed in gratifying her own selfish ends; she spent her ill-gotten gain on lusts and luxuries. She robbed the wealth and population of other nations and wasted them for her own glory. Although Rome provided a vast network of roads and established a system of law that is imitated even today, yet in the final analysis, she brought suffering and trouble and sin upon many, and did not purify or elevate morality. She had crossed the line, and must be destroyed.
 - d. The blood of prophets and saints was found in her.
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Some Reasons Why the Babylon in Revelation is Rome and not Jerusalem

1. Babylon caused all nations to sin: “And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8).
2. It ruled over all kings: “And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH....And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:5,18). Jerusalem and all Palestine were dominated by Rome; Jerusalem did not reign over other kingdoms.
3. Its connection with the sea: “For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!” (Rev. 18:17-18). Jerusalem was not known as a great sea-going nation.
4. It had great wealth: “The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!....And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate” (Rev. 18:15-16, 19). While Rome was enriched by sea trade, this was not a major characteristic of Jerusalem.
5. By its sorceries were all nations deceived: “And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived” (Rev. 18:22-23). Again, this description fits Rome, not Jerusalem.
6. The seven mountains of chapter seventeen suggest Rome: “And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (Rev. 17:9). The context shows that the seven heads of the beast represent seven mountains; the heads are also representative of seven kings. The seven mountains (or hills) upon which Rome is built lies in the background of Revelation.

The cumulative evidence points to Rome, and not to Jerusalem, as the “Babylon” of Revelation.

REVELATION 19

The Rejoicing Saints and Victorious Christ

A. Revelation 19:1-10: The Saints Rejoice.

1. Verses 1-2: "After these things I heard as it were a great voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; Salvation, and glory, and power, belong to our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great harlot, her that corrupted the earth with her fornication, and he hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand" (ASV).
 - a. The first ten verses of this chapter describe the end of the harlot of chapters 17-18. The fall of Babylon was introduced in Revelation 14:8, but the overthrow does not actually occur until Revelation 18. The holy ones in heaven and earth were called on to rejoice over the fall (Rev. 18:20); this they do in the current passage. The rejoicing described stands in stark contrast to the wailing of the kings and merchants in Revelation 18:9-20.
 - b. Alleluia (Hallelujah, ASV) is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase, "Praise ye Jah" (Jehovah). The definite article "the" is given in the Greek text before "salvation," "glory," and "honor" (power, ASV). "The" gives emphasis to each of these tributes.
 - c. This is not a song of rejoicing over the evil which has befallen Rome; rather it is over the great victory truth and righteousness have won over evil. Above the weeping and wailing of the merchants, kings, and mariners, and above the noise of the demise of the wicked empire of Rome, comes the sound of rejoicing.
 - d. "For" (because, hoti) gives the reason for the rejoicing—God's judgments are true and righteous. The harlot was properly judged for she had corrupted the earth with her fornication. "Corrupt" (phtheiro) means to destroy by bringing to a state of moral decay, effected by "the lusts of deceit" (Eph. 4:22) [Hailey]. Rome did this to many. Those who obey the gospel are told: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22).
 - e. Thus, God avenged the blood of his servants who had suffered at the hand of this cruel persecutor. Again, the pleas of Revelation 6:9-10 have been heard and answered! "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11).
2. Verse 3: "And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."
 - a. The destruction is not pictured as the ordinary burning of a captured city, for in those cases men go in and remove the charred remains. Rome's overthrow is pictured as complete and lasting.
 - b. The city of Rome (called "The Eternal City") continues today, but the corrupt Rome and its Empire have long since perished. It will not be resurrected; and the judgment against the individuals will be eternal in nature.
 - c. When the fascists took control of Italy between the two world wars, and began to exert their influence on other nations, some millennialists ranted that "the Roman Empire was about to be resurrected." They knew the Roman kings were to be on the throne when the kingdom of Daniel 2 arrived. They denied that the kingdom had come; therefore, they foolishly thought the Empire of Rome must be restored before the kingdom could be established. As any unprejudiced Bible student can know, the kingdom came exactly on schedule—nearly two thousand years ago.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the

- forgiveness of sins."
- 3) Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."
3. Verses 4-5: "And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."
 - a. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures humbly and reverently praise God, and state their approval of the tribute given by the heavenly multitude and of the judgment poured out on the wicked.
 - b. Again, an anonymous voice speaks from the throne. The exhortation for praise and reverence to be shown to God is given to all his servants, small and great. These are his people yet on earth.
 4. Verse 6: "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."
 - a. The writer keeps before our minds the fact that he is describing a vision—"as it were"—"as." The sound of the praise was likened to the voice of many waters, and of mighty thunderings.
 - b. God is described as "omnipotent" (Almighty, ASV). This term is used ten times in the New Testament. It is used once in 2 Corinthians 6:18: "And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." It appears nine times in Revelation (one of the places is in the text, where the word is translated omnipotent):
 - 1) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - 2) Revelation 4:8: "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."
 - 3) Revelation 11:17: "Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."
 - 4) Revelation 15:3: "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."
 - 5) Revelation 16:7: "And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."
 - 6) Revelation 16:14: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."
 - 7) Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 - 8) Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."
 - c. Despite the many and powerful foes, God is still in control of his creation. He may take his time in righting wrongs since he does so in this life through his providential, and not through miraculous, action. Centuries sometimes pass before his will is worked out.
 - 1) Genesis 15:13-16: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: **for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.**" [The time came when the Amorites developed the fullness of lawlessness, as the following passages show].
 - 2) Deuteronomy 2:24-37: "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thine hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee

upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee. And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon with words of peace, saying, Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left. Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet; (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the LORD our God giveth us. But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land. Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz. And the LORD our God delivered him before us; and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people. And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain: Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took. From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river of Arnon, and from the city that is by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us: the LORD our God delivered all unto us: Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, nor unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbad us."

- 3) Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up in pride (Dan. 4:30); God told him that he would be driven from his kingdom. "The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Dan. 4:30-32).
5. Verse 7: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."
 - a. A third woman is introduced (the others being the radiant woman in chapter 12 and the harlot in chapter 17); this woman is called the wife of the Lamb, thus the church is meant. God's relationship with his people was sometimes described in the Old Testament as a spiritual marriage (Hos. 2; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 2:32; Ezek. 16). This same figure is used here of the relation of the church to Christ.
 - 1) Romans 7:4: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:22-32: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
 - b. The Hebrew custom of betrothal and marriage must be understood to appreciate the real relationship. Mary was spoken of as being the "wife" of Joseph (Matt. 1:20); she was his wife "before they came together" (Matt. 1:18). He heeded the heavenly messenger and "took unto him his wife" (Matt. 1:24). The Hebrew custom of engagement was much more sacred and binding than in modern society; those who were engaged were considered so bound that Joseph would have had to put Mary away (obtain a divorce) in order to break the engagement.
 - c. The church is not presently married to Christ; she is betrothed to him. It is a spiritual relationship

which will be consummated in heaven. "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). "Espoused" (from *armoxo*) means "to join, to fit together...or betroth, to give one in marriage to any one" (Thayer). In the light of Hebrew custom, the church of Christ is now espoused (or betrothed) to Christ, as Mary was betrothed to Joseph.

6. Verse 8: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."
 - a. The bride is given opportunity to be arrayed in proper garments, to prepare herself for the coming wedding. The pure garments are defined by John as representing the righteousness of the saints.
 - b. Notice the distinction between the attire of the harlot and the bride: one was clothed in gaudy, sensual attire; but the bride in fine linen—clean and white (bright and pure, ASV).
 - 1) Matthew 22:12: "And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."
 - 2) Ephesians 2:10: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:26-27: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 4) Colossians 3:8-17: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
7. Verse 9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - a. This is the fourth beatitude of Revelation. The speaker is unidentified in the verse, but probably was an angel. A state of blessedness or happiness is pronounced on those who are called to the wedding feast of the Lamb. The call is extended by the gospel.
 - 1) Romans 10:13-16: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 1:9: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 2:14: "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 4) Matthew 11:28-30: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
 - b. John introduced the fall of Babylon in Revelation 14:8, but did not describe it until chapter 18. Here the feast is spoken of as if it were presently taking place, but the description of it is not given until chapter 21.

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- c. The speaker affirms that “these are the true sayings of God.” This affirmation includes not only the beatitude just named, but extends also to this whole section of the book.
8. Verse 10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- a. John was so overwhelmed with the awesome sight and/or with the person of the speaker that he fell down to worship him. This worship was rejected, for the speaker identifies himself as a fellowservant and of the brethren; thus he is not Christ or God.
- 1) Peter refused to receive homage from Cornelius: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:25-26).
 - 2) John was again rebuffed when he tried to worship an angel in Revelation 22:8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
 - 3) From this we learn that no man and no angel of heaven is worthy of being worshipped. What then of the “pope” and other self-styled “dignitaries” who not only accept but demand such homage?
- b. Regarding the identity of the person John sought to worship in Revelation 19:10, Lenski suggested he might be one of the saints who had left earth and was now in heaven. However, angels and Christians are servants of God, thus can be classified as “brethren” in this connection. The speaker may simply be saying that he is a fellowservant with John and a fellowservant also of John’s brethren. [Note: The New Testament teaches that we do not go directly to heaven (or hell) at death: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8)].
- c. Worship is to be directed to God.
- 1) Matthew 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."
 - 2) Matthew 6:9: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
 - 3) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - 4) Revelation 19:10: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."
- d. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy:
- 1) “The testimony of Jesus is the life-principle of prophecy. Although it is true that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of all prophecy previous to John’s, here the phrase has likely reference only to the prophecy of this book; he is its very breath of life (cf. 1:3; 22:18)” (Hailey, p.380).
 - 2) “The word ‘spirit’ here does not signify the Holy Spirit, but rather the inner spirit, the vital element, the life and soul—the essence of the apocalypse was the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ to his servant John by his servants, the angels” (Wallace, p.9).
 - 3) A fuller and more pointed explanation is given as follows:
 - a) First, Thayer defines prophecy: “...discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events.....the spirit of prophecy, the divine mind, to which the prophetic faculty is due, Rev 19:10" [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - b) Second: “Since the testimony is given by divine inspiration and the spirit of prophecy is by divine inspiration, it follows that the reference here is simply a reference to the fact that the testimony, commandments and prophecy found in this book and indeed in all of the Bible, is
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given by inspiration. John explained back in Revelation 1:9-11 that while he was in Patmos for his preaching and for his testimony of Jesus he was in the Spirit and received his divine commission to write his prophecy. Prophecy and testimony come from the guidance of God” (J. Noel Meredith, ADL, p.465).

B. Revelation 19:11-16: Vision of Christ the Conqueror.

1. Verse 11: "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war."
 - a. The destruction of the harlot was detailed in chapter 18; she represented decadent Rome. But the two great beasts are still at large: the one from the sea (13:1-10) and the one that came up out of the earth (13:11ff). The latter beast is also called “the false prophet” (16:13). These are defeated in the present chapter.
 - b. The Great Warrior is not specifically identified as Christ, but the description given fits only Him. He is called “faithful and true.”
 - 1) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 2) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;"
 - c. Christ is pictured in this vision as riding a white horse (indicating purity and victory). He rides forth to judge and make war. The enemies, as pictured in Revelation, are (1) the dragon (Satan—chapter 12), (2) the sea-beast and the land-beast (chapter 13), and the harlot (chapter 17). These are defeated in reverse order: the harlot (Rev. 18); the 2 beasts (Rev. 19:11ff); and finally Satan himself (Rev. 20).
 - d. Satan is the only personal being in the group: in our view, the first beast represents the Roman Empire, personified in Domitian, the corrupt Roman emperor who persecuted the saints; the second beast represents the corrupt religion of the empire; the harlot represents Rome, the seat of the entire corrupt government. Some extend these to a broader application: The two beasts and the harlot would symbolize anti-God power, false religion, and seductive lusts of the flesh, the instruments Satan uses in waging his war against God and his kingdom.
 - e. The scene to be described is not the second coming of Christ, but his successful war against the enemies named in the context. However, the Lord will eventually overcome every earthly foe, condemn them, and destroy death and banish Satan and all of his henchmen and all others under his control, into Gehenna. While this scene may not directly depict the second coming, it at least gives an indirect picture of the final destiny of all who oppose God.
2. Verse 12: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself."
 - a. As in Revelation 1:14, Christ is pictured as having eyes as a flame of fire (cf. Rev. 2:18). This suggests his ability to look into the heart of man.
 - b. On his head were many crowns (diadems); Satan wore seven diadems and the sea-beast had ten; but Christ has many.
 - c. He had a name written that no man knew, only Christ himself. Therefore, it is folly to try to discern that name! Some scholars suggest that the name may possibly represent the close relationship which exists between the Father and the Son: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).
3. Verse 13: "And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God."
 - a. His clothing was blood-stained, perhaps a reference to the crucified Christ. In Revelation 14:20, the winepress was trodden outside the city and “blood came out of the winepress.” In Revelation 19:15, Christ is said to tread “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”
 - b. In Isaiah 63:1-3, the Lord is pictured as returning from Bozrah with his garments stained with blood; he was asked, “Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat?” He replied, “I have trodden the winepress alone....I trod them in mine anger, and trampled them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments, and I have stained all my

raiment.”

