

Bowman's notes—

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THE

REVELATION

OF

**JESUS CHRIST
TO
The Apostle
JOHN**

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**A VERSE BY VERSE
COMMENTARY**

REVELATION

(apokalupsis)

Foreword.

There were giants on the earth who have written cogent commentaries on the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Apostle John. At the front of the pack I clearly place my favorite, William R. Newell. The commentaries of William Kelly, Arno Gaebelein, and John Walvoord, follow closely and John Darby's *Synopsis of the Bible* is a valuable overview of the Bible that shows the place of each book. My debt is incalculable to those men who labored so long in the Word to deliver to me and to you their understanding of God's purposes. That they did it in such masterful works, put together without the aid of word processors and computers, is simply staggering. I will say now that I have not had a single thought that I would dare claim as original regarding the pages of Scripture, and this book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ is no exception. On my bookshelf, in addition to those previously mentioned, I have Mounce, William Barclay, Hedricksen, Ladd, Lang, Morris, Sir Robert Anderson, Tim LaHaye, Clarence Larkin, Arno C. Gaebelein, Hamilton Smith, J. Dwight Pentecost and M. R. De Haan.. Other commentaries and reference books that I prefer are listed at the end of the commentary. At times we have all stumbled through passages we didn't comprehend, or barely understood at best. The problem is illustrated by the many varieties of interpretation one can find, as well as the different schools of interpretation. I think that it was Patrick Fairbairn who solidly impressed on me through his book, *The Interpretation of Scripture* that the key to interpretation and understanding of any passage is in the Bible itself. I should note that I last taught through Revelation in 1979 at the Evangelical Free Church of Walnut Creek California. As I recall, it took 76 lessons to complete. I continue to pray for those long-suffering souls

who loved me enough to tolerate such a venture into discovery. My position then was dispensational and futuristic and it has not changed, though I have mellowed with the intervening years.

Revelation deals with the events of the “*last days*” beginning with Pentecost in the upper room (Acts 2) and the descent of the Holy Spirit, and ending with the Great White Throne Judgment and the New Heavens and New Earth. The last day is covered by the sixth seal, the seventh trumpet, the seventh bowl and the last battle. It is the story of the Fullness of All Things in Christ coming to pass.

Anyone who writes on Revelation should study what previous Christians have written and then write for the benefit of his own generation. Therefore, I have used a futurist interpretation

because we in the dispensational camp are looking for the appearance of our Lord for His Bride and the subsequent revealing of the Antichrist.

This presses upon us the need to be prepared for His coming, which will precede the cataclysmic events to accompany the rise and defeat of Antichrist. There is a danger of becoming preoccupied prior to the Rapture, with the identification of the Antichrist (Revelation 13) so that we stop *walking in the works prepared for us* (Ephesians 2:10) and thus fail in the task

of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles as delivered to the Apostle Paul.

Every commentary on Revelation contains the doctrinal assumptions of the author and this is no exception. Wilcock has said that “No one has ‘the’ correct interpretation of Revelation, this is partly because it shows the principles but not always the details; its interpretation depends on the circumstances of the church at the time.” It seems to me, however, that if you don’t have confidence that you have the correct interpretation, then why bother to write it and impose it on others. If you don’t take the text as literal, unless forced to do otherwise, then you are left to the exercise of extracting messages that are relevant. To some it may be ‘Wake up!’ Strengthen that which is about to die...’ to some it may be ‘Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.’ That kind of *verse snatching* (to borrow a term favored by the late Miles J. Stanford) will surely muddle the original message. The book of Revelation speaks to all believers. It was written specifically to those believers who live in anticipation of the Rapture, and should be of interest to those who find themselves facing the trials of the Tribulation, as a guide through the storm while they look for the Second Coming of Christ. Whether you believe that the beast is Rome or China, Russia or Antichrist, you will ultimately judge for yourself that the argument or scriptures used have weight or not.

In our generation there are many commentaries available that strive for relevance. This is not one of them. My goal is to discover what John was saying to the immediate recipients of his day, and, if possible, to identify their assumptions in light of the pressures they faced. Walvoord has provided a lot of historical information on the Roman Empire. Since I see that world-wide scenario beginning to reshape today it should be of special interest to those who want to follow those developments; so my advice is to get his work and study it. Most Christians in the West are looking for the Antichrist to be identified, rather than for the appearance of Jesus to claim His Bride, the Church. There are no speculations here that address that particular itch. But at the same time, Christians in other parts of the world are undergoing extreme persecution; thus a fresh understanding of the Revelation could be an important motivator that fuels our prayer for and ministry to them. A futurist interpretation of Revelation is really most appropriate to both their times and ours.

I have tried to incorporate all the major cross-references upon which each passage is based or that shed additional light on the book from both the Old and New Testaments or from within Revelation itself. The *New Scofield Reference Bible* has been particularly useful, as has Darby's *New Translation*.

Revelation is a closed book to many because they attempt to study it isolated from all the Scriptures that provide the interpretive keys. But diligently study and it will reveal its treasures. Many say that the literary style of Revelation is such that its many internal cross-references make it suitable for using a computer bible. I must confess to being a book worm, one who is addicted to the printed, preferably musty, page. Nothing so stimulates me to concentration as the earthy smell of an old, worn, volume with previous owners' marginal notes to ponder. My primary guide was William R. Newell's *Revelation, Verse by Verse*. It is easy to read and follows a literal interpretive style.

Bible version used

Scripture references are mainly from my *New American Standard Bible*, because that's the one that I teach from in our class. But, I like Darby's *New Translation* best, so if there is a difference, then that is what gets preferential treatment. However, if it seems that a particular verse is clearer if restated, then I have no hesitation whatsoever in making that change based on Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, or A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the Greek New Testament*

On the commentary

The best commentary on Revelation is Scripture itself. Reading Revelation for the first time, the imagery brings fantastic pictures to mind; but as you grow in understanding of the entire scope of the Bible more of the scenes of Revelation become recognizable, even familiar. The apocalyptic style in which it was written may be a barrier to our understanding the message of the book, simply because we are not accustomed to reading such literature. Both Old Testament and New Testament scriptures, as well as Revelation itself, provide keys to the interpretation of the book. Much insight can be gained merely by studying the cross-references within Revelation, but keep in mind that someone else had to decide that these were relevant. It is filled with Old Testament imagery that ties it to the message of the Gospels and to the expectations of the Apostles sent to the New Creation Church. Its unity with the rest of the Word of God makes it a rich source to study. Osborne commented that “we shall only recognize the events in Revelation when they happen,” (isn’t that a sobering thought) but remember that he expected to go through the tribulation period, as do most Covenant Theologians. That view is not very satisfying or relevant for those of us looking for the Rapture that will occur before the Tribulation begins. Until that occurs, let those in both camps at least plumb the depths of theological meaning tied to these events. God is obviously saying something to us, both in this book and in the way that world events unfold.

“Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near (1:3). He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.”

Revelation is a frequently neglected book because its symbolism intimidates many readers. If read lightly it will yield inconsistent messages; but with diligence, it will lead to wonderful discoveries and fresh understanding of God’s completion of His plan for mankind. Another reason why it is not often taught in expository fashion from the pulpit is that understanding comes as the result of hard study.

Why should we study Revelation?

- a. It claims the highest level of divine authorship of any book in the bible (1:1)
- b. Because *all* scripture is profitable.
- c. It offers blessing to those who hear it and take its message to heart (1:3, 22:7).
- d. It is a message to the church throughout our generations intended to prepare us for Christ’s return.

- e. It is a message that is relevant to us today, just as the letters were to the seven churches then.
- f. It is God's last word to the church in the Scriptures both in place and time.
- g. It has a particular message for those undergoing persecution.
- h. It shows the end of history, and the new heavens and new earth, the defeat of God's enemies, and the fulfillment of both earthly and heavenly blessing for God's saints.
- i. It shows us the glorified Christ as does no other book in the bible.

Revelation was written by one of those Apostles (John) who were commissioned to take the Gospel of Grace to those who understood the promises of the Old Testament. They had lived through their generations depending on those promises as their inheritance. Then, in the Gospels, the generation that met the Lord Jesus face-to-face saw the unveiling of a new relationship to God through their discipleship to the Messiah, Jesus. Later, through the ministry of Paul

that developed after the ascension of Jesus, and after Pentecost, they came to understand union with Christ. Quickly, the Church, the Body of Christ, became real to them through the epistles that have become our New Testament. The Apostle John, writer of the last of the New Testament epistles, addresses the issues involved with how God is yet going to deliver His promises. There were those within Israel who had a firm grip on the Law as their ethic for living, and there were those who would accept the ascended Christ as their Messiah. Today there are some who hold fast to whatever Judaism has become across the last twenty centuries and lay their own lives down as their claim on eternity. This prophecy speaks to all of them. It is a prophecy concerning the near future, to show such servants of God what must *soon* take place; (1:1, 1:3, 1:19, 4:1, 22:6, 22:10) and it also shows the distant future with the end of God's enemies. At the same time, for those who are looking for the coming of Christ for His Bride, the words bring comfort in the face of current persecution and rejection by the world. Some think that the words of the prophecy were originally intended to be read aloud. That was true of all the circulating letters of the Apostles, so this is no exception. It is also important to remember that the New Testament as we know it did not exist at that time, but was circulating in individual letters or pieces of correspondence. How much of what we know today as Scripture was then available at the local assembly level we cannot know. But, of this we are

sure, the ministry of the Holy Spirit *to teach and reveal* the mind of Christ to His own was all-sufficient then and now. There is a real blessing for the person who teaches the book to the assembly, as well as to those who hear and take to heart what is written in it, because the time for those things in it to be fulfilled has *always been near*. The book reveals God's elect being preserved and tested during a time of great tribulation such as has never been seen by man.

Persecution of the saints of God by mankind and a parallel response by God of tribulation for the world in the form of wars, famines, demonic attack, deception, disasters and plagues from God, serve as warnings to mankind to repent.

There was a period of persecution under the Roman Empire already underway which lasted until Constantine (314 AD). There are also elements of this prophecy that apply to the periods of persecution described by Christ as lasting until He returns for His Bride. As the last prophecy and one that that is directed to the last Apostle, it is a final warning to His people to be *faithful to the end*. That's a very loaded phrase that needs some explanation. For believers in the dispensation of Grace that means to the end of their lives; for those who become believers at or after the Rapture and find themselves still on earth, it

means to remain faithful to their martyrdom or to the end of the Tribulation, when Christ returns in glory with his holy angels and ushers in the Millennial Kingdom and reign. This book is intended to strengthen our faith until he returns and to strengthen the faith of those who must face the tribulation and the Antichrist.