- c. The blood-spattered clothing of Christ in Revelation 19 may be in reference to the battle of Revelation 14:20 and of that battle portrayed in this passage. "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs" (Rev. 14:20).
4. Verse 14: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."
 - a. He had with him heaven's armies, each warrior of which rode a white horse and was clothed as was the Leader. No statement is given whether they are armed.
 - b. The plural (armies) gives way to the singular (army) in Revelation 19:19: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."
 - c. "Furthermore, the war now to be fought is not at his final coming, for there is to be no war then; all will be over. It is the war introduced earlier, though not described (16:14-16). It seems therefore that this army is the 'called and chosen and faithful' who overcome with the king (17:14). The picture symbolizes a divine judgment and a spiritual war directed from heaven, led by a heavenly warrior-king. It is fought by a host of pure and faithful warriors, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and whose names are written there (Luke 10:20)—the faithful saints of God" (Hailey, pp.384f).
5. Verse 15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
 - a. He is again pictured as having a sharp sword coming from his mouth. He is called "The Word of God" in Revelation 19:13; the word of God is referred to as a sword in various passages of scripture (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). But this sword coming from Christ's mouth is not the gospel with which men are converted. With this sword, the conquering Christ will fight against the nations; he would rule them with a rod of iron; he would tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God. It is a sword of judgment against his enemies.
 - b. The war to be fought is to be engaged in time, not at the second coming; no fighting will be done then. The fighting being done was against the wicked oppressors the early church faced; the outcome was assured; the saints to whom John wrote could take great comfort in knowing that even though they had to endure cruel persecution and perhaps death, ultimately the Cause of Christ would succeed, and they personally would receive an eternal reward (Rev. 14:13; 22:14).
 - 1) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - c. Pagan Rome and other powerful foes might array themselves against the Lamb, but their defeat was and is a foregone conclusion!
 - d. The armies, sword, and the rod are punitive in their nature; they destroy by divine judgment, they reduce to chaff, burning, and carrying away.
 - 1) Daniel 2:35: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."
 - 2) Daniel 2:40-45: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other

- people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."
- 3) Daniel 7:9-12: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."
- e. The treading of the winepress indicates a full, and terrible judgment. Isaiah 63:1-3 and Joel 3:12-14 serve as a basis for interpretation of the winepress as a severe judgment and of the blood-sprinkled garment of the king (Hailey).
 - 1) Isaiah 63:1-3: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment."
 - 2) Joel 3:12-14: "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision."
6. Verse 16: "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
 - a. The Lord has a name known only to himself (vs. 12); he is known as "Faithful and True" (vs. 11) and "Word of God" (vs. 13); to everyone he is known as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" (vs. 16) when his great power is manifested. Christ possesses authority far greater than any earthly king. Indeed, even the greatest king will bow in submission to Christ at the Judgment.
 - 1) John 19:7-11: "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."
 - 2) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - b. This title is assigned to Christ in Revelation 17:14. This name is written on his vesture and thigh for all to see; thus in the judgment vision being depicted, his identity is not hidden.
 - c. "Christ now is assigned the great title, The Word of God (Rev 19:13). As the Word of God, he made the worlds. It was by rejection of the Word that sin was brought into the world. By the Word of God, salvation is offered to men. Sin and anarchy, godlessness and rebellion, are in one way or another the repudiation of the Word of God. That Word, the Eternal, Omnipotent Word, now descends from heaven to fulfill prophecy, to destroy the enemies of God, to reveal to the universe, once and forever, the folly of resisting Christ and the indisputable pre-eminence of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords (v. 16). We are now introduced to an earthly scene in which the kings of the earth take a prominent part. How strange, how tragic is this situation we now behold, in which it seems that the rulers of the

whole world are united in one terrible effort to destroy the anointed of God. How contrary this is to the dreams of men, to the foolish statements of their false prophets, and to their unjustified belief that human society is ever progressing in the areas of peace, goodness, comradeship, and social welfare. We are now to see the fulfillment of Ps 2" [The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database, © 1962 by Moody Press].

- d. Compare: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 2).
- e. "As in Rev 17:5, so here, there is nothing in the original to denote that this should be distinguished, as it is, by capital letters. As a conspicuous title, however, it is not improper. It means that he is, in fact, the sovereign over the kings of the earth, and that all nobles and princes are under his control—a rank that properly belongs to the Son of God....The custom here alluded to of inscribing the name or rank of distinguished individuals on their garments, so that they might be readily recognized, was not uncommon in ancient times" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].

C. Revelation 19:17-18: The Angel's Call to the Grisly Feast.

1. Verse 17: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God."
 - a. "The battle now described was earlier presented as the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath. It is the same battle described as 'Armageddon' in Revelation 16:12-16, but here a vivid description is given of how the battle proceeded and of the final outcome" (Meadows, ADL, pp.188f).
 - b. In the great battle between Christianity and paganism, the victory is pictured as being a complete overthrow of the latter. The call issues from a lone angel who was standing "in the Sun"—a place of prominence and importance. He calls with loud voice for the birds which fly in mid-heaven to come and feast on the carnage left behind on the battlefield. These birds would be the carrion-eating birds.
 - c. Similar descriptions are given in Isaiah 34:6, Jeremiah 46:10, and Ezekiel 39:17-20.
 - 1) Isaiah 34:6: "The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea."
 - 2) Jeremiah 46:10: "For this is the day of the Lord GOD of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries: and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Lord GOD of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates."
 - 3) Ezekiel 39:17-20: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord GOD."
 - d. In the earlier verses of this chapter the marriage feast of the Lamb is alluded to, which stands in stark contrast to this grisly supper.
 - e. This picture describes the utter defeat of the Lord's enemies. The battle is not to be taken as literal, for Christ did not personally take up literal weapons and physically defeat Rome or any other enemy. The war and victory are spiritual. His cause lives!

2. Verse 18: "That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great."
 - a. The birds are called to devour the flesh of the slain enemy (Ezek. 38-39). This picture is grisly indeed. Through the centuries, this image has often been duplicated following the countless battles that have been fought. Compare Ezekiel 39:17: "And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord GOD; Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh, and drink blood."
 - b. "The supper of John's vision was comprised of (1) 'the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains' —chiliarchs, military leaders who were over a thousand men; (2) 'the flesh of mighty men,' the great of earth, and of horses and horsemen; and (3) 'the flesh of all men, both free and bond, the small and great.' In this war the devil recruits from every walk of life; he has some of all these of earth in his army. There are no barriers or limitations except righteousness. There is no middle ground; every one is either on one side or the other in this conflict" (Hailey, p.387).
 - c. "All men; that is, all the ungodly....The whole account indicates the widespread and complete nature of God's judgments, which none shall be able to escape" [The Pulpit Commentary, Electronic Database, © 2001 by Biblesoft].
 - d. The carnage is unlimited; there will be no limit on the servings; all are invited. The victory of the Lord will be complete; the enemy will be utterly vanquished.

D. Revelation 19:19-21: The Decisive Battle and Victory of the Lamb.

1. Verse 19: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."
 - a. In the vision, John saw the battle lines being formed: the beast, the kings which supported him, and their armies are arrayed against Christ and his army. The battle is about to be joined. The call of verses 17-18 was in anticipation of the inevitable outcome.
 - b. The interpretations on this chapter of the major views of Revelation include:
 - 1) Brother Wallace sees in this passage a depiction of the overthrow of Jerusalem.
 - 2) The millennialists think this section will have a literal fulfillment in connection with the return of Christ and the establishment of an earthly kingdom. This interpretation flies in the face of many plain passages which show that the kingdom is here already (Col. 1:13) and that when the Lord returns, all earthly and material concerns will be burned up and dissolved (2 Peter 3:9-14)..
 - 3) The continuous-historical method thinks this section points to the overthrow of the Roman Catholic religion. Such interpretations rob the book of any real value to the first recipients of Revelation.
 - c. Summers gives a concise and consistent explanation: "This is a book thoroughly suited to the times in which it was produced. Armageddon is not a place name; it is a symbolic term for a decisive conflict. Christ is pictured as coming down from heaven, but this does not picture the second coming of Christ which we find discussed elsewhere in the New Testament. This scene symbolically represents his coming to the aid of the persecuted Christians with heavenly assistance in their spiritual struggles. If the beast is identified, as it has been in this work, with the emperor as he personified the pagan persecuting Roman Empire, there is no other explanation of this battle. It is a vivid symbolical representation of the final victory of Christ's cause and people over that pagan Empire. The beast (Domitian) and the second beast (false prophet, Roman Concilia, state religion priesthood) were cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is symbolical of their destruction. Christ overcomes them; the Christians are bothered with them no more. The conflict pictured is a spiritual conflict" (p.199).
 - d. In our view, the dragon is Satan; the beast is the Roman Empire (personified in the Emperor); the second beast is comprised of emperor-worship, along with those who enforced it. The kings of the passage are the various ones under the domination of Rome; these were subservient to the will of the Emperor. "These kings aligned themselves with the beast to make war against the Lamb and his followers (17:12-14), but no battle was described. For the third time these are revealed with their armies (plural) to make war against the warrior-king and his army (singular), but again no battle; only

the outcome is described. It seems clear that we have now come to the actual battle of Har-Magedon which is fought to decide who is King of Kings—Christ, or world-caesars and potentates” (Hailey, p.387).

2. Verse 20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."
 - a. The beast and the false prophet (cf. Rev. 13) were taken; these were cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.
 - b. The battle of Revelation 16:16 is being described. More to the point, the outcome of the battle is described, rather than the battle itself. The fate of these two enemies is similar to that of the harlot.
 - 1) Revelation 17:16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."
 - 2) Revelation 18:8-9: "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning."
 - 3) Revelation 18:18: "And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!"
 3. Verse 21: "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."
 - a. The rest of the enemy were slain; these are destined for torment in the lake of fire: "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Rev. 14:9-10).
 - b. Pagan Rome was destroyed to rise no more; Daniel 7:11 was fulfilled, and in this defeat and destruction is seen the fate of all such powers that strive against God and his kingdom. "I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11).
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REVELATION 20

The Thousand Year Reign and the Final Judgment

A. The General Theory of Premillennialism.

1. The following points are generally believed by the premillennialists, although there are many variations.
 - a. They think Christ will come first in what they call “the rapture.” At this time the righteous dead will be raised and the living saints will be changed in an instant from mortal bodies into immortal bodies, and meet the Lord in the air. This part of the theory is a perversion of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." No mention is made here or elsewhere in the New Testament about the resurrected saints or Christ ever setting foot on the earth again.
 - b. They think the marriage feast of the Lamb will then occur, during which time the “Great Tribulation” will take place on earth. The “Great Tribulation” part of the theory is a perversion of Matthew 24:21: "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." We are told in a later verse in the passage that the items in the context would take place during the lifetime of the generation then living on the earth (the generation to which the statements were made): "Verily I say unto you, **This** generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. 24:34). This tribulation took place at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70; it is not some imagined event to occur at the end of time.
 - c. After the wedding feast, premillennialists think Christ will return to earth with the resurrected and changed saints, and establish an earthly kingdom, sit on the literal throne of David, and reign from Jerusalem for a literal 1,000 years. This 1000-year-reign is what they call the Millennium. This coming of Christ is called [in their terminology] the “revelation.” They think there will be seven years between the rapture and the revelation.
 - d. Some of them think all of the Jews will be converted and returned to Palestine. This is based partly on a perverted interpretation of Romans 11:16: "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.”
 - 1) Coupled with the preceding verse, millennialists make this statement teach that the whole nation of Israel will be saved, evidently by a miraculous act of God. If their conversion is supernatural, then what about their free moral agency? If God converts them in such a fashion, then he shows partiality toward them, doing for them what he is unwilling to do for others. And what about all of those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the past two thousand years? And what about all those Jews who died in rebellion to God during the Old Testament days? If Christ came earlier than the time supposed by the millennialists, Jews would be saved who will not be saved (according to their suppositions). The time of the Lord's return will, therefore, determine which of the Jews will be saved! Will all the Jews who ever lived on earth be saved? If so, then God did not mean what he said to them who lived under the Mosaic Law (Deut. 28).
 - a) Deuteronomy 28:45: "Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee."
 - b) Deuteronomy 11:26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known."
 - c) Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."
 - d) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his

- commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
- 2) The gospel does not really mean what it says, if the millennial theory is true:
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - b) John 8:21: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - c) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - d) 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." This applies to all accountable Jews and Gentiles from the cross to the end of time.
 - 3) What, then, does the passage actually teach? First, notice the word **so** (Greek, houtos) in both English and Greek is an adverb of manner, and means in this way (manner). In the manner or after the way Paul describes, will the Jews be saved. But what is that way? Paul has previously shown that many of the Jews were lost (Rom. 3:9,23; 9:1-3; 10:1-3, 16; 11:14,21-23). He has also set forth the only means for their salvation: the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3). The majority of the Jews had rejected the gospel, and continued in condemnation (Rom. 8:1ff; 10:1-3). Since the gospel is God's power to save both Jew and Gentile, and since he is no respecter of persons, it follows that the same conditions required of Gentiles for their salvation are also the requirements for the salvation of Jews (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; 2:38; 22:16; 10:47-48).
 - 4) The gospel is God's final message to mankind (Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 4:12; Acts 4:11-12; John 14:6; Rev. 14:6; Heb. 7:17-28). If any Jews are to be saved during the Gospel Age, it will have to be by the gospel! When the Lord returns, there will not be any time or occasion or opportunity for anyone to be saved then; it will be too late for that! Therefore, if any Jew is to be saved, it will be because he obeyed the gospel of Christ in this life prior to the Lord's second advent. "Else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." (Heb. 9:26-28, ASV).
 - 5) Paul's point in this verse is simple: In this manner of obeying the gospel will all Israel be saved, if they are to be saved at all. There is no other method by which they can be saved. If any of them are to be saved, it will be in the same manner by which the Gentiles were saved, and that was by obeying the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3, 13-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).
 - 6) Far from saying that all Israel will be saved, the apostle is affirming that in the same way as all others are saved, will Jews be saved. He adds that salvation is possible because the Deliverer has come out of Zion, who will turn Israel from their ungodliness (Isa. 59:20; Psalm 14:7). The Deliverer is obviously Christ; Zion is Jerusalem; it was at Jerusalem that Christ was sacrificed for the sins of the world (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 2:9; John 1:29-34). Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. 9:22); but the blood of animals cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4); only the blood of Christ can remove the guilt of sin (1 Pet. 1:18-19; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28).
 - 7) Alien sinners contact the benefits of Christ's blood when they are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:1-18; Eph. 1:3; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 8:1-3). The Deliverer turns Israel from their ungodliness when they obey the gospel! This is the same manner by which he turns any Gentile from ungodliness. When men obey the gospel, they make a complete change from their former ways. This is an individual choice and act.
 - 8) Paul showed in Romans 11:22-23 that Israel would receive the benefits of God's goodness if they
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- did not remain in their unbelief; in other words, if they would believe and obey Christ they would be saved. Peter said in Acts 15:11: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." The pronoun we refers to Jews; the pronoun they refers to Gentiles. Peter had just shown that Cornelius and his Gentile family were saved by the gospel of Christ; he now states that Jews can only be saved in the same way. But not all of the Gentiles will be saved; neither will all of Israel be saved.
- e. Old Testament worship will be restored during this 1,000 year reign (according to the theory), and life on earth will be one of perfection in which the lamb and the lion will dwell in peace.
 - f. The theory further asserts that, at the end of the reign, Satan will be loosed for a little while and will make an effort to overthrow Christ and his people.
 - g. Then the Millennium will end with the resurrection of the wicked dead and the "Great White Throne Judgment." But according to the Bible, the wicked and the righteous dead will all be raised in the same moment of time: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). There will only be one literal resurrection from the dead: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24:15).
 - h. Several resurrections are called for by the theory. Depending on the brand of millennialism, there are said to be four or more resurrections, and from two to seven judgments. The Bible teaches that there will be one resurrection (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29) and one Judgment (Heb. 9:27; Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10-12). **The "resurrections" they claim include these:**
 - 1) The resurrection of the righteous at the rapture.
 - 2) Another for those who become believers between the rapture and revelation.
 - 3) Yet another for those who are converted and die during the millennium.
 - 4) Another for the wicked at the end of the millennium.
2. Revelation 20 is the passage upon which all of the above theory rests.
 - a. None of the other Bible writers mentions anything at all about a thousand year reign. Were it not for Revelation 20, no one would have ever thought of a reign of one thousand years in connection with Christianity. Of course, this reign is not a literal reign of Christ on the earth.
 - b. The theorists take the one thousand years as literal, but it can be shown to be a symbolic number. "Revelation is a book of symbols. It was 'signified' (Rev. 1:1) or made known in signs. Therefore, in the interpretation of this book some normal hermeneutical rules are reversed. We should take a term as figurative unless there is a reason not to do so. This is especially true in Revelation 20, where there are at least thirteen figurative nouns in the first ten verses. This is an important observation in understanding the 'thousand years'" (Gary Workman, SS Lectures, p.521).
 - c. The whole Bible has to be twisted to be made to fit their interpretation of Revelation 20.
 3. The essential parts of the theory are not even named in Revelation 20.
 - a. Nothing is said in the passage about the Second Coming of Christ.
 - b. A bodily resurrection is not mentioned.
 - c. The reign of Christ on earth is not mentioned.
 - d. The literal throne of David is not named.
 - e. Neither Jerusalem nor Palestine is mentioned.
 - f. You and I are not named: We read that "they" lived and reigned with Christ; only by interpretation can "we" be included in the "they."
 - g. The passage does not place Christ on earth.
 4. There are many things wrong with the theory of premillennialism, including the following:
 - a. It denies that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has been established. But Paul wrote that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son" (Col. 1:13). John said he was "in the kingdom" (Rev. 1:9).
 - b. It denies that Jesus was right when he said, "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God

come with power" (Mark 9:1). Either the kingdom has come, or Jesus was wrong (for no one claims that anybody from the first century is still living on earth).

- c. It denies that the church and the kingdom are the same. But Christ used the terms "my church" and "kingdom of heaven" interchangeably in Matthew 16:17-18: "And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The institution he called his church in verse 18, he called the kingdom in verse 19.
- d. It denies that the church was in God's plan until the Jews rejected Christ. It was only then, according to premillennialism, that God decided to establish the church instead of an earthly kingdom. But Paul said that the church was in God's plan all along: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). Isaiah predicted that in the last days the "house of the Lord" would be established in Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3; cf. Luke 24:46-49). The Lord's house is the Lord's church (1 Tim. 3:15). The church (which is also the kingdom) was in God's plans from eternity, and was never a last-moment substitution.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Micah 4:1-3: "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - 3) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
- e. It denies the prediction of Jeremiah 22:30 by saying that Jesus, a descendant of Coniah (Matt. 1:11, 16), will indeed sit on the throne of David and rule in Judah. God said through Jeremiah that no descendant of Coniah will ever do so! "Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah" (Jer. 22:30). Since Jesus is now reigning as king, his kingdom is not an earthly kingdom.
- f. It denies that Christ is presently sitting on the throne as King, thus has no kingdom. But Zechariah says that Christ "shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne." He would be a priest while on his throne; but he cannot be a priest on earth (Heb. 7:14). Therefore, his throne cannot be on earth. He would rule while sitting on the throne. He is on the throne now: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool" (Acts 2:32-35). Therefore he is ruling (is King) on his throne now.
 - 1) Zechariah 6:12-13: "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall

- build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."
- 2) Hebrews 7:14: "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood."
 - g. It denies that Jesus was right when he said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). When he said this, did God know that the kingdom would be postponed (as the theory teaches)? If God knew and yet allowed Jesus to say it was at hand, his integrity is compromised! If God did not know it would be postponed and let Christ proclaim that it was "at hand" when it was not, it denies God's omniscience. Premillennialism involves God and Christ in a misrepresentation of the truth or else charges them with not knowing the truth. [See Wallace, God's Prophetic Word, p.203].
 - h. It denies that Christ came in the "fulness of time," for they say God had to postpone setting up the kingdom: "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:1-5). "Millennialism either denies Galatians 4, that the first coming of Christ was the fulness or time, or else charges that after appointing the time, God failed to keep the appointment, backed by the word of his oath"(ibid., pp.377f).
 - i. It denies Christ's statement that he would be "no more in the world" (John 17:11).
 - 1) John 17:11: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." "In verse 5 of this prayer to the Father Jesus very plainly said that he had glorified the Father on earth, and had finished the work that God had given him to do. Because he had thus completed the divine purpose, and had finished his Father's work, he said 'I am no more in the world.' If 'no more' means no more, then Jesus will be no more in this world" (Wallace, God's Prophetic Word, p.381).
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:16: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." To know someone is to have a special relationship with that person. A husband knows his wife, and his wife knows him (Gen. 4:1; Matt. 1:24-25). A Christian knows his God and Christ: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Tit. 1:16; cf. 2 Thess. 1:8-9; John 17:3). We know God and Christ in the sense that we believe in them, love them, and follow them.
 - a) Therefore, we know no man after the flesh; we do not follow any fleshly being or obey any fleshly source of authority. We follow the will of God and Christ. These are the ones we know. This is a blow against the Judaizers who sought to convince the Gentile saints to follow the Law of Moses.
 - b) These Jewish teachers claimed that the Law was still in effect and that the Gentile Christians must be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be saved. Acts 15. The books of Galatians and Hebrews destroyed this doctrine. Keeping the carnal commandments of the Old Law was no longer required (Eph. 2:14-15; Col. 2:14).
 - c) The Jewish people mistakenly believed that there were certain blessings which forevermore belonged to them because of their fleshly kinship to Abraham (Matt. 3:8-10; Rom. 2:28-29).
 - d) For about thirty-three years, Christ abode on earth in a fleshly body. He no longer is on earth and does not now live in a fleshly body. We will never see him in a fleshly body. Premillennialism claims that Christ must return to earth, live again on earth, and set up an earthly kingdom over which he will reign for a thousand years. For this to take place, it appears that he would have to have a fleshly body again. But Paul says that "henceforth know we him no more" (that is, he will not inhabit a mortal body any more). There is no passage of Scripture which says that Christ will ever so much as set foot upon the earth again!
 - j. It denies the following Bible truths:
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- 1) The return of Christ will end the period of probation for man: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- 2) It will be the end of the world: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).
- 3) It will be the time for the resurrection of all the dead: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29).
- 4) It will be the time of the final judgment: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matt. 25:31-32).
- 5) It will be when Christ will deliver the kingdom back to God: "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:24).

B. Revelation 20:1-10: The Thousand Years.

1. In following the context of the past few chapters, it is clear that the main emphasis of this passage is the overthrow of Satan, not the thousand year reign. The three enemies of Christ and his church are Satan, the two beasts [these two beasts were a team], and the harlot. The overthrow of the harlot is described in chapter 18; the two beasts are defeated in chapter 19; Satan is overcome in the vision of this chapter.
2. Verses 1-3: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."
 - a. Some writers identify the angel of this passage as Christ; but he does not appear anywhere else in the book as an angel. In Revelation, the angels are his servants. He is presented as the Lamb of God and the King of kings. However, the identity of the "angel" is not of primary importance. He had the key to the bottomless pit [the abyss—ASV] and a great chain with which to bind Satan. He laid hold on the devil, bound him a thousand years (with the great chain), cast him into the bottomless pit, shut him up, and set a seal upon the abyss. This angel may be the same one as in Revelation 9:1-3: "And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power."
 - b. The key to the abyss is not a literal key, but symbolizes the authority and power to do the job at hand. The "keys of the kingdom" given the apostles (Matt. 16:18; 18:18; 19:28; Acts 2) represented the authority and power for them to deliver the gospel.
 - 1) Matthew 16:19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 3) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
 - 4) Acts 1:5: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
 - 5) Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part

- of the earth."
- 6) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 7) Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- c. The "bottomless pit" [the abyss] is not literal, for literally there is no such thing as a bottomless pit; the ASV translates it as "abyss." This was the place the demons in the swine dreaded (Luke 8:31), but which was their appointed place. A bottomless pit on the earth would be a tunnel all the way through.
- 1) Luke 8:31: "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep."
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."
 - 3) The abyss was sealed in order to place a limit on the devil; it was not for the purpose of punishment; the penalty he must pay comes later (verse 10). The tomb of Jesus was sealed to prevent anyone from entering and taking the body (Matt. 27:66). The sealing up of Satan in the abyss was symbolic of the limitations placed on him: "that he should deceive the nations no more." The sealing and binding were to be for a thousand years.
 - 4) Christ is said to have been in the "deep" [the abyss, hades] during the time his body was in the tomb: "Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead)" (Rom. 10:7). Between his death and his resurrection the Lord's body was in the tomb and his spirit was in Paradise.
- d. The great chain is certainly not a literal chain, for Satan, a spirit being, cannot be bound with a material chain. The chain is no more literal than are the key and pit.
- e. Satan is identified by four terms.
- 1) Devil—accuser, slanderer.
 - 2) Satan—adversary.
 - 3) That old serpent: in this guise he appeared to Eve (Gen. 3). This term emphasizes his subtilty: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:3).
 - 4) Dragon: illustrates his strength and ferocity: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).
- f. The "one thousand years" is used symbolically as are other numbers in Revelation. It represents a complete but undetermined length of time; a full period of time. Satan will be restricted for the full amount of time determined by God. "Thousand" is used in this very sense many times in the Bible.
- 1) Deuteronomy 7:9: "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." This does not mean that God will be true and merciful to the obedient only for a literal one thousand generations, but rather for all time and for every such generation.
 - 2) Job 9:3: "If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand." This does not mean that on the one thousand and first try man can answer God. Compare: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness" (Job 33:23).
 - 3) Psalms 50:10: "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." This does not mean that God owns only the cattle on a literal one thousand hills, but that he owns them all, wherever they may be. If literal, which are the one thousand hills? Which hills are not included?
 - 4) Psalms 90:4: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night." Thousand is here used to represent God's view of time; it does not matter how much

- time passes, God will fulfill his threats and promises: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:8-10).
- 5) Ecclesiastes 6:6: "Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?"
 - 6) Ecclesiastes 7:28: "Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found."
 - 7) Revelation 5:11: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands."
- g. The devil is to be bound for one thousand years. He is to be restricted [bound] for a thousand years—for a long and undetermined (from our viewpoint only; God knows for how long) period of time. For this period of time he will be limited in power; for that full amount of time he will be under limitation. But this binding of Satan does not make him absolutely helpless. Jesus was bound and led away to the high priest (John 18:12-13). Though he was bound, yet he could still walk and speak.
- 1) This word [bound] is the same word in the Greek text. It is used literally in Acts 22:5 and figuratively elsewhere to describe the binding together of husband and wife.
 - a) Romans 7:2: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."
 - b) 1 Corinthians 7:27: "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife."
 - c) 1 Corinthians 7:39: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."
 - 2) We tie up a dog but he still has some movement possible. The Devil is bound today but still has power to act.
 - 3) When the Lord came and for some years afterward, Satan had power to overwhelm his victims by sending evil spirits [demons] to take them over. The victim had little or no choice:
 - a) Mark 9:14-29: "And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him. And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me. And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."
 - b) Luke 9:37-43: "And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I

beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God....”