As in the past, at the end of every dispensation, God will again intervene to preserve the faithful and destroy the powers of evil. This will coincide with the coming of the Messiah in victory and the ushering in of God's kingdom on earth as part of the extended Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

John, in the very first verse, claims Revelation to be apocalyptic, so we can see why a commentator like Mounce would state that 'a major role of the apocalypse was to explain why the righteous suffered and why the kingdom of God delayed.' This leaning towards viewing Revelation as an *apocalyptic* work with prophetic elements leads him to not take the prophetic elements literally. I take Revelation more as a *prophetic* work with apocalyptic elements, delivered by vision (9:17) and treated as an epistle for purposes of exposing the Church to its message as it circulated. God's message in the Revelation is recorded in vivid symbols and images that depict the struggle between good and evil in the affairs of mankind. It presents man as ultimately being unable to overcome evil, because he lacks the power and resources to do so

from within himself. As in the past, at the end of every dispensation, God will again intervene to preserve the faithful and destroy the powers of evil. This will coincide with the coming of the Messiah in victory and the ushering in of God's kingdom on earth as part of the extended Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The apocalyptic idiom would be familiar to John's audience because the book is filled with references to Old Testament prophetic writings. But, as Ladd points out, "there is not a similar proven allusion to any known Jewish apocalyptic writings. One difference between Revelation and *Jewish apocalyptic literature* of the time should be noted, although John was a Jew he is also a Christian and as such his message is Christ centered," (Ladd, cited by Taylor).

We can speculate that the reason for John's apocalyptic style was to make the message vivid enough to remember by those undergoing persecution; but that would be a *dangerous assumption*. That's certainly true of the way that our mind works; but is it the way that the mind of man works when not indwelt by the Holy Spirit and without the mind of Christ? Was John writing for Christendom at large, or was he writing for the remnant of true believers specifically undergoing extreme persecution? It is my opinion that he was writing for Christendom at-large at the end of the first century, plus that Jewish remnant that had not yet decided to trust Christ as Savior, plus those who would be left behind at the

Rapture! Further, is this the answer to why God directed His apostle so differently than He directed others? The theology of Paul's epistles is what was intended to govern the Church and set its course until the Lord's return at the Rapture. But the vivid imagery of Revelation could easily be recalled by apostate Israel, awakened after the Rapture and now facing the most terrible trials ever known to man. The Calvinist might say that the use of symbolic imagery makes it meaningful to all generations because the symbols are not specific to any single event in church history. That may certainly be true, but only because it is not describing any events in Church history other than one—the final preparation for the scenario that will be in place immediately after the Church is taken out. Therefore, when the Calvinists approach these passages they say that they *may be spiritualized* to fit the circumstances of the day. This is preferred, they say, because God is more interested in teaching us spiritual truth that we can apply to our own circumstances than He is in giving us a detailed blueprint of the future. (There is that "*dangerous assumption*" that I mentioned previously.) The preference rests solidly on the tendency of Calvinists to see the Christian mandate as one to improve the world for Jesus, rather than developing a solid theology based on study of Scripture (see Abraham Kuyper's comments in the box). The book is intended today to make us watchful and strengthen us for the rising battle with evil as the end draws ever nearer.

For the Jew among the 144,000 witnesses, it is intended to provide him/her a preview of coming events and trials and to assure him/her of God's ever-present love and concern for His own.

The beast is often suggested by commentators to be the revived Roman Empire during the Tribulation, however, it is taught by some that it is not *only* the Roman Empire down through history, but the beast is also tyrants and nations through the centuries that attack the church and persecute Christians. This trend ends by those nations submitting to the power of the Antichrist. Scripture tells us that as the end approaches there will be many who pose as antichrists before the final Antichrist appears. Though we cannot use Revelation to predict the exact time of the Rapture of the Church, it does give us the *sequence of events* leading up to the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. The impetus for us to study this dynamic book is to help us prepare to meet the Lord in the air at the Rapture of the Bride and avoid the Tribulation. For God's people who go through this last phase of Jacob's Trouble,

*Revelation is their part in His story,
the story of God's redemptive grace
delivering His chosen and
defeating those who would wipe
them off the earth.*

Though the book is quite apocalyptic in style, it is very important that it be interpreted *literally* whenever possible and symbolically when absolutely necessary. Taking primarily a symbolic approach will yield many difficulties, for it leads to *spiritualizing* events and peoples on the basis of the reader's assumptions. Let it say what John recorded and take it in the plainest sense first. The symbolism often is explained within the text, as when Jesus explains the seven stars and seven golden lamp-stands in Chapter One, providing, then and now, a very dependable and easily understood key to interpreting John's record.

Rev 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou hast seen on my right hand, and the seven golden lamps. -- The seven stars are angels of the seven assemblies; and the seven lamps are seven assemblies.

We do not ever want to forget the three-fold aspects of the Trinity

**The FATHER
PLANS**

**The SON
EXECUTES**

**The HOLY SPIRIT
REVEALS**

**The Son does what the Father wills
and the Spirit reveals that work and will to man.**

The book's symbolism was never intended to be something mystical, as if it were the property of some secret order to be revealed on initiation. However, understanding it does require a general familiarity

with the whole of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments; because the symbolism is scattered throughout. Those representative illustrations are within the abilities of any average reader to understand, with diligent study and with the ministry of the Holy Spirit who reveals the truth of Scripture. If there is one hindering factor today, it is the failure of Christians to study Scripture. We live today in an age where everything is delivered to us in entertaining small bits that we can take in without interrupting our busy lives too much. Scripture does not yield its treasures to such a half-hearted search for answers.

If your study consists of sitting in a pew and listening to your Pastor for about a half-hour once a week, then you are on a collision course with spiritual disaster.

Whenever prophecy is the issue, the point is really forth-telling the Word of God in a way that it has not been revealed before. When writing Revelation as an epistle, John emphasizes repentance and a commitment to holy living on the part of the saints. This is a direct contrast with the empty rituals that Israel had observed for generations under an apostate priesthood. Also, it was clearly intended to direct Christians to the impending coming of the Antichrist. Additionally, it is part of the Gospel to those who are currently rejecting the offer of Christ as Savior, regardless of where you look on the time line from 70

AD to the future Tribulation. With the “good news” there is also the warning against delay. It offers encouragement to those undergoing persecution and the oppression of Rome and it warns the saints to remain steadfast as the enemy of God undermines the first-century organization of the Church. The final message is the reward of those who overcome and obey the words of this book after the Church, the Bride of Christ, is taken to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and then the ultimate punishment of those who do not “endure until the end.” John’s vision is of events on earth and events occurring in heaven. We see the visions: of one ‘like a son of man’ (1:13-16); of a lamb, looking “as if it had been slain” (5:6 ff.); of the Lamb as the Shepherd, leading his people to springs of living water (7:17); of the Lamb of God, standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000 witnesses (14:1); of the rider on the white horse as King of kings and Lord of lords (19:11 ff.) and of the Lamb, as the Lamp of the new Jerusalem. In John’s Revelation we also hear a great many names of Jesus—

*the faithful witness
the firstborn from the dead
the ruler of the kings of the earth
the First and the Last
the Living One
the Amen
the ruler of God's creation
the Lamb
the Faithful and True
the Word of God
the King of kings and Lord of lords
the Alpha and the Omega
the Root and the Offspring of David
the bright Morning Star.*

Now, I pray that you gain immeasurable joy from your study of Jesus' REVELATION to the Apostle John, in exile on the Isle of Patmos. The Lord from Heaven came to John personally to deliver the Father's message to him. That old sage and saint was not diminished of spirit, though he had been cut off from all fellowship, and like David so many years before him, he "encouraged himself in the Lord daily" (1 Samuel 30:6). This should remind us that "where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in your midst" is a fact—because any place where a *single* believer *is* in this age of Grace, there the Lord *is* within whom he is in UNION! The words of Paul ring out; "Who can separate us from the love of God" (Romans 8:38-39);

Part 1

Judgment

Chapters 1-20

Introduction:

In this commentary the primary text is from Darby's *New Translation* (1890). Sometimes a word may be substituted or a sentence structure altered for easier reading, but not very often.

Revelation 1

Introduction

(1:1-3) The pathway for delivery of God's instructions to the seven churches (*ekkllesia*-assemblies) in Asia is clearly laid out here—God the Father delivered the message to “Jesus Christ” (*Iēsou Christou*) who gave it to “John” to be delivered (*tois doulois autou* literally ‘to bondslaves his’) to His, Jesus Christ's “bondservants.” Robertson tells us that “the precise meaning here turns on the genitive” “**of** Jesus Christ.” It is subjective because of the next phrase “which God (the Father) gave to Him.” The content of the message begins with “what must shortly take place.” Now, that gives us a clue that the expectation of the return of Christ for the Church and the events to follow that milestone in

God's Plan for man was considered to be imminent from the time that John received the revelation until today. The early church believers who received John's message were living in constant anticipation of seeing the return of Jesus, just as He had promised (Matthew). When the Apostle John heard the message from the Angel of God, he witnessed that it was "the word of God," and that it was "the testimony of Jesus Christ," and that it was true of "all things that he saw." But that was based on the fact that God "signified" *sēmainō* this message by sending it by means of His angel, Christ. In other words, John made sure that no one could think that these words and images originated with him, but were directly received from God. Note carefully that "the word of God" was not referring to the canon of Scripture that we now have, but was the very instruction of God revealed to him by God's Angel, His messenger. There are three sources of blessing spoken of by John: (1) "blessed is he that **reads**" these prophecies; (2) blessed are those who "**hear** the words of the prophesy" and (3) blessed are those who "**keep** the things written in it."

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him, to show to his bondservants what must shortly take place; and he signified [it], sending by his angel, to his bondservant John, who testified the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, all things that he saw. Blessed [is] he that reads,

and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written in it; for the time [is] near.
Revelation 1:1-3

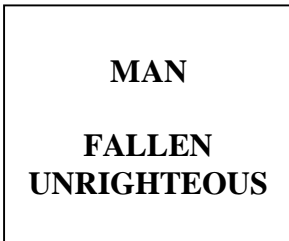
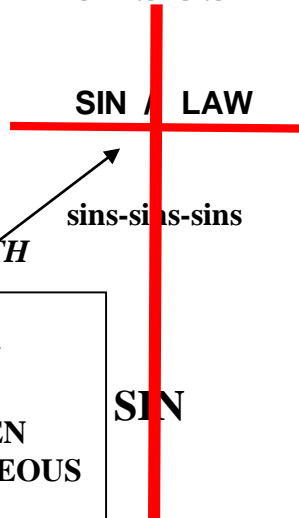
Letters to the seven assemblies (churches) in Asia

(1:4-6) The Greek word *ekklesia* means “called out ones.” It is translated “churches” in the KJV and “assemblies” in the Darby text. Note that the entire record of revelation is directed primarily to these “seven assemblies” in different locations “in Asia.” I find it interesting that this begins with the very Pauline phrase, “Grace to you and peace.” It is approximately 100a.d. and Paul’s epistles have been well circulated. But, the message then begins to sound quite different—“from Him who is” *apo ho ōn*, “and who was” *kai ho ēn*, “and who is to come” *ho erchomenos* (lit. ‘the coming one’), a reference to the eternal One, specifically to God the Father. The Father is enthroned and there are “seven Spirits, which are before His throne.” The seven Spirits are there to minister grace and peace, which come from the Father to His creation. This is very important—to recognize that the Father is the source of all blessing that comes to man, and therefore, is due all of our worship. The Son does all the work necessary to make sure that the pathway of access to the Father is always open to men and women of faith. What you are seeing is illustrated in the diagram on the following page— *God the Son*, the Second Person of the Trinity from eternity past,

became *The Son of God*, his title relative to all creation. Then, He was declared by the Father to be the *Only Begotten Son of God*, (His title specifically relative to mankind). In His incarnation, the *Only Begotten Son of God* was seen as *Jesus, God come in flesh*, the unique Person of the Universe, Man without Sin. Sin in the singular always refers to the Adamic Sin Nature (wherein the very principle of sin rests), which resides in each man from birth into Adam's family; (Christ being the only exception, since Adam was not His father). *Jesus* was to Israel the *Kinsman Redeemer* and to the Church He is ever the *Savior*.