- c) After the miraculous work of the first century was completed, the demons were all cast out; the devil has no power today to take over anyone as he once did; he is still “bound” in this sense.
- Matthew 12:29: "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."
 - Mark 3:27: "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house."
 - Luke 10:17-18: "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven."
 - John 12:31: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out."
 - Ephesians 4:8: "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."
 - Colossians 2:15: "And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."
 - Hebrews 2:14-15: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."
 - 1 John 3:8: "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."
- 4) During the first century and until the Roman Empire began to be weakened, paganism reigned supreme in the world. Pagans worshipped idols of all sorts; this was the preeminent religion and was followed by nearly everyone in the far-flung Roman Empire. With the great success of the gospel, paganism declined and was rejected by many. Satan had controlled the nations through false religion for a long time. And he used his power over the nations and their paganism to bring severe persecution against God’s people. The back of paganism was broken when the Empire fell. Thus, Satan is “bound” also in the sense that he no longer controls the nations to the extent of bringing their full power against the church in persecution as he once did. His binding restricts him from deceiving the nations any more. “The passage says nothing about Satan’s influence over individuals. He still remains the subtle ‘serpent’ (II Cor. 11:3), the ‘angel of light’ (v. 14), and the ‘roaring lion’ (1 Peter 5:8). He can still devour individuals, but he is restricted from controlling nations. In what way? He cannot, while bound, instigate a worldwide persecution against the church. We can know that this is what the binding means because this is what Satan does as soon as he is ‘loosed’ (vs. 3,7). He will then ‘deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth’ into laying siege to ‘the camp of the saints’ (vs. 8-9)” (Workman, SS Lectures, p.527).
- 5) He has power over us personally today only to the extent we allow him. We have the power to resist the devil and cause him to flee from us: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (Jas 4:7).
- 6) He is to be loosed for a little season: his confinement in the abyss is not final; when the appointed time comes he will be loosed for a little time: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea" (Rev. 20:7-8).
- h. Hailey gives this summary of some significant events in the book:

- 1) 'The holy city was to be trodden under foot 42 months (11:2). [Forty-two months times thirty days equals twelve hundred and sixty days; it is the same as three and one half years].
 - 2) The two witnesses were to prophesy under persecution for 1260 days (11:3).
 - 3) The radiant woman was to be protected in the wilderness for 1260 days (12:6,14).
 - 4) The beast with authority to persecute and blaspheme would do his unholy work for forty-two months (13:5; cf. Dan 7:25).
 - 5) This period was the same for each and was interpreted to be the period of Roman persecution. In two previous visions, God told the saints under the altar that they should rest for a little time until other saints were martyred, and after his casting down, Satan would know he had but a short time (Rev. 12:12).
 - 6) The time period (three and one half years, the little time of the martyrs, and the devil's short time) are the same and are now fulfilled. The Roman persecution as it backed paganism is at an end; the devil is cast into the abyss, no longer to deceive the nations as once he did; the saints' death for the Word of God is avenged and vindicated as they now sit upon thrones, reigning with Christ (verses 4-6). This leads to the conclusion that the thousand years symbolizes that period of victory beginning with Constantine, when Roman persecution ended, and continuing until some time before the Lord's return when Satan will be loosed from his present restraint (Hailey, p. 392).
3. Verses 4-6: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
- a. The devil was bound; the martyrs were victorious. The picture given here would provide much consolation and encouragement to the beleaguered saints to whom John wrote.
 - b. In verse 4, John saw thrones and those who sat thereon; the ones on the thrones were those who had been beheaded for the Lord's cause; they had not received the beast's mark and had not worshipped the beast.
 - 1) Judgment was given unto them: reference is probably to the vindication and vengeance which came as a result of the confinement of the devil. In Revelation 18:20, judgment was meted out against the harlot which vindicated the saints; in chapter 19, this was also said with reference to the beast and false prophet.
 - 2) To those who wish to take this passage as literal, some problems arise: only those who had been beheaded sat on the thrones. And if the 1000 years is literal, then the "reigning" and the "living" are also literal. "They lived AND reigned with Christ a thousand years." Taken literally, when the thousands years are over, they will cease to **reign** and cease to **live**! What proves too much, proves nothing at all!
 - 3) Notice that John did not see bodies on the throne, but souls. The ASV indicates that two groups were on the thrones: those souls which had been beheaded and those who had not worshipped the beast; the KJV indicates only one group: "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Rev. 20:6, ASV). The ASV may simply be describing the same people in two different ways.
 - 4) These were reigning **with** Christ. The passage does not tell where the reigning occurred. It does not say that the reign is a literal, earthly reign. **We** are not considered in this passage. However, all faithful Christians "reign in life" by Christ (Rom. 5:17). But John is seeing a vision which shows the martyred (persecuted) saints of that age in a victorious scene; this was to give the saints hope. Since they were victorious, so shall all faithful saints be victorious. To those who overcome (remain faithful even unto death—Rev. 2:10), will Christ "grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21).

- c. Verses 5-6 speak of the first resurrection. This refers to the reign of the saints in verse 4, for verse six pronounces a blessing on those who take part in the first resurrection and says they shall reign with Christ a thousand years and shall be priests.
- 1) **One view of verses 1-6:** The thousand years represents the period of relative peace from the time Constantine gave Christianity a favorable standing with the government (about 325 A.D.) and continues until some time before the Lord's return; this period of relative peace for Christians will end when Satan is loosed for a "little season."
 - a) Only the martyred saints and those others who refused to worship the beast or receive his mark are included in the vision; indirectly all faithful saints are involved since we "reign in life" with Christ (Rom. 5:17). But only those who overcame (Rev. 2:11; 2:20; 3:21) are pictured on the thrones reigning with Christ. This period of peace is the first resurrection—the resurrection of the cause of Christ (it came through the persecution successfully and is victorious).
 - b) The binding of Satan is figurative; it was accomplished when the saints refused to submit to his trials, and thus overcame the persecution he hurled against them via the Roman Empire. During this time of peace, the saints will continue in some manner to be priests (as they were on earth—1 Peter 2:5,9).
 - c) In this view, these interpretations are made about the two deaths and two resurrections:
 - The first death (which is implied since there is a second death) is either physical death or the symbolic demise of Christianity under imperial persecution.
 - The second death (verse 6) is eternal separation from God in the lake of fire (verse 14); those who overcome have nothing to fear from the second death.
 - The first resurrection is the resurrection of the Cause of Christ following the great persecution. In Revelation 6:9-11, the saints are under the throne, crying to God: "How long, O Lord?" In Revelation 20, they are enthroned.
 - The second resurrection (implied) is the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time.
 - 2) **Another view of verses 1-6** [Workman, Stearsman]: The one thousand years is equal to the Christian Age. The time of the thousand year reign is the same as the time when Satan is bound.
 - a) Those who reign include each faithful Christian who is dead; they reign with Christ in the spirit world in a place called Paradise; they are with Christ there, and will come with him at his second advent (cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18).
 - b) Those who reign are "disembodied souls." These reigning saints overcame the trials and temptations of life (Rev. 2:26; 3:21), and have nothing to fear from the second death (which is eternal condemnation—Rev. 20:14; 2:11).
 - c) Near the end of time, Satan will be loosed for a little season, at which time he will again deceive the nations. This period is described in verses 7-11.
 - d) In the passage, there are two deaths and two resurrection.
 - The first death [implied] is physical.
 - The second death is eternal punishment in Gehenna.
 - The first resurrection is the New Birth.
 - The second resurrection is the general resurrection of all the dead (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
 - e) The "rest of the dead" are the followers of Satan; their cause will not be resurrected until their master is loosed for the "little season" (Hailey, Summers).
4. Verses 7-10: "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."
- a. At the end of the thousand years, Satan is to be released from his prison. He will be allowed to deceive

the nations again; he would gather his forces against the camp of the saints to fight against them; but fire would come from God to devour their enemy. Then the devil will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night forever; his companions will be the beast and false prophet. The following are two views of this passage.

b. One view:

- 1) The time of the beast's triumph (Rev. 12:12; 13:5) was short, so the time of the devil's release will be short in comparison to the period of victory which the saints receive (Rev. 20:3). By their faithfulness they bound Satan; when this spirit of loyal devotion to God no longer distinguishes God's people, the devil is loosed. He relied on one great power (Rome), but now gathers his forces from the four quarters of the earth; his host is numberless in this latter situation. This is not the battle of Revelation 16:14-16. It is the same war, but a different battle.
- 2) Gog and Magog (see Ezekiel 38-39). Some theorists assert that this has reference to a battle to be fought between the USSR and the USA in Palestine [this whole idea is bankrupt, especially now that the USSR is no more!]. But Ezekiel 38:17 identifies Gog and Magog as the enemies which God brought against Israel; Gog and Magog are symbolic of the heathen enemies of Israel from the time of the prophets to the Roman Empire. God had predicted through the prophets the coming of Gog and Magog, but did not name these enemies by that name; thus they are simply the various heathen enemies of God's people in the ancient days.
- 3) The battle indicated is spiritual and moral in nature, not physical. "Satan's Gog and Magog symbolize such forces and agencies as atheism, humanism, communism, materialism, astrology, and all manner of false and perverted religions. Gog and Magog also represent such forces as anarchy (rebellion against all principles and standards of truth); corruption in government and business; immorality with its decay of the home, lack at natural affection and devotion to children; sodomy; alcoholism; and total abandonment to a base and sordid life of the flesh. Satan will use the anti-God, immoral standards and practices that he is using today, but probably to a more intense and flagrant degree. Gog and Magog do not gather around a conference table and offer themselves to the devil...but being deceived, they are drawn to him as were the kings of old" (Hailey, p. 397).
- 4) Verse 9: "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." "But as God brought Ezekiel's Gog and Magog to an end by his judgment, so he brings this last enemy to an end. Whenever and wherever the battle and whatever be the nature of its enemies, the church can be assured that in all ages and at all times God will fight for his own and give them victory" (Hailey, p.398).
- 5) Verse 10: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." The devil, man's enemy from the beginning, now reaches his final doom. He was first cast out into the earth (12:9); then put into the abyss (20:3); now he is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, his ultimate end (Hailey).

c. Another view:

- 1) Nothing is more clearly stated in this chapter than the fact that the loosing of Satan occurs after the one thousand years have ended (verse 7). No one knows how long this symbolic period will last.
- 2) The duration of the loosing will be only for a "little time" or "a little season." In comparison to the "1000 years," it will be brief. "Whereas the symbolic 1,000 years of the binding signifies the bulk of the time between the Lord's first and second comings, the loosing signals the onset of a final conflict just before the end of the world" (Workman). [However, if this conflict is discernable, would not this be a "sign" of the Lord's coming? Our Lord pointed out that there would be no sign by which we could identify the nearing of his second coming—Matthew 24:36; Mark 13:32-33]. In response, it might be said that the assault against righteousness and truth would be so general and widely spread that its power might be apparent only to a discerning eye, and not by the average man of the world—and even that would not identify the time of the Lord's Second Coming. Through the past 2000 years, sin and trouble have been common; another episode would not necessarily stand out from past cases.
 - a) Matthew 24:36: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but

my Father only."

- b) Mark 13:32-33: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is."
- 3) On being loosed, Satan will be relieved from the restriction against deceiving the nations; he will marshal his forces against the church.
- 4) "Magog was one of the sons of Japheth and a grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:2); two other sons of Japheth were Meshech and Tubal (Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5). Many centuries later, Ezekiel uttered a prophecy against an enemy of Israel—a certain Gog who came from the land of Magog and was the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (Ezek. 38-39), obviously the same lineage. The apostle John was inspired to utilize the Old Testament names of Gog and Magog in an extended sense. Here they represent, not some specific nations (like Russia and China), but the wicked world in general....In no clearer way could John convey the fact that this last-ditch stand of Satan involves the whole world" (Workman, pp.207f).
- 5) The reference to the camp, the beloved city, describes the city God has prepared for his people (Heb 11:10; Gal. 4:26; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 12:22). The "beloved city" refers to the church on earth in terms of its ultimate heavenly fulfillment (cf. Rev. 3:12; 21:2).
- 6) "The reason no battle is pictured in these passages...is because the two sides fight on different planes" (Workman).
 - a) John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - b) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - c) Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
 - d) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

C. Revelation 20:11-15: The Final Judgment.

1. Verse 11: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them."
 - a. The throne depicted is that which belongs to God. A very glorious and awesome sight is presented so that heaven and earth fled away. The Bible speaks of four different heavens: the eternal abode of God; the third heaven (Paradise—where the righteous dead await the resurrection in the Hadean realm); the place where the sun, moon, and stars operate; and the atmosphere where birds fly. The earth and its atmosphere, and outer space with its heavenly bodies, will cease to exist at the return of Christ.
 - 1) The atmosphere where the birds fly is called heaven:
 - a) Genesis 1:20: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."
 - b) Matthew 6:26: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"
 - 2) Outer space where the stars, the sun, and the moon are, is called heaven:
 - a) Genesis 1:14: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years."
 - b) Genesis 15:5: "And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be."
 - c) Genesis 17:7: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

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- 3) Paradise, where the blessed reside in the Hadean Realm, is called the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2,4). Following the deaths of Jesus and the penitent thief, they were together in Paradise (Luke 23:43). However, after his resurrection, the Lord told Mary Magdalene that he had not yet ascended to his Father (John 20:17). During the time his body was in the tomb, he was in Paradise but he was not in heaven, where God dwells. This must be the place where Paul was in the scene he is depicting.
 - a) 2 Corinthians 12:2,4: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven....How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
 - b) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 - c) John 20:17: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."
 - 4) The dwelling place of the Almighty, the eternal home of the saved, is called heaven:
 - a) Matthew 6:9: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."
 - b) 1 Kings 8:30: "And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive."
 - b. "As the islands had vanished or disappeared from the divine presence at the pouring out of the seventh bowl (16:20), so now both earth and heaven flee from his face as he appears to judge, 'and there was found no place for them.' It has been abundantly foretold that heaven and earth will pass away....John sees this taking place at the coming of Christ in judgment, as the present order passes away" (Hailey, p.400).
 - 1) Genesis 8:22: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."
 - 2) Psalms 102:25-27: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."
 - 3) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:10-12: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - c. Other passages speak of the destruction of the earth and material things:
 - 1) Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - 3) Colossians 3:1-2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."
 - 4) 1 John 2:17: "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."
 - 5) Revelation 21:1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."
 2. Verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and
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another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."

- a. This scene follows the resurrection of all the dead, the changing of all living men, and the destruction of the earth and universe. It is then that all shall be gathered before the great judgment throne.
 - b. Books were opened. Compare: "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened" (Dan. 7:10). Daniel is describing the judgment of one of the beasts he has portrayed.
 - 1) The Lord said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:48-50).
 - 2) The word of God will be the standard by which we shall be then judged in the last Judgment. Those who lived under the Patriarch Age will be judged according to the standard then in effect during their lifetimes; those who lived under the Law of Moses will be judged by the standard of that Law; those living on this side of the cross will be judged by the law of the gospel. Thus, "books" (plural) were opened.
 - c. The Book of Life.
 - 1) This is referred to many times in the Bible:
 - a) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - b) Psalms 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."
 - c) Isaiah 4:3: "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem."
 - d) Malachi 3:16: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name."
 - e) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - f) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."
 - g) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - h) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - i) Revelation 17:8: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."
 - j) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - 2) It contains God's roll of the faithful who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and have continued "in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23).
 - d. The dead were judged by the things written in the books according to their works.
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- 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 3) Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - 4) Each destiny is precisely the same in length of time—never-ending! "And these shall go away into **everlasting** punishment: but the righteous into life **eternal**" (Matt. 25:46). The same Greek word is used for both of these English words.
3. Verse 13: "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."
 - a. Even those who were lost at sea will not be overlooked by God; all those who died at sea will be in the judgment. "Because of the Jewish emphasis on proper burial of the dead and fear of possible calamity if this was not done, some have concluded that John speaks of the literal sea. According to this view, the seer is emphasizing the fact that even the sea gives up its dead; these are not lost to God's sight" (Hailey, p.402). Hailey's view is that "sea" is a symbolic reference to the great mass of humanity—whenever and wherever they lived on earth. Since the passage speaks of the resurrection and Judgment, we take the sea to be literal—that every person who ever lived on earth will be in the Judgment, no matter where he died.
 - b. Death and hades will deliver all they have swallowed up. Not one will be absent! Not a single person will be retained in hades; death will not be able to retain its control over the dead; every dead person will be resurrected to face the Judgment. All who have died will be there; and all who are alive at the Lord's return will be there; our Lord is the Judge of all: "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:42). Death removes souls from earth and places them in hades. Death and hades are personified; they work as partners, in the view described.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:50-53: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 4. Verse 14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
 - a. Death and hades are associated in the book of Revelation: "And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth" (Rev. 6:8). Death and hades are cast into Gehenna—forever banished from our lives and future.
 - b. Death is the last enemy to be overcome: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:26).
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- c. The second death is here described as the lake of fire.
 - 1) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
 - d. Death is pictured in the Bible as separation.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - e. Definitions of the Greek term for Death:
 - 1) Vine: It is used in Scripture of:
 - a) The separation of the soul (the spiritual part of man) from the body (the material part), the latter ceasing to function and turning to dust, e. g., John 11:13; Heb 2:15; 5:7; 7:23. In Heb 9:15, the KJV, "by means of death" is inadequate; the RV, "a death having taken place" is in keeping with the subject. In Rev 13:3,12, the RV, "death-stroke" (KJV, "deadly wound") is, lit., "the stroke of death."
 - b) The separation of man from God; Adam died on the day he disobeyed God. "Death" is the opposite of life; it never denotes nonexistence. As spiritual life is "conscious existence in communion with God," so spiritual "death" is "conscious existence in separation from God."
 - 2) Thayer:
 - a) Properly, the death of the body, i. e., that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended: John 11:4.
 - b) Metaphorically, the loss of that life which alone is worthy of the name, 2 Cor 3:7.
 - c) The miserable state of the wicked dead in hell is called—now simply thanatos, Rom 1:32.
 - d) In the widest sense, death comprises all the miseries arising from sin, as well physical death as the loss of a life consecrated to God and blessed in him on earth [Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database, © 2000 by BibleSoft].
 - 5. Verse 15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - a. Those whose names are not recorded in the book of life will be cast into this same lake of fire, and shall suffer the second death—eternal separation from God.
 - b. How important it is to be a Christian!
 - c. How important it is to live according to the will of God!
 - d. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
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REVELATION 21

The Glory of the New Heaven and New Earth

A. Revelation 21:1-2: The New Heaven and Earth.

1. Verse 1: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."
 - a. The Bible does not teach the sectarian doctrine of a renovated earth. It does teach that at the return of Christ, the material earth and universe will be destroyed.
 - 1) Genesis 8:22: "**While the earth remaineth**, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." [The passage clearly implies that the time will come when the earth will no longer remain].
 - 2) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The Lord bluntly stated that heaven and earth will cease to exist. There are four heavens identified in the Scriptures:
 - a) The atmosphere where the birds fly is called heaven (Gen. 1:20; cf. Mt. 6:26). This will be destroyed when the Lord returns (2 Pet. 3:10-11).
 - b) Outer space where the stars, the sun, and the moon are, is called heaven (Gen. 1:14; 15:5; 17:7). This will also be destroyed at the Second Coming (2 Pet. 3:10-11).
 - c) Paradise, where the blessed reside in the Hadean Realm, is called the third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2,4). Following the deaths of Jesus and the penitent thief, they were together in Paradise (Luke 23:43). However, after his resurrection, the Lord told Mary Magdalene that he had not yet ascended to his Father (John 20:17). During the time his body was in the tomb, he was in Paradise but he was not in heaven, where God dwells. This must be the place where Paul was in the scene he depicts (2 Cor. 12:1ff). Paradise is part of the Hadean Realm (place of the unseen dead); Hades will be emptied of all its inhabitants by the resurrection.
 - d) The dwelling place of the Almighty, the eternal home of the saved, is called heaven (Matt. 6:9; 1 Kings 8:30).
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:8-13: "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."
 - b. The reference to the new heaven and earth in this text must be an expression describing heaven, the home of the soul. This is the meaning of the similar expression in 2 Peter 3. There are two words in the New Testament translated **new** [kainos].
 - 1) One is prospective and indicates that which is young as opposed to that which is old; this word is neos.
 - 2) The other is retrospective and points to that which is fresh, in contrast to that which is worn out. This word is kainos. Peter and John used this latter word to describe the "new" heaven and earth. It describes something new in quality, of a different nature from what is contrasted as old. Kainos is used to describe the new tongues (Mark 16:17); these languages were new to the speakers who had never before used them. Kainos is used to describe the "new" covenant (Matt. 26:28). It is also used to describe the "new" creature (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - c. In Matthew 9: 17, both neos and kainos are used: "Neither do men put new [neos] wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new [neos] wine into new [kainos] bottles, and both are preserved" (Matt. 9:17). Here the new wine is recently

made wine, yet to ferment, expand, exert pressure and break the old and dried skins used for bottles. The new skins or bottles are new in quality, not like the old skins, but fresh and pliable, able to expand and fit for the new wine. The word *kainos* [new] is used to describe the tomb in which Jesus was buried (Matt. 27:60). This tomb was not necessarily freshly hewn from rock, but was new in the sense that it had never been used as a burial place.

- d. Peter and John speak of the new heaven and earth only in the sense of a new habitation for the saved, one prepared by the Lord and wherein dwells righteousness. It is a place new in quality, one that has never before been used by man.
 - 1) When the Lord spoke of the eternal abode of the redeemed, he described it as a place to which he would go; he would have to leave the earth in order to be there (John 14:1ff). He said he would prepare a place for us there. He left the earth (Acts 1:9-11) and ascended to heaven. Therefore, heaven will not be a renovated earth. He promised to return and to receive us in the air (1 Thess. 4:13-18), and that we will ever be with him. Thus, our eternal home is not on earth.
 - 2) The new heaven and earth will be a place where righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13). Revelation 21:27 teaches that no unrighteousness will be in heaven; Jesus stated that we are to pray that God's will might be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). His will is perfectly done in heaven—righteousness characterizes all who are there; but only those who will believe and obey the gospel are righteous on earth, a definite minority in every generation.
 - 3) We now live in an abode where our feet are upon earth but our heads are in heaven, where the birds fly. We now abide in heaven and earth [the home of the material body]; the new heaven and earth is but a figurative, symbolic description of heaven, the eternal home of the soul.
- e. There was no more sea. When the first heaven and earth passed away, so also did the sea, for the sea is part of the earth. It appears that another "sea" is meant. [See comments under Rev. 4:6]. The sea in that scene [Rev. 4:6] apparently describes the infinite distance between the holy God and sinful man. It can only be crossed by overcoming the trials and tribulations with which Christians are faced in this life. Passing through this sea mingled with fire (Rev. 15:2) is the process; and when this is done, the sea is no more (Rev. 21:1)—there will be no more suffering for the Savior; the ultimate victory will have been won.
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
 - 4) 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 - 5) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 6) Acts 14:22: "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 7) James 1:2-4: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
 - 8) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye

be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."

2. Verse 2: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."
 - a. The picture here gives more and closer details: it pictures heaven as the holy city (Heb 11:10; 13:14), new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
 - 1) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
 - b. One view of the new heaven and earth, and the holy city, is that this refers to heaven itself (as we affirmed in the above notes). Another view held by some today is that this description is of the church, after it came through the persecutions of the early centuries. But when the church came out of the period of Roman persecution, it went almost immediately, completely into apostasy. The description given here does not fit the facts, but there is a problem with the other view as well: if the new heaven and earth, and the holy city, new Jerusalem, describes heaven, why is it pictured as coming down out of heaven? Answer: this is apocalyptic language which depicts things that are literally impossible; symbolic language is used.
 - c. "In a series of visions beginning in chapter twelve, the seer beheld the birth of the man child; the assault on the church by the dragon's agents; the trials of the church; the waging of the great war; the destruction of the harlot city, the beast, and false prophet; the final conflict with Satan and his destruction; the passing of the present order; the final judgment of mankind; and the punishment of the wicked. From this arrangement of the visions it is logical that the next scene in order would portray the final glory of the church as it comes to rest with God, beyond time. This appears to be the design of the revelation before us. Heaven could be no more than is revealed symbolically in this picture of perfect fellowship with God, safety, security, and abundance in the glorious city described by everything that is precious and priceless" (Hailey, p.404).
 - d. The picture presented gives us a wonderful view of heaven and the eternal life awaiting us there (Rev. 21-22).

B. Revelation 21:3-8: The Great Voice Speaks.

1. Verse 3: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."
 - a. The identity of the great voice from heaven is not identified, although the things spoken later in verse 6 indicate it to be the Father or the Son. But in this verse God is spoken of in the third person, indicating the speaker is not the Father. Whoever the speaker may be, what is spoken is the will of God. What is said here is truly uplifting—God is going to be with his people. There is a sense that he is with us now (2 Cor. 6:14-18), but in heaven that association will be on a more direct and personal plane.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

- Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."
- 2) Acts 2:41-47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
- b. "People" is in the plural in the Greek, emphasizing the varied earthly backgrounds of the saints.
 - 1) Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - 2) Luke 24:46-49: "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - 3) Acts 8:1,4: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 2. Verse 4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 - a. This is one of the great passages of the New Testament dealing with a description of heaven and the quality of life we will enjoy there. We are given a list of five negatives following the affirmation that God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. We need not be concerned as to how God will wipe away all tears. That he is able to do so is sufficient to all those who believe God means what he says and trust him to fulfill all his promises.
 - b. **No more death:** since all who will abide there will have incorruptible, immortal, spiritual bodies, death will not have any effect. Indeed, following the Lord's return, death will be utterly abolished (1 Cor. 15:25-28; Heb. 2:14). Death is the cause of much of the sorrow that we experience here; but in the long view, it is in the best interest of mankind. Without death, the wicked would only grow more wicked, the sick would become sicker, the pain would only grow more intense—with no relief possible; and for faithful Christians, it is the doorway through which we must pass in order to obtain eternal life in heaven.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 15:25-28: "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."
 - c. **No more sorrow.**
 - 1) There are many causes for sorrow in this life: death of a loved one; sickness; financial problems;

accidents; war; separation; marital difficulties; social dilemmas.

2) All of these will be totally absent from heaven!

d. **No more crying.**

1) "No Tears In Heaven" is the scriptural title for a beautiful and encouraging hymn.

"No tears in heaven, no sorrow given, All will be glory in that land;

There'll be no sadness, all will be gladness; When we shall join that happy band.

Glory is waiting, waiting up yonder, Where we shall spend an endless day;

There with our Savior, we'll be forever, Where no more sorrow can dismay.

Some morning yonder, we'll cease to ponder, O'er things this life has brought to view;

All will be clearer, saved ones be dearer, In heav'n where all will be made new.

No tears in heaven, no tears, no tears up there; Sorrow and pain will all have flown

No tears in heaven, no tears, no tears up there; No tears in heaven will be known"

[Robert S. Arnold]

2) There will be nothing to cause us to cry there.

e. **No more pain.**

1) Many people live in constant pain in their diseased or maimed physical bodies, but in heaven we will receive perfect, spiritual bodies which will not be subject to pain.

2) 2 Corinthians 5:1-10: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

3) Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

4) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

5) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

f. **The former things are passed away.**

1) The earthly conditions which were painful, hard, and dangerous will not be allowed in heaven: they will have passed away.

2) Sin, the root cause of grief, pain, death, etc., will have been destroyed.

3. Verse 5: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

a. Identifying the speaker is not important in order to understand what is said. The intention of God is that all things are to be made new (from kainos). Heaven will be a far better place than earth, though

there are many beautiful and wonderful things about our present abode. Heaven far surpasses the earth in grandeur and blessings.

- 1) John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - 2) Hebrews 11:10: "For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:14: "For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."
- b. John is instructed to record these things—for these words are faithful and true!
4. Verse 6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
 - a. So sure are the promises and purposes of God that he can speak of their fulfillment, though still in the future, as being already accomplished. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:8-14).
 - b. The Lord states: I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end—this is given in reference to both the father and Son (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; Rev. 22:13,16; 1:10-18). The Bible teaches that both God and Christ are eternal, divine beings, as is also the Holy Spirit.
 - 1) Isaiah 41:4: "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he."
 - 2) Isaiah 43:10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."
 - 3) Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."
 - 4) Revelation 1:10-18: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.... And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - 5) Revelation 22:13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."
 - c. Christ promised life-sustaining spiritual water.
 - 1) John 4:10: "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."
 - 2) John 4:13-14: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."
 - 3) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - 4) Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

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- 5) "Nothing will be lacking in the complete fullness and realization of all spiritual desires of the glorified soul in heaven" (Hailey, p.408).
5. Verse 7: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."
- a. Rewards of overcoming are mentioned in each of the seven letters:
- 1) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."
 - 2) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 3) Revelation 2:17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."
 - 4) Revelation 2:26: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."
 - 5) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 6) Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."
 - 7) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
- b. Christ overcame and received his reward:
- 1) Hebrews 12:1-3: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."
 - 2) Revelation 3:21: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."
 - 3) Revelation 5:5: "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."
- c. His reward was in heaven; our ultimate reward will be in heaven, but first we must overcome—be faithful to Christ even if our lives must be sacrificed.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
- d. We will inherit all things (these things, ASV) if we "overcome."
- 1) Matthew 19:29: "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."
 - 2) Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"
 - 3) Ephesians 1:14: "Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
 - 4) Hebrews 1:4: "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (cf. Rev. 3:21).
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his
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abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

- 6) 1 Peter 3:9: "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."
- 7) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- e. He will be our God, and we will be his child. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:1-3). This hope is fully realized in heaven, not on earth.
6. Verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." [While those who are faithful are to receive the glorious blessings named above, the ones named in this verse are headed for an entirely different destiny].
 - a. The **fearful** [delios: the cowardly and the timid; the word is never used in a good sense in the New Testament]. These are those who shrink back and are unwilling to pay the costs of discipleship. In these God is not pleased: "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:38-39). There is no room in the Lord's army for cowards. Fearfulness is placed at the beginning of this list of unacceptable practices; virtue (courage) is placed first in the list of graces to be developed (2 Pet. 1:5). The word delios is used in these verses:
 - 1) Matthew 8:26: "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm."
 - 2) John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."
 - b. The **unbelieving** [see Luke 12:46; 1 Cor. 6:6; 2 Cor. 6:14]. This term includes those who have betrayed the trust committed to them (Hailey, p.409), as well as the aliens who do not believe the gospel. A Christian becomes an unbeliever when his life and conduct are contrary to the gospel.
 - 1) Luke 12:46: "The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:6: "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 6:14: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
 - c. The **abominable**: those who are morally or spiritually foul; a person whose life is disgusting in the Lord's sight: Compare Revelation 17:4: "And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations

and filthiness of her fornication." "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be abomination" (Prov. 28:9). This includes anyone who does not follow God's word.