JESUS



*“He who knew no sin **became sin** for us in order
that we might become the righteousness of God in
Him”*

2 Corinthians 5:21

The Gospels present Christ as the “faithful witness” to God the Father’s love for mankind and to His grace extended on the

The content of the Apocalypse is not merely prediction; moral counsel and religious instruction are the primary burdens of its pages. --Moffatt

basis of that love. In order for the Father’s Love to be transferred by means of Grace to man, His Righteousness and Justice are standards which must be met, or the structure of the relationship simply does not exist. So, in giving His Only Begotten Son to pay the sin-debt for all of creation, the Father’s nature (His attributes) was entirely satisfied. In addition to becoming the recipient of God’s love, man was given the Righteousness of God. It was possible because the decree that the “wages of sin is death” was satisfied by the death of Christ the perfect Sacrifice. By Faith, then, man could appropriate at the cross the Righteousness of God in Christ. Christ took the sins of man into the Grave as He “became Sin for us” specifically so that the Father could confer His Righteousness *on us*. The closest representative act that the Israelite had before him in the Tabernacle and Temple was when the Priest took parts of the sacrifice that was offered for sin, after the sin of the Israelite had been placed on it and it had become sinful, and the Priest ate it! That depicted what Christ would actually accomplish for every man in His incarnation. It is the priestly act of “becoming sin” by becoming “the sin offering.” When the Son rose from the grave,

He brought with Him all the Old Testament saints that were in Abraham's Bosom (also called Paradise) including the thief from the cross. In doing this, He became the "firstborn out from the dead," the first-fruits offering that Israel observed under the Law.

The last thing that John refers to in these six verses is that we who have been "washed . . . from our sins in His blood" have been made to be "a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." This can be a bit confusing, because in the Pauline Epistles, which we have been studying in our Sunday School series, it is always Israel that we have talked about as being in an Earthly Kingdom, and as being in the Millennial Kingdom; while the Body of Christ is spoken of in her relationship to Christ as His Bride. Here, the believer is in a relationship to the Father, and it is important to note that the Son is the eternal intercessor, the Great High Priest for all creation, who offered His own spotless blood to atone for sin and remove the stain that the First Adam brought into this world. In this role, His Bride is intimately involved with the ministry of reconciliation, which He entrusted to the Church after His ascension! In his first Epistle to the Corinthians Paul said; *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their*

trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (1 Corinthians 5:17-ff). What John is showing us is that our ministry of reconciliation continues in Christ as our priestly duty and privilege for all eternity. Just as He ministers forgiveness, mercy, grace, and peace; so too are we ministering reconciliation to all who come into the world outside the boundary of Law! Think of it!!!

*We entered this most intimate
relationship to God in time,
and are therefore privileged to
continually offer everything that
reconciliation means, to a kingdom
of men/women who now can
know all that it brings to them,
. forever!!!*

We are barely 6 verses into Jesus' revelation to His apostle John and we are blessed with this glimpse of one of the ways that we will spend eternity—what a gift! So, with John, we say, "to him [be] the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen."

John to the seven assemblies, which [are] in Asia: Grace to you and peace from [him] who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which [are] before his throne; and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the

prince of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father: to him [be] the glory and the might to the ages of ages. Amen.

Revelation 1:4-6

(1:7) Now John's attention turns to the Son, as he announces his vision of Christ's descent from Heaven at His Second Coming—"Behold, he comes with the clouds." This is not a secret or private appearing, such as the catching away of the Church and the resurrection of New Testament saints. Here His coming is before everyone, for "every eye shall see him." That takes care of the living at His Second Coming. But it goes on to describe some who are long in the grave, "and they which have pierced him," means that at this time there will be a resurrection of unbelievers. And it further explains that nations ("all the tribes") will mourn because they have rejected Him.

Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they which have pierced him, and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of him. Yea. Amen.

Revelation 1:7

(1:8) The final benediction to this opening is from the Father, "the Alpha and the Omega."

I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith [the] Lord God, he who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8

(1:9) John announces himself as “your brother” referring to his fellowship with all believers in the Body of Christ. He is a “fellow-partaker in the tribulation” of Rome’s oppression that had engulfed the entire empire at that time. John’s relationship to the “kingdom” is not to be confused with the millennial kingdom that the Jews face, but to the kingdom of God in Christ that Believers in the Age of Grace share together and with Him. To us, “patience” is our rest in Him until He returns at the Rapture. For the Jew who is rejecting Him as Savior at this time, the word that describes their most needed trait is *endurance*.—*we wait for His return* for us, they *endure the persecution* of the Antichrist in the Tribulation until the end of that period and His victorious return to the Mount of Olives with deliverance in His hand.

John says that there were two purposes for his being “in the island called Patmos” when he wrote what he saw in this vision—those purposes were “for the word of God” and “for the testimony of Jesus.” “The word of God” does not mean the canon of Scripture that we now know as the Bible. It refers to the revealed word from God as he received it. “For” is *because of* in both cases, so John was on Patmos ‘because God was providing a message and a testimony (witness) of

(regarding) Jesus. Note that Jesus is His name as Savior, where Christ would be the name used in reference to Him as Messiah, or Kinsman Redeemer.

I John, your brother and fellow-partaker
in the tribulation and kingdom and
patience, in Jesus, was in the island called
Patmos, for the word of God, and for the
testimony of Jesus. Revelation 1:9

The voice of God speaks to John

(1:10-11) John was carried by “the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” *egenomēn en pneumati* (aorist middle indicative-‘I came to be’) He has thoroughly adopted the practice of celebrating the Lord’s death and resurrection on the first day of the week as opposed to the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. In the course of his worship on the Lord’s Day, John says he “became in Spirit;” “the” is not found in the text, thus the character of the Spirit is emphasized. We might say, “I became in *such a Spirit*.” In other words, he was not simply enraptured in his human spirit, but caught up and enveloped by a Spirit of supernal nature. His senses were fully engaged as he “heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet.” Listen to his metaphors; they remind me of a brass band, the trill of the piccolo, the mellow baritone of the French horn and the lilt of the Trombone. The Coronet has the smoothness of a contralto, but the Trumpet cannot be mistaken. It is

the voice of the tenor, clear and ascending, sharp and edgy, bringing man up as high as he can possibly reach, face turned upward to God as if expecting the majesty of heaven to meet him. John is not disappointed, for the voice is saying, "What you see write in a book, and send to the seven assemblies."

I became in Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, What you see write in a book, and send to the seven assemblies: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. Revelation 1:10-11

Note that the rotation starts with Ephesus, then Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. That there are seven (7) churches named is important, seven being the number of completion. Is this a picture of the entire Church? Is this a matrix of the entire Church Age? Is it possible that God is showing us the things that could be found in any New Testament Church by showing us the strengths and weaknesses within these seven assemblies in Asia? These are the questions that we will search these Scriptures for answers to in the commentary to follow.

(1:12-16) John was not in a trance that immobilized him for he "turned back to see the voice, which spoke with me, and having turned I saw seven golden

lamps." In Hebrew the word for "lamps" would be *menorah*, and in Greek it is *luchnia*. It refers to a complete lamp-stand, a source of oil, a wick, something to hold it in a useful position or to be carried; everything required supporting a source of light. The word for light *phos* is not used here, for *phos* would refer to the flame itself and would mean the gospel, the content of the *good news* of grace. In this Age of Grace that structure is the Church and in the Age of Law that structure was Israel. Israel was the keeper of the Tabernacle and then its successor, the Temple, specifically the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, God's place of residence on earth. In the Tribulation the structure supporting the gospel is the body of witnesses, the 144,000 and those who accept their message and are martyred for their testimony. When John saw "in the midst of the seven lampstands one like the Son of man," standing; it should immediately bring to mind the statement of the Lord that "*where two or three are gathered in My Name, there am I in their midst*" Matthew 18:20.

The Sevenfold Glory of His Person

During His walk among men from His birth to the cross, the Lord Jesus displayed his *moral glory*. This aspect of His presentation to mankind is marvelously

Revelation 1:14-16, **"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire. 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 two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shines in his strength."**

captured by J. G. Bellett in his small book, *The Moral Glory of the Lord Jesus Christ*. Here, we are looking at His personal glory as the ascended Man from Heaven. We can hardly imagine the effect that seeing the Lord in this vision had on John. Every attribute described can only approach the actual image that John saw, for before him is the Living Word in glory!

1. "His Head and Hair as White as Snow"--John first notices and mentions the whiteness of His hair, both on His *head* and on His *body*. It was all white, as bright as snow. If it were just his head that was white you might suspect that age and maturity were being emphasized, but that is not the case here. This has nothing to do with age. This speaks of the purity of His person, including His thoughts and wisdom. With God, time is never a factor, for He is the Omnipresent One to whom all of time is but a *single event*. Though time means nothing in the plan of things, wisdom has been prized from the beginning; so Adam and Eve made their decision to take the fruit and gain the knowledge of good and evil. That single decision set the plan of man's redemption in motion, a Plan that centers on the search for wisdom, God's perspective on man's dilemma.

Daniel captured this very same view when he said:

"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 spoke: 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. 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." Daniel 7:9-14

Here we are, barely into the Revelation, and we have this amazing connection between the Apostle John and the Prophet Daniel. Daniel saw Him with that white hair. That head filled with Omniscient wisdom—He knows everything, and with perfect Justice as one of His attributes, He is opening the

books of heaven and judging out of them. Daniel saw Him coming in clouds. Both he and John saw the vision standing pure and full of wisdom, in the midst of the flames of righteousness from where He would judge all things.



Stop here! The images are all-important. Here John sees **a** Son of Man standing in the midst of the flaming lamp-stands. The fire itself is Righteousness applied as a fuller's fire, the purifying fire of judgment that removes contaminating elements. We see same picture in the brilliance of light that covered Christ in the Garden of Eden, and in the covering of Adam and Eve prior to their fall. We see it again in the flaming stones of the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim, literally, "*lights and perfections*" that determined truth! Truth was there in the flaming sword that guarded Eden and in the fire that consumed the offering of Abel on the altar. It was in the flash of lightening on Mount Moriah, when the Law was given and then in the fire that consumed the offerings on the Brazen Altar, bringing the sweet savor of an acceptable offering to God's face. It was in the embers of that same fire, carried to the Altar of Incense to hurry the prayers of God's People to Heaven. The Spirit whispers in our ears; "*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all!*" Christians are to "*walk in light*" as He is in light, carrying the Gospel, the light of the world, to all mankind. "**Light**" in all of its forms has always brought the 'good news' of reconciliation of

man to God to the lost. That is the ministry committed unto us.

2. "His Eyes as Fire"--Now we see that "Fire" captured in the eyes of the One in the midst of the lamp-stands. Those same fiery, flaming, eyes are the eyes of the Judge of all things and are recording the lives of all flesh. Standing in every place, in every moment, throughout all creation, there is nothing He does not know. This is the very meaning of Omnipresence, the basis of His Omniscience. He is the Word that "is alive and powerful, piercing even to the joints and the marrow, and is the perfect critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). There is nothing hidden that is not revealed, for all things are naked before Him with whom we have to do. Think of it, and firmly grasp this truth, this moment—that He knows this instant exactly what you are thinking—every thought you have ever had.

3. "The Feet of Brass"--"And His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Brass is noted wherever righteousness is under judgment. Brass signifies the incarnate Christ enduring judgment as a Man for the sins of the world. This brass of His feet has been tested by the Father's judgment that drew out of it all the contamination that sin could bring to it. Thus it signifies Divine Judgment: a judgment decreed and brought to pass by the Father. This should bring to mind John's reference to Moses and the Brazen

Serpent, *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”* That brought the record of Numbers 21:8-9 right before them, and now to us—*“And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that everyone that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”* Israel had sinned. Sin had to be judged. So God commanded Moses to place a brazen serpent on a pole, and he who looked was saved from the penalty of his sin.

The *brazen serpent* on the pole represented sin from the Garden of Eden, which brought mankind down and separated them from God. Brass speaks of judgment, and on the Brazen Altar in the Tabernacle, the penalty for sin was met in the Sin Offering upon the altar. In this incident we see that the serpent upon the pole is the image of sin already judged, just as is the sin offering on the Brazen Altar. Divine judgment had already fallen upon sin, and Deity accepted the sacrifice that God had called adequate. Therefore, whoever looked *at the serpent* on the pole and accepted the significance of it, was delivered from the result of it, the sting of the serpents on the ground. This foreshadowed the gospel, the salvation of the Lord.

Note carefully that it was the serpent on the pole, *not the pole itself* that delivered the sin-afflicted soul!!!

The serpent on the pole is a *type* of what Jesus came to earth *as a Man* to accomplish. He came in flesh as the Last Adam in order to become the *perfect* Sin Offering. The foundation of the Brazen Altar was wood, the humanity of Christ, overlaid with brass, typifying the Judgment of God from before the foundation of the world. Judgment had already passed upon Him when *as yet there were no sinners*. Thus is salvation entirely of the Lord, the Lamb of God slain *before* the foundation of the world.

At His Second Coming those feet of brass will stand upon the earth, and with equity and perfection He will judge mankind. And there will be no escaping; for those feet of brass will crush the enemy. They will destroy the Antichrist, the beast and the image and all that is vile in His sight. He will destroy the church systems of Christendom that have taken His Name only to corrupt its brilliance and will crush them along with the Antichrist. The books will be opened and the lukewarm church and the five foolish virgins will appear. When He comes he will prepare the earth for His Millennial Kingdom, for it is His, and with Him will be the thousands times ten thousands, His Bride, who has come to worship and to minister to Him. And He will reign with His Bride for a thousand years as the wedding celebration extends over all the earth.

4. "His Voice was as the Sound of Many Waters"—Careful now, for it's *the sound of many waters*, not the waters themselves that is in view. That sound of a great waterfall, or the rolling incoming tide, is the picture here. It speaks of power, of relentless, limitless power. It shakes the very earth and conveys frailty to the world around it. Think of the promise of Christ to the Samaritan woman at the well; "if you had asked of Me, I would have given you water and you would have never thirsted again." That spoke to her of two things; one, water that could slake one's thirst once and for all; and two, water that flowed in an inexhaustible stream. Now think of the shout of Christ in the courtyard of the Temple; "Drink of the water which I give you and out of your belly shall flow a river of living water" (John 7:38ff). Water that is alive! Water that quenches thirst forever! But, it was water that was *rejected*!!! What a tragedy, the sound of that water pouring out without being taken in by any thirsty man--it is a thundering condemnation of everyone who rejects the gospel of grace. *This is the voice of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, who has testified to Christ and preached His Gospel, now rising in judgment against all those who ignored the warning.* Is it any wonder that His heart was broken?

5. "In His Right Hand Were Seven Stars"—we already know from verse twenty what the seven stars actually are: "And the mystery of the seven stars,

they are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches.” These seven stars are the messengers to the seven assemblies named in Asia. They are not called by name. They are just identified as seven, the number of completion. Some say that they represent divisions of the Church Age, from the Ephesian-Age on down to this Laodicean-Age. Others say that they represent seven characteristics, which may be found in any assembly at any time in the Church Age. I take it to mean that these seven assemblies were characterized by these seven characteristics. The application to us is;

*by what characteristics
are we known as an assembly of
believers?*

6. “The Two-edged Sword”—The two-edged sword was the Roman weapon of choice for hand-to-hand combat. It was effective in the hands of a trained soldier and an efficient instrument of death. We often fail to appreciate that the same Word of

“For the Word of God is alive, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a perfect critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12

God that brings grace and mercy, also brings condemnation and eternal death to those who hear but do not accept the offer of redemption and reconciliation. Out of His mouth went the sharp two-edged sword which is the Word of God. In Revelation 19:11-16, “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 . . . and out of His mouth goes a sharp sword.” It is the same image. The “[Word of God](#)” is the [will of God](#) as revealed to man by the [Son of God](#).

7. “His Face like the Sun.”—There are several instances where the *glory* of God appeared unto men: Genesis tells us that when God made man, He made ‘them’ in His image, male and female. Now, what is the image of God? Psalm 104 says that God “wraps Himself with light as a garment.” That’s good

enough for me! So when He made this creature, man, He wrapped it in light, so that it looked like Him. Radiant brilliance! Like moon and sun, so were the man and God. When Moses went up to the top of the mountain to receive the tablets of Law, on returning he covered his face so that the people could not see that the glory on his face was fading as he came down. When God had the Israelites build the Tabernacle, He consecrated it with a ball of fire from within the Holy of Holies igniting the Brazen Altar and filling the tent with the Shekinah (Leviticus 9:24). It was like a bolt of lightning, and all of Israel fell down as dead men.

In Matthew 17:1-2; “and after six days Jesus takes Peter, James, and John his brother, and brings them up to a high mountain apart. And was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.” When Paul was on the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to him, in light so intense that it knocked him to the ground. John said in his Gospel that “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (John 1:5).

John’s response to the image

(1:17-18) Like the Israelites at the fire that ignited the Brazen Altar, when John saw this image, he “fell at his feet as if he were dead.” While he was lying there, the image “laid his right hand” upon John while saying, “Fear not, I (the noun is literally ‘I be’

egō) am the first and the last.” Both “first” and “last” are preceded by the definite article, which means that they are emphatic. There are only two men before the Father, the *first* Adam, and the *Last* Adam. All who were born into the family of the first Adam were flawed with Sin, the Old Adamic Nature. All who were reborn into the family of the Last Adam (Christ) were resurrected to *new creation* life in the Only Begotten Son of God and are therefore directly related to God. The text makes it inescapable that *the* first, and *the* last, refers to these two men before God. Then, He goes on to say that I am “the living one” (referring to His incarnation as a man) and I became dead (referring to the crucifixion), and behold, I am living (the resurrection to new life as the eternal risen Man) to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of Hades” (referring to the fact that all power has been given to Him).

And when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; *I* am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold, I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of Hades. Revelation 1:17-

18

(1:19-20) The Image said to John, “Write therefore what you have seen.” There are three categories of things

It is going to be very necessary for us to distinguish between the lamps (lampstands) and the light that they produce. The lamps, “lampstands,” are the capability of the “seven assemblies” to spread the gospel.

that are to be written by John; things that he *has seen*, things that are *being seen*, and things that are *about to be seen* after these things.

The Lord Jesus begins with things that John has already seen, “the seven stars, which you have seen on my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands.” It is going to be very necessary to distinguish between the lamps *luchnia* (lampstands) and the light *phos* that they produce. The “lampstands” are the capability of the “seven assemblies” to spread the gospel. The “light” *phos* is the gospel, the content of the good news of reconciliation.

“Stars” *asteras* are planets rather than constellations like Pleiades or Orion. *Asteras* speaks of units of heavenly bodies that stand alone, each with a purpose. So it is with the new creation assembly (church); each is an autonomous body, but with a single Creator Head, Jesus. “Angels” *aggeloi*, ‘messengers,’ most likely refers to the pastors or elders of the individual assemblies. The pastors/elders are the ones sent by God with a message to the church, the assembly. They are not free to redefine that message, but are charged with the responsibility of hearing that message from God and delivering it intact, precisely as given to them. You don’t get *that* message from studying the Word; you get it from communion with God. What you get from studying the Word of God is your

knowledge of God, and that allows you to approach the privilege of communion on a level enabling you to receive what God desires to entrust to you. This is not the “Word of Knowledge” that is claimed by many Pentecostal preachers today, but which does not exist as a Biblical gift! The seven lampstands are the assemblies. They are everything necessary to hold the light of the gospel up for men to see. The New Testament church is not replaceable in the Plan of God by any other organization.

Now pay careful attention to this—You can have an apparently perfectly functioning New Testament Church, but if the *content of the Gospel is not correct regarding the reconciliation of mankind to God, then you do not have the light of the Gospel held up for men to see.* By the same token, you can have the Gospel rightly defined and being supported by individual members of the local body; *but the order of and in the body must follow what God intends and has taught us through the Apostle Paul’s epistles.* If it does not, then the message of the gospel is compromised by what is visible in the Church and the Holy Spirit is hindered *in His work of drawing men and women to Christ.*

Write therefore what thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these. The mystery of the seven stars which thou hast seen on my right hand, and the seven

golden lamps. -- The seven stars are angels of the seven assemblies; and the seven lamps are seven assemblies. Revelation 1:19-20

Revelation Chapter 2

(2:1-7) Ephesus was a renowned center of both art and philosophy. The Apostle Paul assigned Timothy, his strongest co-worker to lead the assembly there and appoint elders. "Unto the angel" says that this message is to be conveyed to one who can be depended on to deliver it to the entire assembly. That messenger, specific for each of the seven assemblies, was probably the pastor/elder appointed in accord with the instructions of Paul to Timothy and Titus. When we look at the content of the message we can immediately see the relevance to any New Testament assembly today; so this is rich ground for every teacher to plow. Every believer should spend time digesting the content of each of the letters to the Churches of Asia.