- 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- d. **Murderers**: those who take another's life willfully and maliciously. This has always been considered punishable by severe penalties—by the Lord and by man.
- 1) Genesis 9:6: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
 - 2) Exodus 21:12: "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death."
 - 3) Romans 13:4: "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."
- e. **Fornicators** (whoremongers): those who are sexually immoral. This was a very common sin in the first century, and is becoming exceedingly prevalent in modern society. "Fornication" is the general classification for all sexual sins, including adultery, homosexuality, incest, etc. Many warnings are given regarding it in the New Testament.
- 1) Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 5:9-13: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."
 - 5) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 6) Ephesians 5:3-5: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean

person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."

- 7) Colossians 3:5-6: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."
- f. **Sorcerers:** a sorcerer is one who uses magical arts, especially a user of drugs, potions, spells, and enchantments to bring others under his power (Vine). Astrologers and prognosticators, peddlers of various narcotics, and false teachers who claim to have miraculous powers and thereby bring the unwary under their control, are no less sorcerers than those of John's day (Hailey).
 - 1) "The term sorcerer (Ex 7:11; Jer 27:9; etc.), from the Lat. sors, 'a lot,' 'one who throws or declares a lot,' would assign it initially the more circumscribed sphere of augural prognostication. But the term, as commonly employed, includes one who practices in the whole field of divinatory occultism. As such, it comprehends a necromancer, who may be classified as a certain type of sorcerer. Sorcery is the practice of the occult arts under the power of evil spirits, or demons, and has been common in all ages of the world's history" [New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois, © 1988].
 - 2) In commenting on "witchcraft" under Galatians 5:20, Barnes offered the following: "The apostle does not vouch for the actual existence of witchcraft; but he says that what was known as such was a proof of the corrupt nature of man [Barnes' Calvinistic total hereditary depravement doctrine is not true; however, by the practice of sin, individuals corrupt their souls], and was one of the fruits of it. No one can doubt it. It was a system of imposture and falsehood throughout; and nothing is a better demonstration of the depravity of the human heart than an extended and systematized attempt to impose on mankind. The word which is used here Formica (NT:5331), whence our word 'pharmacy,' from farmakon—a medicine, poison, magic potion) means, properly, the preparing and giving of medicine. Then it means also poisoning, and also magic art, or enchantment; because in savage nations pharmacy or medicine consisted much in magical incantations. Thence it means sorcery or enchantment, and it is so used uniformly in the New Testament. It is used only in Gal 5:20; Rev 9:21; 18:23; 21:8. Some have supposed that it means poisoning here, a crime often practiced; but the more correct interpretation is, to refer it to the black art, or to pretensions to witchcraft, and the numerous delusions which have grown out of it, as a striking illustration of the corrupt and depraved nature of man" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by BibleSoft].
- g. **Idolaters:** these are worshippers of false gods, whether visible or invisible.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 5:11: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 10:7: "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 10:21: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."
 - 5) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." [A covetous man is labeled an idolater because he worships mammon, the god of this world: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).
- h. **All liars:** those who practice deceit and falsehood. This sin can be done by speaking or by remaining silent; by deed or by intimation. The case of Ananias and his wife serves as a timeless and awesome warning against any degree of deceit (Acts 5:1-11).
- i. These shall all have their part in the lake of fire; this unending condemnation to the fiery pit is called the second death, for it is an eternal, painful separation from God.

C. Revelation 21:9-27: The Glory of the Eternal City.

1. Verses 9-10: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."
 - a. One of the seven angels, who had poured out his bowl of wrath, invited John to see the bride, the Lamb's wife. This appears to indicate that the city being described is not heaven, but the church. But it is the church in its heavenly habitation that is being considered. Verse 4 could only describe heaven; in no real sense could it refer to conditions in the church on earth because death still stalks us, tears still stain our cheeks, our hearts still ache with sorrow and loss, and pain still rakes our mortal bodies. What verse 4 describes, the remainder of the chapter also describes.
 - b. John is carried in the vision to a vantage point where he can observe and inspect the holy city, spiritual Jerusalem. Symbolic language is used throughout the picture given of heaven. One cannot literally climb a high mountain and see heaven; nor does heaven literally descend from heaven. John has already told of this city descending from God out of heaven (verses 1-2); here he is probably giving a more detailed account.
 2. Verses 11-14: "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."
 - a. While we consider his description of this spiritual city, we must keep in mind that he is using symbols to depict the beauty and majesty of heaven.
 - b. The glory of God fills the city, even as it filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), and the temple (1 Kings 8:11).
 - 1) Exodus 40:34: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."
 - 2) 1 Kings 8:11: "So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD."
 - c. The flawless jasper, as clear as crystal, describes the perfect illumination of this spiritual city.
 - d. Earthly cities in ancient days depended on the strength of their walls for protection from their enemies. So heaven, pictured as a city from the ancient setting, is shown to have a great wall and twelve gates. These gates bore the names of the twelve tribes. Entrance into the city is gained by means of these gates. Also, at each entrance is posted an angel, presumably to keep the unqualified from entering. Cherubims kept Adam and Eve from re-entering Eden: "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:24).
 - e. The wall had twelve foundation stones, and on these were the names of the twelve apostles. The gates bore the names of the twelve tribes; the names of the apostles were on the foundation stones; thus the Old and New Testament systems are combined in this holy city. Faithful people of the Old Testament and faithful Christians of the New Testament will be in heaven. Exactly which apostles are named on the stones is unimportant [Christ actually had thirteen apostles, including Paul].
 3. Verses 15-17: "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel."
 - a. The angel had a golden reed with which to measure the wall. Gold befits the splendor of this spiritual city. The size of the city is impressive.
 - b. The wall was 12,000 furlongs (1,500 miles in each direction; one furlong equals one-eighth of a mile). The city was foursquare—like a cube; it was therefore 1,500 miles in width, breadth, and height.
 - c. The wall was 144 cubits—one cubit was the distance between a man's elbow and the tip of the middle finger (18-21 inches). This was the measure men used, but here an angel is using it. The wall would be about 220 feet, probably in height; the city would tower above and inside the wall.
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4. Verses 18-21: "And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."
- a. The beauty of richness of the city staggers the imagination. This corresponds to the indescribable richness of the gospel and beauty of the Lord's church.
 - 1) Isaiah 64:4: "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 2:9: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."
 - b. Precious stones adorned the foundations of the wall. Some of these precious stones cannot be identified today. Eight of the stones were on the breastplate of the high priest: "And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this shall be the first row. And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be set in gold in their enclosings" (Ex. 28:17-20).
 - c. The twelve kinds of precious stones:
 - 1) Some scholars have thought that the jasper may be the diamond, the most precious of all stones. But Barnes says: "The jasper, properly, is 'an opaque, impure variety of quartz, of red, yellow, and also of some dull colors, breaking with a smooth surface. It admits of a high polish, and is used for vases, seals, snuff-boxes, etc. When the colors are in stripes or bands, it is called striped jasper' (Dana, in Webster's Dictionary). The color here is not designated, whether red or yellow. As the red was, however, the common color worn by princes, it is probable that that was the color that appeared, and that John means to say that he appeared like a prince in his royal robes" [Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database, © 1997 by Biblesoft].
 - 2) Sapphire is a stone having different shades of blue; it is second to the diamond in hardness. It is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament.
 - 3) Chalcedony [kal sed' n ee] is a green carbonate of copper found in the mines of Chalcedon, a Greek city on the Bosphorus, opposite Byzantium. "This word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. The stone referred to is an uncrystallized translucent variety of quartz, having a whitish color, and of a luster nearly like wax. It is found covering the sides of cavities, and is a deposit from filtrated silicious waters. When it is arranged in 'stripes,' it constitutes 'agate'; and if the stripes are horizontal, it is the 'onyx.' The modern 'carnelian' is a variety of this. The carnelian is of a deep flesh red, or reddishwhite color" (Barnes).
 - 4) Emerald: probably the same as the emerald of our day.
 - 5) Sardonyx: a kind of onyx; valued as a cameo setting. "This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. The 'name' is derived from 'Sardis,' a city in Asia Minor (notes on Rev 3:1), and [onux], a nail—so named, according to Pliny, from the resemblance of its color to the flesh and the nail. It is a silicious stone or gem, nearly allied to the onyx. The color is a reddish yellow, nearly orange (Webster, Dictionary)" [Barnes].
 - 6) Sardius: the identity is of this stone is uncertain. "This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is also derived from 'Sardis,' and the name was probably given to the gem because it was found there. It is a stone of a blood-red or flesh color, and is commonly known as a 'carnelian.' It is the same as the sardine stone mentioned in Rev 4:3" (Barnes).
 - 7) Chrysolite: "This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. It is derived from chrusos (NT:5557), 'gold,' and lithos (NT:3037), 'stone,' and means 'golden stone,' and was applied by the ancients to all gems of a golden or yellow color, probably designating particularly the topaz of the moderns (Robinson, Lexicon). But in Webster's Dictionary it is said that its prevalent color is green. It is sometimes transparent. This is the 'modern' chrysolite. The ancients undoubtedly understood by the name a 'yellow' gem" (Barnes).
 - 8) Beryl: sea-green in color; similar to the emerald. "This word occurs nowhere else in the New

Testament. The beryl is a mineral of great hardness, and is of a green or bluish-green color. It is identical with the emerald, except in the color, the emerald having a purer and richer green color, proceeding from a trace of oxide of chrome. Prisms of beryl are sometimes found nearly two feet in diameter in the state of New Hampshire (Webster)" [Barnes].

- 9) The last four:
 - a) Topaz: had green tints. "This word does not elsewhere occur in the New Testament. The topaz is a well-known mineral, said to be so called from 'Topazos,' a small island in the Arabian Gulf. It is generally of a yellowish color, and pellucid, but it is also found of greenish, bluish, or brownish shades" (Barnes).
 - b) Crysoprasus: akin to the beryl, but of a paler color. "This word chrusoprasos (NT:5556) does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is derived from chrusos (NT:5557), 'gold,' and prason (NT:4237), 'a leek,' and denotes a precious stone of greenish golden color, like a leek; that is, 'apple-green passing into a grass-green' (Robinson, Lexicon). 'It is a variety of quartz. It is commonly apple-green, and often extremely beautiful. It is translucent, or sometimes semi-transparent; its hardness little inferior to flint' (Webster, Dictionary)" (Barnes).
 - c) Jacinth: probably a sapphire, a precious stone of transparent rich blue color. "The word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is the same word as 'hyacinth'—huakinthos (NT:5192)—and denotes properly the well-known flower of that name, usually of a deep purple or reddish blue. Here it denotes a gem of this color. It is a red variety of 'zircon'" (Barnes).
 - d) Amethyst: wine-colored, purplish red stone. "This word, also, is found only in this place in the New Testament. It denotes a gem of a deep purple or violet color. The word is derived from a (NT:1), the alpha privative ('not'), and methuoo (NT:3184), to be intoxicated, because this gem was supposed to be an antidote against drunkenness. It is a species of quartz, and is used in jewelry" (Barnes).
5. Verse 21: "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."
 - a. Each gate was made of a great pearl. Pearls were especially valued by the people of ancient times. The street of the city was of pure gold. Different ideas have been advanced regarding the number of the street (s). One street seems out of proportion for such a large city.
 - b. Each gate would have a street which would probably connect to each other. The point of emphasis is the richness of the thoroughfare.
6. Verses 22-23: "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."
 - a. He turns to a description of the interior of the city proper now. The entire city is one grand temple (naos, sanctuary). There was no need for a special place set aside as a temple. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb constitute the temple. The glory that pertains to them fills the whole city; the inhabitants are never out of their glorious presence.
 - b. Under the Law, God's glory was represented by what the Jews called the Shekinah, which filled the tabernacle and temple; in the church, God's glory is represented by his Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16). In heaven, the glory of God is throughout the city, so that there is no need for a material sun or lamp.
7. Verses 24-26: "And the nations of them **which are saved** shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."
 - a. People of all nations will walk in the light of this glory; and kings will bring their glory into it. There will be none to challenge the glory of God there.
 - b. All enemies had been cast into the lake of fire, so there was no need for the gates to be closed; there is no night there. Only glory and honor are in the city—all dishonor and shame are on the outside.
8. Verse 27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 - a. Nothing that is defiled, polluted, or impure will be allowed in the city; no one shall enter who makes or does an abomination or lie; only those whose names were recorded in the Lamb's book of life will

be there. When one sincerely obeys the gospel of Christ, the pollutions of sin are removed from the soul by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5; Matt. 26:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-25; Acts 22:16). The obedient one then continues in his obedience to the Redeemer (1 John 1:7; Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:10). In the last day, therefore, an abundant entrance will be given to that pure one into the everlasting kingdom (2 Peter 1:3-11).