"These things says he who holds the seven stars ("Angels"–Messengers) in his right hand." This is the Lord who personally protects and directs the "seven stars," His Messengers. It is He "who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." Though He has ascended to His heavenly position, and taken with Him the saints from the Old Testament (Ephesians 4:8) as honored guests at the Marriage

Supper of the Lamb, He still is present “in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,” which are the assemblies of believers across the earth. His “right hand” is the hand of power and authority. Every one who serves the Lord Jesus today does so in the power of the Spirit that He sent to indwell and empower. Here the Spirit reveals the ascended Jesus to the Church of Ephesus as the Head of the “faithful, holy and true” assemblies, the body of Christ.

Ephesus means *desired*, and as the letter to the Ephesians demonstrates, the Church is the cherished object of His love. The Ephesians’ assembly is representative of the entire Church at the beginning of this dispensation of Grace. It is the Church that had received the truth of union with God in Christ from Paul in the clearest of terms. Their “works” are known to the Lord, for He prepared them in eternity past that they “should walk in them.”¹ Remember in Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles, where the qualifications for Elders and Deacons were given—well, here we see the results: “you have tried them who say that they are apostles and are not, and found them liars.” What a precious gem of a commendation. They have “endured” and they “cannot tolerate evil men” and they have “not wearied” in their labor. “But” begins the contrast—“I have against you, that

¹ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, *which God prepared in advance for us to walk in them.* Ephesians 2:10

you have left your first love." Here is the seed of all Church and individual failure; and it is sown before the great Apostle Paul is ever taken in death. Failure springs from becoming so occupied with *our* labor, *our* walk, and *our* obedience that we lose sight of Him, the source of our life as *new creation* believers, and in losing sight of Him, we *leave* our love *of* Him for our work *for* Him. We are so focused on what *we are 'doing'* for Him that we lose sight of what He is to us. What is the result? If you do not change your course, then "I will remove your lamp out of its place." What the Lord Jesus wants from His Bride, the Church, was and is her complete adoration, her "first love." Now this is perhaps the scariest warning in all of Scripture, because it is to a Church that had everything going for it and let the true gospel drift past them without even so much as a ripple in the water. Removing the "lamp out of its place" means that

*the gospel of reconciliation
based on God's grace
is no longer going to be propagated
by this growing assembly!*

This is the most stinging indictment ever leveled against an assembly of believers within the Body of Christ, one that thinks they are pursuing a course that is pleasing to God. Look at the things they are commended for maintaining; then look at this major disappointment that is registered with so much

sadness and so much disdain that it would require the extinguishing of the light of the gospel from their midst.ⁱ

To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write:
These things says he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps: I know your works and [your] labor, and your endurance, and that you cannot bear evil [men]; and you have tried them who say that they [are] apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and endure, and have borne for my name's sake, and have not wearied: but I have against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore whence you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works: but if not, I am coming to you, and I will remove your lamp out of its place, except you shall repent.

This next section of the passage describing the letter to the church at Ephesus is going to require some details regarding the *Nicolaitanes*. The name, "Nicolaitanes," is a compound word composed of three Greek words. Because it is a proper noun, it is transferred directly into English. The Greek words used are, *nikos*, which means "a conquest, a victory, or a triumph. It can also refer to those conquered; and by implication, dominancy over the defeated." The second term used is *laos*, "people." The Greek word/phrase *laiton*, root produces "the laity." The third word used in

Nicolaitanes is *tan*, the genitive case plural in all genders of the definite article "the" (Robertson). So we then have the English word *Nickos-laoston*, which becomes *Nicolaitanes*. In its Scriptural application to the Church it means, "*those who believe that the bishops, pastors, and priests of the Church rightly hold a superior position before God over the laity*" i.e. Clergy. In other words, that clergy are held in higher regard than laity by God and men. They have by their own decree become that thing which God hates: "Lords over God's heritage." Dear Pastor, Elder, Teacher, Deacon, Missionary, or brother/sister; please do not take this as any sort of denigration of what you do while laboring in God's harvest, but as a caution against letting any hint of privilege creep into your thoughts beyond that of simply being on site when the blessed Spirit of God *does the work* in which you are to walk.

Carefully note this change in emphasis from the Body as a whole to a specific segment that includes many who call themselves 'Christian.' As the Church loses its "lamp" of the gospel by default, even as it "hates the works of the false clergy," God still has His remnant, identified here as "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies," but it is diminishing. While Christendom and the Church are failing, there are those who see and understand what the Spirit teaches; and they use 'the truth' to "overcome." *That one* will "eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God." There is no group deliverance,

but individual accountability before God. Look around you child of God, for He is dealing with His remnant even now according to the truth delivered to the Apostle Paul and diligently recorded in the very epistles we are studying.

But this you have, that you hate the works of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him that overcomes, I will give to him to eat of the tree of life which is in the paradise of God. Revelation 2:1-7

(2:8-) The assembly in Smyrna is facing a period of severe persecution. Scofield notes that it extended from the end of the Apostolic Age to approximately 316a.d.

Smyrna comes from the word "myrrh," which is the main aromatic ingredient of the anointing oil and of the incense on the altar within the tabernacle and temple. It signified the presence of God to an OT **believer**.

The "first and last" refers to the Lord Jesus, Who "became dead and lived" through the resurrection and ascension. The Smyrna Church, like the Church in Ephesus, is busy at work for God. But, they face a hard future of "tribulation, and poverty." What they lack in material goods they have in an abundance of spiritual wealth. The question is; do they know it? Within their ranks are a group of people, claiming the name of Christ, but

who are insisting that they are real Jews, which means that they are supposedly practicing Jewish Law. The Lord calls them “a synagogue of Satan.” Note the play on words here—*ekklesia* is an assembly of ‘called out ones,’ those separated out of mankind, out of Jewish legalism, and unto the ascended Jesus. *Synagogue* refers to those ‘gathered together,’ an entirely Jewish thing, as Wm R. Newell puts it. How subtly the errors manifest themselves within the assemblies.

With loving concern the Lord says to this assembly; “Fear nothing of what you are about to suffer.” The sympathy of a suffering Savior is extended to them; also the courage of One who is ever confident of the love of His Heavenly Father. From our vantage point in history we know that they were gong to fail miserably, for the early church was so rapidly and thoroughly changed by those addicted to law as a Biblical ethic. Does evangelicalism today continue to meld the principles of law into our relationship to our Savior? *It does!* Does the average Christian today know the difference between Christ the Messiah of Israel and the ascended Jesus, the Savior of mankind and His *ekklesia* in particular? *They do not*, for the Psalms, Proverbs, and Prophets of the Old Testament are the favorite haunts of preachers in search of a theme. Those portions of Scripture offer earthly rewards; ease and wealth; defeat of one’s enemies, and an earthly Kingdom of peace and universal prosperity

as the anticipated reward for faithfully *working for* God. But these things are not *to be found* in the Pauline Epistles, nor are they in the testimonies of the Apostles. The letter to the church in Ephesus spoke of the total bankruptcy derived from working *for* God.

What is the “Second Death?”

Adam was told in Eden that the price for disobedience regarding the forbidden fruit in the garden was “dying thou shalt die,” speaking of the dual deaths that would follow failure. The first imposed death was physical; it was in effect immediately, though evidenced by their aging, it was slowly perceived. The second death imposed was spiritual, which occurred immediately and was evidenced by the loss of their covering of light and their awareness of nakedness.

After physical death, man faces the consequence of having reached the end of his life without a relationship to God—this condition of condemnation is the *second death*. Note the requirement for deliverance, “you be faithful unto death and I will give to you the crown of life.” For the man or woman in this Age of Grace who is staring at this passage with the thought that salvation can be lost through faithlessness, let me give you some assurance. This is speaking to those who have never grasped the Gospel of Reconciliation, but have been toying with it, sometimes for years. You have been constantly

reviewing your works to gain some indication that you are worthy of being inducted into God's heavenly graces. Your challenge is to carry faith in God's redemptive power and mercy (faith that He alone can give you through the Spirit's wooing you unto the suffering Savior). You will carry that faith to His grave and there accept His death for you as your Savior. At that moment you *will die* with Him, and rise in Him, and with Him join the grand assembly in resurrection life as a *new creation*. Then, "He that overcomes shall in no wise be injured of the second death." The second death is the judgment following the resurrection of all unbelievers and is their final moment of condemnation for unbelief and rejection of the Gospel of grace. True believers will never face that moment—they are the overcomers.

10 The number 10, used here of "tribulation," to be endured for "ten days," speaks of a time of completion. It calls for focus on the end that draws ever closer. But, you are to "be faithful unto death" and the reward, which is the "crown of life," is yours—for through death, comes life. "He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies" is a clear indication that some will not heed the Spirit's call to Christ in the day of trial! It is clear that this test began immediately on the heels of Paul's admonitions in Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles. And, it is also clear that it applies today to the Body of Christ under attack doctrinally.

The enemy of God began this phase of his assault on truth at the birth of the Church. Not being able to prevent its conception at Pentecost, he started almost immediately, perverting the truth as revealed through the Apostle Paul and substituting in its place the humanism and methodologies of man. Humanism perverts the truth by substituting men's efforts for the work of the Spirit²; the world's methods of management substitute numerical growth *of* the Body of Christ instead of personal growth within those who submit to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and Headship of the ascended Jesus. "I don't believe you" some say! Well, take this test of your favorite program: will it work successfully in an organization *not* committed to Christ? In other words; will it motivate and move any group of men and/or women to achieve their goals in any endeavor apart from promoting Jesus as Lord of Lords and King of Kings? If it will, then it does not require the input and direction of the Spirit of God and is thoroughly worldly at its core. "[I know your works](#)" the Lord said through the apostle John.