- 1) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 2) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:18-25: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 4) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - 5) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 6) 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - 7) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 8) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- b. "There the saints shall have no impure persons admitted among them. In the earthly Jerusalem there will be a mixed communion, after all the care that can be taken. Some roots of bitterness will spring up to trouble and defile Christian societies; but in the new Jerusalem there is a society perfectly pure. First, free from such as are openly profane. There are none admitted into heaven who work abominations. In the churches on earth sometimes abominable things are done, solemn ordinances profaned and prostituted to men openly vicious, for worldly ends; but no such abominations can have place in heaven. Secondly, free from hypocrites, such as make lies, say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie. These will creep into the churches of Christ on earth, and may lie concealed there a long time, perhaps all their days; but they cannot intrude into the new Jerusalem, which is wholly reserved for those that are called, and chosen, and faithful, who are all written, not only in the register of the visible church, but in the Lamb's book of life" [Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern

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- c. A master list of all the citizens of the Roman Empire was kept; it was most advantageous for one living then to be a citizen, which could be obtained by birth or by purchase. Being written in the Lamb's book of life is the ultimate need:
 - 1) Exodus 32:32-33: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
 - 2) Psalms 69:28: "Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."
 - 3) Luke 10:20: "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."
 - 4) Revelation 3:5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."
 - 5) Revelation 13:8: "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."
 - 6) Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - 7) Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - 8) Philippians 4:3: "And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellowlabourers, whose names are in the book of life."
 - d. "The terms and phrases and words describe the whole category of the moral and spiritual corruption of heathendom. The first chapter of Romans is an inspired commentary on the depths of degradation into which the heathen world had sunken by these practices because, said Paul, 'they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.' But these impurities of heathenism could gain no admission or entrance into the realm of the Lamb's Bride. The defiled could not enter, because the gospel removed all moral defilement. The paganistic abominations could not enter, for the gospel separated from all heathen idolatry. The deceivers who by making a lie had seduced the inhabitants of the earth into emperor-worship could not enter, for the gospel destroyed the doctrines of antichrist. Wherefore, only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life—whose names were entered into the registry of the New Jerusalem by 'doing his commandments' could 'enter in through the gates into the city'" (Foy. Wallace, *The Book of Revelation*, p.446).
 - e. Alien sinners cannot go directly into heaven; they must all pass through the Lord's kingdom (his church). The entrance requirements into the church removes all guilt; as the Christian then walks in the light of the gospel (1 John 1:7), he obtains the continual cleansing offered by the blood of Christ. At the last day, therefore, he will be invited to enter heaven, and enjoy the pleasures provided there by the benevolent God of Heaven. No one who is defiled by sin will be permitted to enter.
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What Must One Do To Be Saved?

The Ailen Sinner Must:	
Learn the truth	John 8:31-32; Rom. 10:17
Believe in Christ	John 8:24
Repent of his sins	Luke 24:47; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10
Confess his faith in Christ	Rom. 10:9-10
Be baptized into Christ	Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-4
The Child of God Must:	
Study the Word of God	2 Tim. 2:15
Grow spiritually	1 Pet. 2:1-2; 2 Pet. 1:5-11; 3:18
Worship regularly	Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:23-31
Live right in this present world	Titus 2:11-12
Be faithful unto death	Rev. 2:10; Matt. 10:22
The Erring Child of God Must:	
Repent and confess sins	Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-10
Pray for forgiveness	Acts 8:22; James 5:16

REVELATION 22

The Last Words Of Revelation

A. Revelation 22:1-5: Further Descriptions of New Jerusalem.

1. Verse 1: "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."
 - a. There is a close relationship between the first five verses of this chapter and chapter twenty-one. In these verses, John is looking at another aspect of the heavenly scene. The descriptions of heaven, what few there are in the Bible, depict it as pure, new, pleasant, beautiful, and unending. John sees here a pure river flowing with the water of life; it issues from the throne; it is clear as crystal. The picture is of constant purity and beauty.
 - b. For a similar scene, see Ezekiel 47:1-12: "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward: for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."
 - c. This is the first occurrence of the phrase "the throne of God and of the Lamb." The Kingdom belongs to both the Father and the Son: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).
 - d. This symbolic stream of life-giving water flows from the fountainhead of life—God. This water is not stagnant, but is alive (moving). "The allusion here is doubtless to the first Eden, where a river watered the garden (Gen 2:10, seq.), and as this is a description of Eden recovered, or Paradise regained, it was natural to introduce a river of water also, yet in such a way as to accord with the general description of that future abode of the redeemed. It does not spring up, therefore, from the ground, but flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. Perhaps, also, the writer had in his eye the description in Ezek 47:1-12, where a stream issues from under the temple, and is parted in different directions" (Barnes, *ibid.*).
 - e. "The chapter comprises the remainder of the description of the 'New Jerusalem'—the blessed abode of the saints (Rev 22:1-5), and then (Rev 22:6-21) the conclusion or epilogue of the whole book. It is difficult to conceive what induced the author of the division of the New Testament into chapters, to separate the first five verses of this chapter from the preceding chapter. A new chapter should have commenced at Rev 22:6; for the remainder properly comprises the conclusion of the whole book....In the New Jerusalem; the happy abode of the redeemed" (Barnes, *ibid.*).

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2. Verse 2: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." "In the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (ASV).
 - a. It is difficult to visualize the scene being described; perhaps the tree is in the middle of the street and is so broad that its limbs overhang both sides of the river, which is alongside the street. The "Tree of Life" is mentioned in Genesis 2:9 and 3:22, and refers to a certain life-sustaining tree planted in Eden.
 - 1) Genesis 2:9: "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."
 - 2) Genesis 3:22: "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."
 - b. Adam and Eve, by their sin, lost the tree of life for us all. But that which they lost is fully regained in Heaven. This heavenly tree of life bears twelve crops each year; there will be no shortages.
 3. Verse 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."
 - a. When sin entered the human race, a curse was placed on the serpent and upon the ground.
 - 1) Genesis 3:14: "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."
 - 2) Genesis 3:17: "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."
 - b. A curse was placed indirectly on Adam and Eve: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:16-19).
 - c. A later curse was pronounced upon Cain when he slew Abel: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand" (Gen. 4:11).
 - d. Other curses were given in Genesis 12:3, 27:29, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, and 28:15-68.
 - 1) Genesis 12:3: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
 - 2) Genesis 27:29: "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."
 - 3) Deuteronomy 27:15-26: "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen."
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- Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen."
- e. The curse of the Law was removed when Christ died on the cross: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). The curse of the law was in the fact that it identified sin but was unable to remove its guilt.
 - 1) Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - 2) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 3) Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - 4) Hebrews 10:1-4: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."
 - f. We will be under no curse in Heaven. The curse of sin's guilt is removed from those in Christ in this life.
 - 1) Zechariah 14:11: "And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:8-13: "For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."
 - 3) Hebrews 12:22: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels."
 - g. God's servants serve him imperfectly in this life, but in Heaven perfect service will be possible. The nature of this service we shall render in heaven is not revealed.
4. Verse 4: "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."
- a. No man has seen the face of God, but we have ever desired that privilege. This will be possible in Heaven.
 - 1) John 5:37: "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape."
 - 2) John 14:6-9: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"
 - 3) 1 Timothy 6:16: "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."
 - 4) 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but

we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

5) 1 John 4:12: "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

b. The name of God will be symbolically inscribed on our foreheads.

1) Revelation 3:12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name."

2) Compare:

a) Revelation 7:3: "Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads."

b) Revelation 14:1: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

5. Verse 5: "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

a. There will be no need of any natural or artificial light, but the glorious presence of deity will fully illuminate Heaven: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

b. "John repeats what was said earlier, that there is no need for lamp or sun....The thought has developed from walking in the midst of the light (21:24), to serving in the light (22:3), and now, to reigning in that light. The reign is now extended from the thousand years with him during this age (see 20:4), to a reign 'for ever and ever,' ages without end. These reigned with him upon the earth (5:10) and in life (Rom. 5:17); but this reign is one that is not limited by time. It shall not cease. Here is further evidence that Revelation 21:1—22:5 refers to the eternal glory, and not to the present age" (Hailey, p.424).

c. The reign in which we shall take part is not limited by time, but will be eternal.

B. Revelation 22:6-9: The Angel and John.

1. Verse 6: "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."

a. The angel, who had been identified in Revelation 21:9, and had shown John the awesome heavenly scene just described, again addresses the apostle. The information provided to John is affirmed to be faithful and true.

b. There are many teachings and assertions of men which are neither faithful nor true.

1) Joseph Smith wrote in 1832 that a temple would be built in Independence, Missouri, "in this generation." It was never done (Doctrines and Covenants, 84:25; 57:1-3; 101:17,20,70-74). [See ADL Lectures, pp.230-237].

2) Charles Taze Russell, the founder of the modern-day "Jehovah's Witness" movement, asserted that "the exact date of our Lord's return" would be in 1874. He was wrong, but despite what he called "the 1874 disappointment," he argued that Christ did return but was invisible; he claimed that Christ would become visible in 1914 at which time all earthly "governments will be dissolved." He died in 1916 and thus lived to be disappointed a second time (Studies in the Scriptures, III, 129,306; VII, 53, 11, 98-101) [ADL, *ibid.*].

3) Russell's successor, J.F. (Judge) Rutherford, claimed that in 1925 we would see "the return of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Millions Now Living Will Never Die, pp.88-90).

4) Another of Russell's successor, Nathan Homer Knorr, said the end of all earthly governments was to be in the fall of 1975, September 5. In 1974 he complimented those Jehovah's Witnesses who sold "their homes and property" to spend the short time remaining "before the wicked world's end" in evangelizing. This third debacle resulted in a 27 percent drop in membership among these so-called "witnesses." [ADL, 1984, p.231].

c. But God's word is faithful and true. In every instance in which sufficient evidence exists to verify or disprove some statement in the Bible, the Bible has always been faithful and true in its report. Prior to 1884, Ur of Chaldees was known only by biblical references; today, baked yellow mud bricks have been found with the name of Ur inscribed thereon, and the city itself has been found and excavated.

Before "1898 critics disbelieved that there was a king in Babylon called Belshazzar, for historians gave the name of another king reigning at Babylon at the same time. But archaeology has raised Belshazzar from non-existence, finding he reigned with his father. Daniel's words are 'faithful and true'" (Hugo McCord, ADL, p.233).

- d. The events and situations described in Revelation are again said to be in the near future to that time. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1). In a short time, the events of the book would begin to take place. This did not mean that the end of the world was then at hand.
2. Verse 7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
 - a. These words are spoken from the viewpoint of Christ: he will come swiftly. The Bible elsewhere describes the coming of Christ as being sudden, unannounced, as a thief in the night.
 - 1) Matthew 24:36-39: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."
 - 2) Matthew 24:42-44: "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."
 - 3) Mark 13:32-37: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - b. A blessing is announced for those who keep the sayings of this book. Obedience is blessed and disobedience is punished. This is the sixth of the seven beatitudes of Revelation:
 - 1) Revelation 1:3: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."
 - 2) Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - 3) Revelation 16:15: "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."
 - 4) Revelation 19:9: "And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

- 6) Revelation 22:7: "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."
- 7) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- 3. Verses 8-9: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God."
 - a. When John had seen and heard these things, he was so overwhelmed that he fell down before the angel who showed him these things. This was a natural reaction, but should not have been done. The angel reproved him for trying to offer this worship. The angel identified himself as a fellow-servant with John of the God of Heaven. He was not worthy of being worshipped. He instructed John to direct his worship to God.
 - b. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." There are many who seek the adoration and praise of man. The word "reverend" means "worthy of reverence; deserving to be revered." The term is used only once in the Bible, and that is in reference to God: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name" (Ps. 111:9). A strong warning is given, to those who would follow the Lord, against exalting themselves above their brethren: "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:8-11).

C. Revelation 22:10-21: The Last Words of Jesus.

- 1. Verse 10: "And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."
 - a. It is difficult to identify the speaker in every instance in this chapter; in some verses the identity is clearly Christ; in others it appears to be the angel; but in each case the will of the Lord is being expressed. What any inspired messenger said, or wrote in the Bible, is from God.
 - b. Seal not up the sayings. A "sealed" book is one beyond human comprehension (cf. Rev. 5:1-5). John was told to seal up the things uttered by the voice of the seven thunders (Rev. 10:4), so we cannot learn what was said there.
 - c. Daniel was told to shut up the vision he had seen and words he had heard, for they pertained to the end of Israelite history.
 - 1) Daniel 8:26: "And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days."
 - 2) Daniel 10:14: "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."
 - 3) Daniel 12:4: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."
 - 4) Daniel 12:9: "And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 12:2-4: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
 - 6) Exodus 23:2: "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to turn aside after a multitude to wrest justice" (ASV).
 - d. But John is told not to seal up these matters, "For the time is at hand." The main events of Revelation, therefore, were not in the far distant future, but lay in the immediate future for our brethren of the first century.
 - e. With the exception of those visions clearly depicting conditions and events which are to be after time is no more, the visions beginning in chapter four were "shortly" to come to pass.