And to the angel of the assembly in Smyrna write: These things say the first and the last, which became dead, and lived: I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty; (but you are rich); and the railing of those who say that they

² This is the same tactic used with Cain that led to the murder of Abel, through whom the truth and worship continued.

themselves are Jews, and are not, but a synagogue of Satan. Fear nothing of what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. You remain faithful unto death, and I will give to you the crown of life. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. He that overcomes shall in no wise be injured of the second death. Revelation 2:8-11

The Church at play with the world--

(2:12-17) "Pergamos" *permagōi* means 'a thorough marriage' (Gaebelein). Here is an assembly that should exhibit a total trust in the Lord, "He that has the sharp two-edged sword" *tēn romphaian tēn distomon tēn oxeian*. The *romphaian* was the Thracian long sword, or lance. It had hollows or holes ground into its tip to increase the damage it did passing through a body; thus it was "two-edged" *distomon* (lit. 'two-mouthed' from *dī* two, and *stoma* mouth). "Sharp" *oxeian* preceded by the article *tēn* emphasizes that this is a fine cutting instrument, not a coarse axe. This church is found right "where the throne of Satan is," on earth. This is also the realm from which the Lord identifies His Bride, who does "hold fast my Name." There is no question of their faith or identification with the ascended Jesus. "Antipas" represents the martyrs in the Body of Christ whose blood always

seems to stimulate growth. This is the period in history when Satan stopped persecuting the church and began his infiltration as an angel of light, forging alliances with the world and turning away from the *principles of separation* that Paul taught. Isn't this exactly what brought Israel down prior to the Messiah's arrival? The church at Pergamos has embraced those same practices and also accepted the *hierarchy of clergy*, which is the core error of the Nicolaitanes. This is Christianity based on a supposed Judeo-Christian ethic, which is nothing but a works-based, law-keeping, rule of life that obscures the gospel of grace. It is sobering to think that this began in the second century and is in full bloom today. The "hidden manna" speaks of the Lord Jesus, our sin offering, of which we as believer-priests partake. The "white stone" signifies our election, and the "new name" is known only to the one who is redeemed and in union with our ascended Lord. Inset is a photo of a common white stone marker from Pergamos with names inscribed. Pergamos was a grand city that rivaled Ephesus and Alexandria with its temples to Zeus and Dionysis, and the temple to Asclepius the God of Healing.

And to the angel of the assembly in Pergamos write: These things says he that has the sharp two-edged sword: I know where you dwell, where the throne of Satan is; and you hold fast my name, and have not denied my faith, even in

the days in which Antipas my faithful witness was, who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against you: that you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat of idol sacrifices and commit fornication. So you also have those who hold the doctrine of Nicolaitanes in like manner. Repent therefore: but if not, I come to you quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him that overcomes, to him will I give of the hidden manna; and I will give to him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives it.
Revelation 2:12-17

The Church under the influence of clergy and liturgy

(2:18-29) The first thing we note about the letter to Thyatira is that it comes from “the Son of God” *ho huios tou theou*. This is His name as related to the Trinity and must be compared to the Papal persona of Him as the *son of Mary*. The historical period associated with the church at Thyatira is that of Rome’s Papal ascendancy. It should not go unnoticed that this period is identified with the rise in influence of the goddess figure of Mary as Co-Mediatrix of Grace. The reference here to “Jezebel” *tēn gunaika*

Jezebel (“the woman Jezebel”) is to the influence of a self-appointed female seer within the church, who led those who would follow Christ into idolatry, worldly pursuits, and licentiousness, just as did Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, who married Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kings 16:31). A fanatical worshiper of the pagan idol Baal; she attempted to force it upon the Israelites. King Ahab even built a pagan temple for her in the capital city of Samaria and permitted 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to eat at the royal table (1 Kings 16:32, 18:19). Jezebel attempted to overthrow the worship of God, commanding that the people forsake Jehovah, and murdering as many of His prophets she could find (1 Kings 18:4). The remainder hid in caves in the wilderness (1 Kings 18:13). The prophets of Baal were killed after a confrontation with the prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:16-46). A. T. Robertson comments; “One is puzzled to know how such a woman had so much shrewdness and sex appeal as to lead astray the servants of God in that church.”

Now, watch the details of this letter unfold—“eyes as a flame of fire” *tous ophthalmus autou hōs phloga porus*, brings to mind the fuller’s fire that purifies. “Feet of fine brass” *hoi podes auto homoioi chalkolibanōi* (1:15) are those hardened by trial. He knows their works, namely “the love, the faith, the service, the endurance” *tēn agapēn, tēn pistin, tēn diakonian, tēn*

hupomonēn (note that all four works, or graces, are preceded by the feminine article); also notice that their “*last works*” are “more” *pleiona* (in number) than the “*first works*.” This is very significant, and a serious warning. This church has gotten real busy working *for* God, but it is not what He wants. He never wants us out there creating the “works” in which we labor.

He wants us to concentrate on walking
in the works that He has done
and prepared for us
from before the world was--
(Ephesians 2:10).

That’s what Paul told the believers at Ephesus long before God gave this vision to John. Do you see the thread?—James told the Jews who had seen the Messiah, and were now faced with leaving the Law and taking on the Christian life of faith, that they had to have “*new works*” to go with their “new faith” for ‘faith without works is non-productive, dead! But, their habit of going to the synagogue or to the temple and doing the works of the Law was not going to lead them to repentance like it had in the past (Hebrews 6). They had come into a new understanding of truth as delivered by the resurrected and ascended Jesus—“Old things have passed, behold new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Now look at what has happened; barely two decades have passed and John

sees the churches busy at work, inventing ways to serve God, working hard—but look carefully because it's getting them chastised; even condemned! “More” *pleiona* is greater in number, not in quality! And whose works are these that are being so diligently pursued? They are “*her works*,” the works of Jezebel, high priestess of Babylon. Is this same thing with us in our world of churches today? Yes! In its most virulent form it is Jihadic Islamic theology, malevolent and paranoid. In it's slightly less perceptible form, though it remains spiritually malignant and disabling, is liturgical Christendom. This includes Catholicism, the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and high-church Episcopalians as well; and it is spreading like wildfire throughout the realm of protestant churches caught up in purpose-driven programs rather than Spirit-directed service. At the edge of your mental chart are the Masonic lodges that depend on *their works-salvation* for all who are well-intentioned. Look carefully, for God made her available to men supposedly committed to following Him. In verse 21, He gave her time to repent of her fornication *porneías* (unnatural sex), and she would not, so—“Behold I cast her into a bed.” Those that “commit adultery *moicheuontas* (illegal sex), with her” are destined for “great tribulation unless they repent of *her works*.” But it doesn't stop there for “her children will I kill with death.” What does that tell you? Spiritual children are those won to any system of false doctrine, adhering to a gospel other than that of an ascended

Lord Jesus, revealed through the Apostle Paul (Galatians 2). Last, the doom of the offenders will be known as far as their relationships with Jezebel (both ancient and current) are known by the one who searches the “reins and the heart,” “Reins” *nephrous* (lit. “kidneys”).

And to the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write: These things says the Son of God, he that has his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass: I know *your works*, and love, and faith, and service, and your endurance, and *your last works* to be more than the first. But I have against you that you permit the woman Jezebel, she who calls herself prophetess, and she teaches and leads astray my servants to commit fornication and eat of idol sacrifices. And I gave her time that she should repent, and she will not repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed; and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of *her works*, and her children will I kill with death; and all the assemblies shall know that I am he that searches the reins and the hearts; and I will give to you each according to *your works*. But to you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I do not cast upon you any other burden; but what you have hold fast till I shall come. And he that overcomes, and

*“he that keeps unto the end **My works**,
to him will I give authority*

over the nations,” and “he shall shepherd *poimanei* them with an iron rod; “as the vessels *hos ta skeua* of the pottery *ta keramikos* are broken in pieces, as I also have received from my Father; and I will give to him the morning star. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. Revelation 2:18-29

Where does the reward go? Not to the one performing works for God, but to the one who “keeps unto the end **My works.**”

It is important that we do not overlook the phrase, “as the vessels of the pottery are [being] broken in pieces.” I understand the “vessels” in this context—In a great house there are many vessels, some made to honor, and some made to dishonor, or common use. That speaks to me of service, and if applied to the church in the Age of Grace it would be the believer as the container of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of service of that believer. Since this is speaking to the church right at the time of transition from the Age of Grace to the Tribulation under Law, then it presents the “over-comer” who is being given authority to rule over the Gentile nations (a position previously held by the

Church) and the “breaking into shards” of the vessels containing the gifts of the Spirit for service, which was the church of the Age of Grace. It is not the destruction of the Church, but that the Church is no longer the agent of God in the Tribulation, for it now *reigns* as the overcomer *rules*.

Revelation Chapter 3

The Church with a compromised Gospel

(3:1-6) One stands in the midst of the seven candlesticks, and in His hands are the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars. We will get to their individual meanings in a bit; but here, I want you to focus on this visual imagery of majesty and grace, and power. From that One comes this statement: “I know your works and that you have a reputation (name) for being a church that is alive and thriving; but you are dead.” All the growth and glitter and reputation for being a ‘happening’ place is not going to keep any assembly from being “dead” before God! Look at His caution—“Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die.” What was it that was slipping away and about to die? It was the Gospel revealed to Paul and preached to the Colossians and Ephesians.

What you teach is everything!

It doesn't have to be relevant! It doesn't have to be even close to contemporary! It doesn't have to be

entertaining! It just has to be **accurate . . . right . . . Scriptural!**

I don't care what they *did* for God; their works were not "complete." They (the works) were immature, not productive, falling short of demonstrating the meat of the Word of God (Hebrews 5). Those works were coming from minds of shallow character and lack of spiritual depth. So, what's the answer? "Remember how you have received and heard" the gospel "and keep it and change the course you are on (repent)."

We are blessed at our church to have a rich legacy of Bible instruction that stretches back into the nineteenth century and the reintroduction of Pauline theology through the work of dedicated and scholarly men and women, i.e. the Brethren authors. Those lessons spanned the gap of those dark ages between John's vision of Jesus' Revelation marking the attack on the great Apostle Paul's instructive epistles to the Body of Christ, and *the reawakening* brought to light by so many Brethren authors from 1827 to approximately 1940. It was totally predictable that the core of that truth would dissipate over the last six decades of the twentieth century, just as it did in the six decades after Paul. Now we can see more clearly that truth is, as always, thinly scattered throughout the assemblies of Christendom, in the hands and hearts of the faithful; and we know that is how the Church is to be found at the Lord's return—corporately in shambles and

individually alive under trial and testing. Let these thoughts wash over your thirsty souls as you read and reread these letters revealed to the apostles so many centuries ago. Darby might have been more right than any of us suspects, when he said that the Church is, and has been, in total ruin since Paul. As you read these revelations given to John it is apparent that the assemblies were *already* seen by God as failing miserably before the end of the first century. "I know your works" is oft repeated, and here is added, "I have not found *your* works complete." The word for "complete" *teleios* is the same used for 'mature,' or 'fully equipped.'

What happened to the gospel according to Paul during the intervening years? It had been allowed to become corrupt through both benign (lack of attention) and malignant (intentional false teaching) neglect on the part of leadership. The church got busy 'working *for*' Jesus and in that process, stopped the very activity that it was designed to accomplish; '*walking in the works of God that He had prepared before the foundation of the world, that we should "walk in them (Ephesians 2:10)."*'

*We were not designed as Christians
to accomplish great things for God,
but to walk in the great things that He has
already accomplished on our behalf.*

We are the “living trophies of God’s Grace” (Ephesians 2:4-7) from this spiritual battle of the ages. What do you expect a trophy to do? It doesn’t win the battle! It doesn’t even participate! It *testifies* to the strength and prowess of the winner!!! I can hear Charlie Jones, my dear brother from Jackson, now with the Lord, even now, saying, “Connie, just brag on Jesus.”

Now, watch carefully—“If therefore you shall not watch,”—watch what? Watch what you have “received and heard,” which is the Gospel delivered to them by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the churches; those thirteen epistles that make up [God’s instructions to the Body of Christ](#). If you don’t pay careful attention to keeping what you have been taught, then “I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall not know at what hour I shall come upon you.” The message to the church at Sardis is exactly the Lord’s warning to us today—**Guard the content of the Gospel that has been given to you through Paul!** Are they all guilty? No, for there are some who have not defiled their covering of Christ’s righteousness; “But you have a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.” They will walk with the Lord Jesus “in white because they are worthy.” How important is this; it is essential, for “he who overcomes” the world’s attempts to pollute the Gospel, “he shall be clothed in white garments, and I

will not blot his name out of the book of life, and will confess his name before my Father and before his angels." The clear implication is that those who pollute the Gospel or change its content are in danger of having their names taken out of "the book of life" because they do not know what the true Gospel of grace really is. Those who are in the spiritual intelligence of a true believer have ears tuned to the Holy Spirit's instructions; thus, "He that has an ear; let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies." The emphasis is on actively listening to what is being taught and making sure that you and/or your church leadership are not drifting in their treatment of the Gospel of Grace.

And to the angel of the assembly in Sardis write: These things, says he that has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars: I know your works that you have a name that you live, and are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, which are about to die, for I have not found your works complete before my God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and keep it and repent. If therefore you shall not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you shall not know at what hour I shall come upon you. But you have a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, because they are worthy. He that over-comes, he shall be clothed in white

garments, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. Revelation 3:1-6

The Church focused on God's love--

(3:7-13) Here is the message to the assembly in the city of brotherly love, Philadelphia. Watch this word-play carefully; the one who is speaking is "the holy, the true," which refers to His character, His attributes as Divine. He is further described as "he that has the key of David." This speaks of His humanity, the rights of the King, the man in the highest position of authority among men. There is nothing closed to Him, nothing that He cannot look into and examine thoroughly. When He is described as, "he who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open," it is speaking of His decrees as absolutes. When He opens an issue to discovery, there is no one who can cover it up or hide it from view. Conversely, when He closes an issue to discovery, there is no one who can open it for inspection or uncover its secrets. Having established His power and authority, His assessment of the assembly in Philadelphia begins with the words; "I know your works" *oída sou ta erga*. We flinch at the first two words, "I know," but err completely in our focus, for the real condemnation falls upon the third and fourth words, "your works."

Look at the last sentence on Chapter two . . . He would see **"My works"** instead of *their works*. There is a principle that is well-established in Scripture—Grace always precedes judgment!

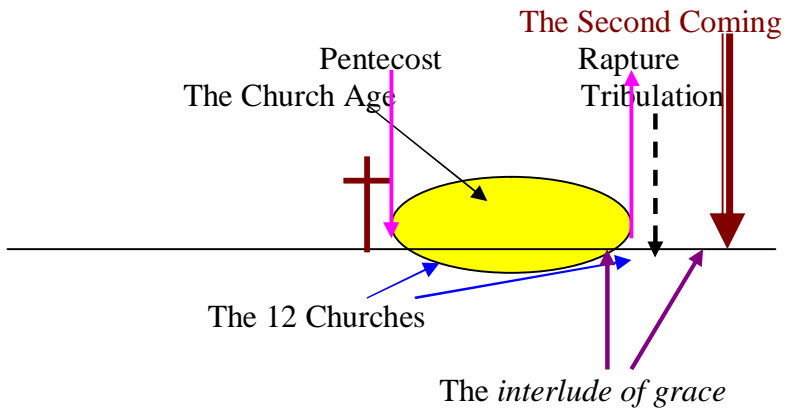
The *Interlude of Grace*

There is now before this assembly an "hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." That "hour" was beginning even as the message was being delivered through the Apostle John; and it would continue through the age to the Rapture and on into the period known as the Tribulation.

Peter, James, Apostles	} Gospel to Israel	Paul	} Gospel to Gentiles	John	} The Church in Ruins	→
From Matthew 28 To Acts 2, Rom. 10 and Hebrews 6		From Acts 2 to the Pastoral Epistles		The Church in Prophecy through the Marriage Supper of the Lamb		

Today, we are privileged to live in that short interlude of *grace that always precedes judgment* in the annals of mankind. I believe that this *interlude of grace* is the period extending from the reawakening at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the period of the great apostasy now occurring, which I believe centers in the charismatic, Pentecostal churches that so sorely miss the gospel of grace and embrace principles

of law. On the one hand they pursue the promised blessings of Israel in the Kingdom age ruled over by the Messiah as their reward for faithfulness; while on the other hand, they measure their walk according to principles of Law and suppose ill health, lack of wealth, and an absence of ease, on all who are not faithful in keeping those precepts of law in their walk as Christians. What gets lost in the process is that the principles of law rightly applied must go beyond the Ten Commandments and embrace all 616 ethical rules for living as defined in Exodus and Leviticus. In addition, to keep the Sabbath, you first must have a perfect Sabbath. That is only possible when the Righteous King is *on* the throne and perfect peace rules in the world. Until that happens, the presence of Sin is the cause of great tribulation and distress for all mankind.



Please note that our *interlude of grace* spans from approximately 1800-1825, following the beginning of the Reformation and the ministries of men like Martin Luther, Zwingli and others, and extends through the period of doctrinal drift in the mid-twentieth Century. Then, the leaders of the fundamental arm of the Christian Churches abandoned those dispensational distinctions established by the Brethren and turned again to the bondage of law-based Christianity that Covenant Theology offered. The “assembly in Philadelphia” represents all those churches across the years that fought the battle against the archenemy of God, and they did so without the foundation of a solid understanding of the Gospel of Grace as revealed through the Pauline Epistles. They often attempted to defeat the enemy by using the wisdom of human reasoning. With that information, they did not deny the name of Christ, but they had “little power.” The Lord will cause those under Satan’s dominion to

honor and pay homage to these anyway to show that He loved this Church in spite of their weakness; and because they endured with the patience of God, He will keep them "out of the hour of trial." Their duty is to "hold fast that which you have (in order) that no one (should) take your crown." This is God, in love, protecting the weak; it is not a reward for any strength on their part. This is the "can't we all just love one another" crowd that makes up a significant part of Christendom today.

And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write: These things say the holy, the true; he that has the key of David, he who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open: I know your works: behold, I have set before you an opened door, which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before your feet, and shall know that I have loved you. Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: hold fast what you have, that no one take your crown. He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go

no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. Revelation 3:7-13

(3:14-22) “Laos” is Greek for ‘*people*,’ thus Laodicea is the land or the place of the people. For us, this assembly might be called the “*People’s Church of Houston*” today. How does the Lord, who is speaking to this assembly, identify Himself? He calls Himself “the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” Now, I would have expected Him to be the *object* of the witness; but He says that He *is* the witness!—The witness of what? When the Father expressed His will in eternity past, what was the first thing that came forth—it was God the Son! In the timeless, measureless expanse of everything, known as the will of the Father, *there was a separation of Himself into an entirely other Person, His Son!* This

is the beginning of the creation of God:

Note carefully the article before “beginning,” for it designates this act as the point of origination of all things, and the Son of God as the embodiment of all creation. There is no article in Genesis 1:1; nor is there an article in John 1:1. There, it simply says that the

narrative is going to start “Beginning with Word,” or “In beginning Word was” (John 1:1).

Is the Laodicean church busy? You bet it is for He says, “I know your works.” But, measured against their mission, which is to be a well of living water, the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, they are tepid, “lukewarm,” unappealing and unable to slack thirst; in this case, spiritual thirst for truth. Now carefully note that the church just preceding this one was the church of brotherly love. To them the warning was given to *hold fast what you have* that no one may *take your crown*. The crown is their mark of identification with Christ. Here in Laodicea the slippage is apparent, for their self-view is that they are “rich, and am grown rich and have need of nothing.” What is required for an assembly to become a Laodicean body—it is absence of the light of the Gospel. Listen carefully, for the Gospel was restored to the church-at-large in the midst of the nineteenth century. Until then, the Church of Jesus Christ was operating in the darkness that permeated the 1800 years from Paul until that time. God therefore treated the Church by winking at their ignorance and holding them accountable to the light they were given in that time. But, today, He is holding the Church accountable to the Gospel restored, which should be drawing men to Him and His Son. It is miserably failing in that duty! Look around you and you will soon see that the Church is making every effort to attract men and women by

offering things that appeal to them. The result is mega-churches filled with Biblically ignorant believers. Judgment is coming on the leadership of those churches who have the Gospel and should know better. They are "the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." The Gospel was under attack for those eighteen centuries, "gold purified by fire." Look and see that the gold of the Gospel may only be purchased "of Me," from the Lord Himself; and that Gospel comes with the white robes of righteousness! How is this to be done? "Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking (*continuous action*); if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me." If any will allow the Lord into their lives, He will come in and take a meal with them. In other words, they may finally *know Him*.

And to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea write: These things say the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would you were cold or hot. Thus because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spew you out of my mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and am grown rich, and have need of nothing, and know not that you are the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by fire, that you may be rich; and

white garments, that you may be clothed, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. I rebuke and discipline as many as I love; be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me. He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne. He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. Revelation 3:14-22

Chapter 4- *Things that are yet to come*

Introduction

The first order of business in John's vision was to bring the condition of the churches to the attention of the assemblies themselves. The assessment is not good; for the repeated theme is "I know your works," and the call to repentance that follows. It is obvious that those seven representative congregations have, for the most part, forgotten *His works* and gotten very busy doing *their* works for Him. It is also obvious that this is totally unacceptable to our Heavenly Father. Hear this well—

*God is not impressed with mega-churches;
He pours His love into mature-churches.*

If we tend His sheep, He will give the increase!

One of the main issues dealt with in Revelation is the redemption of the Earth and the Church. The following chart, taken from Arthur Bloomfield's *All Things New*, will be helpful—

From *All Things New*, Bethany Fellowship 1959

Now, John's attention turns, as "a door opened in heaven." On the invitation to "Come up here" his view is now earthward from heaven. What he will see is "things, which must take place after these things" that have already been mentioned, and they are the failure and deterioration of the church. What is being said is this: there is the period of time from the end of Paul's ministry and the revelation to John, to the present that is one long period. During that entire time, the church of Jesus Christ is seen falling from the heavenly position they were told by the Holy Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, to occupy until the Lord's return.