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2. Verses 11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
- a. The speaker of verse ten continues. Society is divided into two groups: the holy and the unholy; the righteous and the unrighteous; the saved and the lost. In John 3, these distinctions are placed on the two divisions of humanity: believers and unbelievers (vs. 18); those who love light or darkness (vs. 19); those who do truth and those who do evil (verses 20-21). Each individual chooses the group to which he belongs. His actions grow out of the basic character he develops; the type character one develops is determined by the information he learns and believes. There is no standing still in spiritual status.
 - 1) Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."
 - 3) Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - 4) Matthew 13:15: "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - b. In eternity, the kind of character one possesses will be the same kind of character which he had developed in this life. "They that have done good" will be raised up to eternal life in Heaven—where no evil taints the scene. "They that have done evil" will be raised up to eternal condemnation.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - c. The practice of spiritual crimes will not be done in eternity, but the guilt acquired in our lives here will carry over into eternity—unless it is removed by the blood of Christ prior to our departure from this world. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - d. But outside the gates of glory will be the dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and deceivers: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15). Such they were while in this life, and such will they ever be in eternity! Those found to be filthy in the Judgment, were filthy in this life, and will remain filthy throughout eternity. He that is found righteous and holy in the Judgment, was such in life, and will remain thus in eternity. The kind of person we each become here on earth, will be our true status in eternity. Only the pure in heart will ever see God in peace.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election
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- sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
- e. How very important it is for us to learn the Bible, obey the gospel, worship scripturally, study regularly, avoid every form and appearance of evil, keep ourselves pure, be filled with love for God and man, and thus become a new creation in Christ!
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
 - f. The Lord again announces the suddenness of his return; there will be no time for anyone to make preparations when the Son of God appears. His appearance, the resurrection of the dead, and the changing of the living, will be done in a flash of time.
 - 1) Matthew 24:36-42: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:50-58: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 5:1-5: "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:10-14: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and

- blameless."
- g. The condition we are in at death or at the return of Christ is all-important! We will be rewarded according to what our work shall have been. There will be no exceptions made!
3. Verse 13: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."
 - a. The speaker is identified by the description given—this could not be said of any angel.
 - 1) Revelation 1:11: "Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."
 - 2) Revelation 1:18: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - b. The same statements are made about the Father and the Son:
 - 1) Isaiah 41:14: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."
 - 2) Isaiah 43:10: "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me."
 - 3) Isaiah 44:6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."
 - 4) Isaiah 48:12: "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last."
 - 5) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - 6) Revelation 1:17: "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."
 - 7) Revelation 2:8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."
 - 8) Revelation 21:6: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
 - c. "Although God the Father has claimed all three of these qualities for himself, it is evident that in this instance (Rev. 22:13) it is Jesus who speaks. He is hereby identifying himself with the Father in completeness of godhood, in eternal being, and in divine authority" (Hailey, p.429).
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."
 - 4) Colossians 2:9: "For in him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 5) Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
 4. Verse 14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - a. This is the seventh beatitude. The importance of obedience to the gospel is stressed. In Revelation 21:27 we are told that only those who are pure will enter heaven; all have sinned (Rom. 3:23).
 - 1) Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - 2) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither

- whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
- b. We are cleansed by the blood of Christ.
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
 - 2) Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."
 - c. We reach the blood of Christ when we obey the gospel (Rom. 6:1-18).
 - 1) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 2) Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - 3) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
 - 4) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 - d. In this condition of faithful obedience, we are purified, kept pure (1 John 1:7), and are given the right to enter into heaven and partake of the tree of life! Matthew 10:22; Revelation 2:10.
 5. Verse 15: "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."
 - a. A strong contrast is given between the pure saints and the outcasts. "Dogs" is a term used to describe the immoral, the prostitutes and homosexuals: "There shall be no prostitute of the daughters of Israel, neither shall there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of Jehovah thy God for any vow: for even both these are an abomination unto Jehovah thy God" (Deut. 23:17-18, ASV). This term is equivalent to "the abominable" in Revelation 21:8 and the "filthy" ones of Revelation 22:11.
 - b. The "all liars" of Revelation 21:8 is broadened to include "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Everyone lives by that which he loves: one who loves truth will follow truth; one who loves falsehood, will follow the same; one who loves the pleasures of sin will pursue a life of indulgence: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).
 6. Verse 16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."
 - a. Christ is the direct spokesman here. He affirms that he is the source of the information given to the churches. He uses his human name and affirms he is the root and offspring of David. "As the root and offspring of David he fulfills the ancient hope of Israel that a descendant of David would rule on the throne of David (II Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 11:1,10 [cf. Rom. 15:12]; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24-25.) Furthermore, the phrase indicates that he is the beginning and the end, the total fulfillment of all that God promised through the prophets. In him is realized the ideal and ultimate purpose of God" (Hailey, p.431).
 - 1) 2 Samuel 7:12-16: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He

- shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever."
- 2) Psalms 132:11: "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."
 - 3) Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."
 - 4) Isaiah 11:10: "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious." Cf. Romans 15:12: "And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust."
 - 5) Isaiah 53:2: "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."
 - 6) Jeremiah 23:5: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."
 - 7) Ezekiel 34:24: "And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it."
 - 8) Ezekiel 37:24-25: "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever."
- b. The brethren in Thyatira were promised the morning star (Rev. 2:28); a prophet declared that a star would arise out of Jacob (Num. 24:17); Jesus now claims that he is the bright and morning star and the offspring of David.
- 1) Numbers 24:17: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth."
 - 2) Revelation 2:28: "And I will give him the morning star."
7. Verse 17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." **This is the great invitation.**
- a. The Holy Spirit invites.
- 1) Compare: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." What the Spirit said to them was what he directed John to write.
 - 2) He guided the inspired men to deliver God's word in errantly; he guided the inspired writers to inscribe it error-free; he speaks and invites today through that inspired word: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
- b. The bride (the Lord's church) invites. It does so through preaching and teaching the word.
- 1) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

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- 2) Acts 8:1,4: "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles....Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 3) Colossians 1:5-6: "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - c. He that heareth invites. Those individuals who hear and heed the word themselves, encourage others to obey; these urge the gospel invitation upon those who need it: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;** but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:10-11).
 - d. Whosoever will—may take of the water of life freely. The gospel is offered to every person without charge; it is made available to every sinner (not to a selected few).
 - 1) Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."
 - 2) Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
 - 3) John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 6:2: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."
 - 5) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 6) Hebrews 2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."
 8. Verses 18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."
 - a. This book is to be accepted as inspired Scripture. It has God's stamp upon it (vs. 16); it has the stamp of Christ's approval upon it (vs. 10); it bears the stamp of the John's approval (vs. 8).
 - 1) Revelation 22:6: "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."
 - 2) Revelation 22:16: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."
 - 3) Revelation 22:8: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things."
 - b. A very strong warning is issued not to tamper with its contents in any way.
 - 1) Deuteronomy 4:1: "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you."
 - 2) Deuteronomy 12:32: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."
 - 3) Proverbs 30:5-6: "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."
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Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

- 4) Galatians 1:6-9: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
- 5) 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
- 6) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- 7) 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
- c. What is said here (if intended primarily for the book of Revelation) is applicable to every other part of the Bible. Is the Book of Revelation more sacred and inviolate than the other books of the Bible? Certainly not! This stern warning makes the task of preaching and teaching the Bible a very serious work, and one which must not be entered into with haste or thoughtlessness: "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment" (Jas. 3:1, ASV).
- d. No wonder we are told to "rightly divide the word of truth" or "to handle aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15).
9. Verses 20-21: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."
 - a. The Author of Revelation affirms again the sudden coming he is planning; we do not know when it will be—we are admonished to be prepared!
 - b. He promised to come in swift retribution in the scenes described in Revelation 2:5,16: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent....Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." This was a symbolic coming.
 - c. He promised to come quickly in response to the needs of his people: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11). This was a symbolic coming.
 - d. He will come literally and personally in the last day. John adds his readiness for the Lord to return. A promise is given to all who "love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8)
 - e. John's pronouncement of grace upon the saints is given in the final verse. "This is a fitting benediction pronounced upon the saints of God, who were facing the vicissitudes, hardships, and suffering persecution. The grace of the Lord Jesus involves his gracious favor and constant good will, which provides for every need in every hour. Only one word remains to be said: Amen—be it so" (Hailey, pp.433f)

D. Concluding Remarks.

1. "As the vision fades from our view and the last word spoken echoes in our souls, our hearts are wrapped in awe at the majestic sight and sounds which we have beheld and to which we have listened. Surely our faith in God and His Christ has been strengthened, our hope for victory and heaven made more precious, our love for the spiritual and eternal made to abound beyond all previous measure, our will given a permanent determination to succeed, and our whole aim and goal of life become more fixed....We continue to share with those early Christians the pressures of political power and intrigue, the subtlety of false religious appeal through human wisdom, philosophy, and tradition, and the seduction of the world of lust. Also we share with them the strength, power, and help that comes from our heavenly Father through faith in the blood of the Lamb. And we shall share with them the eternal reward of victory and an inheritance in God's celestial city as the bride of the Lamb" (Hailey, p.434).
2. Revelation 22:20 "voices a final promise of the Lord's purpose to come quickly to the aid of his

persecuted people. In acceptance of the promise and in the attitude of patience and trust, John bows his head with his audience to whisper the reverent prayer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' Who can read this book [Revelation] which breathes the atmosphere of victorious faith and courageous trust in God, with the unfailing assurance in the fulfillment of his purpose and the victory of the Christ of the cross and the empty tomb, without shouting with the people of the book—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing, and dominion, forever and ever" (Summers, p.218).

3. "This message is peculiarly relevant today—the call to choose the eternal rather than the temporal; to resist temptation, to refuse to compromise with pagan secularism, to place the claim of conscience above all demands against it; to cherish the confidence of ultimate victory for the kingdom of God, not only in the reign of Domitian but also in every other chaotic period of world history, including the twentieth century" (Summers, p.93).
 4. "As the brutalities multiplied, the sympathy of the pagan population was stirred; the opinion of good citizens found courage to express itself against the most ferocious oppression in Roman history. Once the people had urged the state to destroy Christianity; now the people stood aloof from the government, and many pagans risked death to hide or protect Christians until the storm should pass. In 311 Galerius, suffering from a mortal illness, convinced of failure, and implored by his wife to make his peace with the undefeated God of the Christians, promulgated an edict of toleration, recognizing Christianity as a lawful religion and asking the prayers of the Christians in return for 'our most gentle clemency.' The Diocletian persecution [303 A.D.] was the greatest test and triumph of the Church. It weakened Christianity for a time through the natural defection of adherents who had joined it, or grown up, during a half century of unmolested prosperity. But soon the defaulters were...pleading for readmission to the fold. Accounts of the loyalty of martyrs who had died, or of 'confessors' who had suffered, for the faith were circulated from community to community; and these Acta Martyrum...played a historic role in awakening or confirming Christian belief. 'The blood of martyrs,' said Tertullian, 'is seed.' There is no greater drama in human record than the sight of a few Christians, scorned or oppressed by a succession of emperors, bearing all trials with a fierce tenacity, multiplying quietly, building order while their enemies generated chaos, fighting the sword with the word, brutality with hope, and at last defeating the strongest state that history has known. Caesar and Christ had met in the arena, and Christ had won" (Durant, Caesar and Christ, p.652).
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Summary of the Visions of Revelation 4-22

1. Revelation 4: God is on the throne; he is powerful, majestic, and knows all; he is willing and able to stand by his people; they have no reason to be terrified even though under siege by unbelieving enemies.
2. Revelation 5: An encouraging picture is given of the Redeeming Lamb; he is worthy; he willingly and ably takes action in behalf of his people.
3. Revelation 6: The opening of the six seals:
 - a. The first seal (white horse): represents the successful spread of the gospel in the first several years of the Christian era:
 - 1) Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."
 - 2) Mark 16:15-20: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - 3) Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
 - 4) Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
 - b. The second seal (red horse): represents the first great wave of persecution against the church as a result of the saints' successful work of preaching and living the gospel:
 - 1) 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
 - 2) 1 Peter 4:12-19: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator."
 - c. The third seal (black horse): represents the contrived economic discrimination brought against the saints by their enemies (cf. Rev. 2:18-29):
 - 1) Hebrews 10:34: "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."
 - 2) Revelation 13:16-17: "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."
 - d. The fourth seal (pale horse): probably represents a partial judgment of God against the oppressors of the church. Compare: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee; and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee. I the LORD have spoken it" (Ezek. 5:17).
 - e. The fifth seal (martyrs under the altar): represents the awful sufferings the saints were undergoing; they are pictured as crying out to God: "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10).

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- f. The sixth seal (earthquake, etc.): heavy judgment against the enemies of the church is depicted using Old Testament pictures. This judgment against the evil ones would be a day of deliverance for his people.
4. Revelation 7: An interlude giving two consoling visions of encouragement.
 - a. The sealing of the 144,000 represents God putting his symbolic mark on those who have his approval. God is thus telling his people that they will be delivered from the awful judgment described in Revelation 6:12-17; it answers the question of Revelation 6:17: "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"
 - b. The innumerable host that is depicted in heaven around the throne. This symbolically pictures the ultimate, eternal victory the faithful are promised in heaven.
 5. Revelation 8-9: The sounding of the first six trumpets.
 - a. This event was preceded by the silence in heaven and the assurance that God hears and answers the prayers of his saints.
 - b. The first four trumpets represent various natural calamities brought against the enemies of the church (the Roman Empire): "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan. 2:44).
 - c. The fifth trumpet: probably represents the internal corruption of Rome which God would also use in bringing about their downfall.
 - d. The sixth trumpet: the invading hordes which would bring the empire to its knees.
 6. Revelation 10-11: Another interlude giving more consoling visions.
 - a. The mighty angel with a message for all the earth.
 - b. The little book episode: a great work yet remained for John—but with bitter results.
 - c. Measuring the temple (the church) for providential protection.
 - d. The two witnesses (the church: Jews and Gentiles) would successfully do their work and would then be put to death (the cause would be hindered), but would be resurrected.
 - e. The sounding of the seventh trumpet; this is symbolic assurance given the church that God would not desert his faithful.
 7. Revelation 12-13.
 - a. The dragon, who is identified as the devil, arrays himself against the woman and her child. He fights with all his cunning, power, and evil.
 - b. The first beast, which is representative of the wicked Roman Emperor, receives his evil power and motivation from the devil. He wreaks havoc on the church and hurls blasphemies against God.
 - c. The second beast is representative of the Roman Concilia, which receives its authority from the first beast—the emperor Domitian.
 - d. It appears that there can be no hope for the saints: the devil with all his power is assaulting the kingdom of God; he is using the awesome might of the great and evil Roman Empire; there is a dedicated effort by the pagan religionists to destroy the church. The enemies seem to be invincible, but John next turns from this dark scene to present a scene which shows that the forces of righteousness will ultimately be victorious.
 8. Revelation 14-20: This section shows God's wrath against his enemies.
 - a. Chapter 14 tells of the 144,000, who represent the faithful; the messenger with the everlasting gospel is shown.
 - b. Chapters 15-16 gives details about the seven angels who had seven bowls of God's wrath which they poured upon the earth.
 - 1) These bowls of wrath depict God's punishment against the enemies of his people, specifically against various features and parts of the corrupt Roman Empire.
 - 2) Chapter 16 also tells about the battle of Armageddon, which is placed between the pouring out of the sixth and seventh bowls of wrath. This symbolic battle depicts the struggle of the Lord's church and the Roman Empire. Some think it describes the spiritual battle between God's saints and their enemies through the centuries.
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- c. Chapter 17 describes the harlot [the scarlet woman] and the beast. The harlot is Babylon [evil Rome]; the beast represents Domitian, the cruelest enemy to this time that the church had faced.
 - d. Chapter 18 details the fall of the harlot [Rome and its empire].
 - e. Chapter 19 reports on the rejoicing saints and the victorious Christ.
 - f. Chapter 20 tells of the thousand year reign and the final Judgment.
9. Revelation 21-22: This concluding section shows the complete victory of God, his cause, and his people.
- a. A symbolic picture of heaven is given in chapter 21:1—22:6.
 - b. The return of Christ who will dispense just rewards to his faithful followers and deliver punishment to his enemies.
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