*This is what the Pauline Epistles are all about—
the instructions for the Church's occupation
on earth until the Lord's return.*

This is not a pretty story, but rather one of continual

**The restoration of
Biblical Truth that
occurred at the
beginning of the
nineteenth century
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the Body of Christ.**

disappointment to God. However, in the midst of the spiritual carnage there is still a remnant that remains faithful. The restoration of Biblical Truth that occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century brought truth long forgotten back to the Body of Christ. It was revealed anew to Christendom that God was at work revitalizing the Body of Christ, which would carry the *ministry of reconciliation* to a lost world of men until the Lord's return. This is not going to be a winning battle in terms of convincing either the world, or apostate Christendom, of these essential truths that have been revealed again, as they were to the Apostle Paul. It is going to be a period during which the forces of evil under the direction of the Antichrist appear to be winning against the righteous forces of God. But, the Lord Himself will return with force and with judgment in His hand, and that is exactly what John is describing to us here.

(4:1-3) He begins with a description of the Father on His throne . . .

After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard as of a trumpet speaking with me, saying, *"Come up here, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."*

. . . immediately on this call, John says that he "became in the Spirit." What he saw was dependent

upon his being led by the Spirit, who always reveals the things of God to man. The description of the appearance of One sitting on the throne brings the stones of the Priest's breastplate to mind. This is God sitting in judgment, and it's as visible and apparent as the light from the stones.

Immediately I became in the Spirit; and behold, a throne stood in the heaven, and upon the throne one sitting, and he that was sitting like in appearance to a stone of jasper and a sardius, and a rainbow round the throne like in appearance to an emerald. Revelation 4:1-3

(4:4-8) Surrounding the throne on which the Father sits are twenty-four additional thrones. The context suggests that they are surrounding the throne as a circle with the Lord God in the middle. They wear white robes of righteousness, for they were "made to be the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21), and on their heads are "golden crowns." The crowns do not signify rewards so much as authority. Out of the throne in their midst proceed blazing flashes of "lightning, voices, and thunder, and before the throne are seven lamps of fire." There is this mighty roar of sound, and John hears what sounds to him like voices mixed with thunder, and before him are these huge blazing "lamps of fire." Are you getting the picture? And stretching out in front of the throne is what appears to be a sea of crystal that goes

on forever. Can you imagine what that must have been like? The sounds bouncing off the surface of the sea, and the reflections of the flaming lamps; and if that wasn't enough to hammer his senses, there were, around and on, and in front of the throne, four creatures with eyes all around their heads that looked in every direction and shouted in a voice that filled the heavens, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come" . . . **and they never stopped, *not ever!***

And round the throne twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones twenty-four elders sitting, clothed with white garments; and on their heads golden crowns. And out of the throne go forth lightning, and voices, and thunders; and seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; and before the throne, as a glass sea, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, four living creatures, full of eyes, before and behind; and the first living creature like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature having the face as of a man, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. And the four living creatures, each one of them having respectively six wings; round and within they are full of eyes; and they cease not day and night saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,

who was, and who is, and who is to come.

Revelation 4:4-8

(4:9-11) As these awesome creatures shout out their praises, the twenty-four elders, each with their own throne, in a ring surrounding the throne of God, fall on their face before Him and they take their crowns off in homage, throwing them at His feet. They raise their voices to join those they already hear in praise saying, "You are worthy, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you have created all things, and for your will they were, and they have been created." Since the four living creatures are engaged in their activity without ceasing, it follows that these twenty-four elders are constantly on their faces, offering their authority to the One on the throne and saying "You are worthy, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you have created all things, and for your will they were, and they have been created." This goes on for years that stretch into millennia and never gets old or stale or boring. It is just one small hint of the change from our fleshly selves to our new creation selves that worship God without the encumbrance of sin. "Old things have passed away, and behold new things have come" (). Doesn't that present a delicious new dimension for life in the Spirit in our heavenly home? But, dear hearts don't wait until then! Let your new-creation life go now! Let the Spirit inside of you soar in that same kind of adoration. I am not talking about

the undefined ecstatic utterances of the charismatic, but the disciplined mind of the believer driven by the Spirit of God expressing the revealed worthiness of the Son and our Father to receive all glory and honor because of what He is and what He has done on behalf of His creation.

And when the living creatures shall give glory and honor and thanksgiving to him that sits upon the throne, who lives to the ages of ages, the twenty-four elders shall fall before him that sits upon the throne, and do homage to him that lives to the ages of ages; and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying, You are worthy, O our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you have created all things, and for your will they were, and they have been created.
Revelation 4:9-11

Isn't it clear, that eternity centers on glorifying God! It's all about Him, not us!

Albrecht Durer was a very skilled woodcut artist who produced many apocalyptic works. Dürer was born on [May 21, 1471](#), third child of his parents, who had between fourteen and eighteen children. His father was a successful [goldsmith](#), originally named Ajtósi, who in 1455 had moved to Nuremberg from [Ajtós, Hungary](#). The German name "Dürer" is derived from Hungarian, "Ajtósi". Initially, it was "Thürer," meaning

doormaker. A door is featured in the [coat-of-arms](#) the family acquired. Dürer's godfather was [Anton Koberger](#), who became a printer and publisher in the year of Dürer's birth. He quickly became the most successful publisher in Germany, eventually owning twenty-four [printing-presses](#) and having many offices in Germany and abroad.

Revelation Chapter 5

Introduction

7

(Newell tells us to read Chapters 4 and 5 over and over as a single passage, because they contain the key to the rest of Revelation)

Redemption is God's program for all Ages; during this Age of Grace, the process of redemption centers on the preaching of the gospel for the salvation of individual souls as the means of glorifying God. At the time of the Rapture, the process of redemption enters yet another stage; it is that of consummation, during which God will deal with the earth in a more direct and dynamic way. As the Gospel continues to be presented to every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, it will be accompanied by severe judgments. The organization of God's forces follows thus: The Four Living Creatures are the highest; the Horsemen are next; Angelic Messengers are third; Trumpets, Bowls, and Vials contain the Seven Last Plagues,

which describe the judgments on the Earth. Some, like Bloomfield, believe that saints from heaven are the actual characters in every stage and step of this scenario—I don't think so! I believe that the saints who have already gone to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be adoring watchers, attending the Lord when He reigns, but not administering over affairs on earth.

In Chapter Five all attention is riveted on Him that sits upon the throne. The time is immediately after the Rapture and the players in this scene are Christ and mankind, specifically, the Church. John is heart-broken because no *man* is found who can open the scroll. But, one of the Elders points out that Christ can open the book.

The book with seven seals—This is a scroll, on which things are written on all sides, and it's sealed with seven seals, seven being the number of completion and wholeness. You get the impression that this scroll contains information that is conclusive—it is the end of the story—His story.

(5:1-7) When a "strong angel" cries out for someone who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll, John is moved to weeping, because there is no one available. I am struck by the fact that they look everywhere in heaven and on Earth, and "under the earth" for someone who is worthy to open the scroll.

They searched heaven and hell for one who could break the seals, to no avail. There was no one who could even approach the scroll. But one of the elders says that the **"Lion of the tribe of Judah," the root of David, is worthy.** **THIS IS THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD RELATIVE TO HIS ROYAL TITLE AS KING OF ISRAEL, KINSMAN REDEEMER, AND MESSIAH, DELIVERING THE NEW COVENANT TO ISRAEL.** It is an entirely Jewish context. The image that John sees next, that of "a Lamb, standing, as slain," **FURTHER IDENTIFIES HIM WITH ISRAEL AND HIS EARTHLY PEOPLE.** **Notice that He is not a Lamb slain and defeated, but a Lamb slain and standing, having overcome death!**

The Lamb stands just before the throne on which the Father is seated, and He takes the scroll from the Father's hand. No one else is even able to approach "regard" the scroll, much less open it. The scroll has been in the "right hand" of the Father, the hand of power and authority.

And I saw on the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book, written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book, and to break its seals?" And no one was able in the heaven, or upon the earth, or underneath the earth, to open the book, or to regard it. And I wept much because no one had been found worthy to open the book or to regard it. And one of the elders says to me, "Do

not weep.” Behold, the lion which is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome so as to open the book, and its seven seals. And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, which are sent into all the earth: and it came and took it out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. Revelation 5:1-7

(5:8) Do you ever wonder what happens to the prayers of God’s people? Here is your answer—they rise to the throne of God, where those who continually offer praise to Him hold them in “golden bowls full of incense” as they fill heaven with their praise of God and the Lamb. This is what was depicted in the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament by the Altar of Incense that stood just before the Great Veil. It was fired by coals taken from the Brazen Altar of sacrifice and it was never allowed to go out, just as the four living creatures and twenty-four elders never cease their praise. Notice that the prayers of the saints are bathed in the music of the harps of the elders. God loves songs of praise. Charley Starke was a dear brother in Jackson MS, who had a beautiful tenor voice and the wonderful habit of breaking into song right in the middle of our prayer meetings, in the church gathered, and in small groups, whenever the Spirit moved him—

*♪Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him
all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly
hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.♪*

What a joy it was to hear those sweet melodies punctuating our prayers and leading our spirits higher. That's what is going on in heaven, and my brother Charley is right in the middle of it all. How rich our life in the Spirit is already, and still greater things are just in front of us.

When the Lamb "took the scroll," He took control over the governmental power as the Mediator of Grace and forgiveness, "which is the burden of Old Testament prophecy" (Newell) [and our heart's vision of self in union with the ascended Christ].

And when it took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, having each a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. Revelation 5:8

(5:9-14) It is precisely at this point that the song of praise they are offering changes—"a new song" is heard throughout all creation. I want you to pay careful attention to the vision that John is revealing here. The Lamb is worthy because He has "been slain" and because He has "redeemed to God, by means of His blood" a people "out of every tribe, and

tongue, and people, and nation (both Jew and Gentile), and made them . . . kings and priests" under God; "and they shall reign over the earth." Is the Church in view here? No! THIS IS A PICTURE OF GOD'S EARTHLY PEOPLE IN THEIR REDEEMED STATE OF GLORY. This has particular application to those of the *diaspora* who have seen the mighty work of God in Jerusalem and now are returned to their native lands, witnessing and moving among their families.

Further note that [this "new song" is the message of Israel's New Covenant](#), and it is inclusive of all those who received the God of Israel, regardless of their tribal relationship to the Chosen Nation—they have become part of the Covenant relationship to God [by means of their faith](#). The Church of the Dispensation of Grace is *not* in the heavenly view being presented by John *at this point*.

As we teach the principles of living *in union with* the Son of God, we must never denigrate or minimize the importance of the Covenants that God has made [with His earthly people](#). They have eternal implications and fulfillment. Angels in numbers immeasurable gather to witness and participate in this "new song." The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing; "Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." This is the message and testimony of the Old Testament,

covenant-oriented Saint based on his view from *this side* of the resurrection. *Now* they know what the Redeemer *really* accomplished. This is such a momentous event that the four living creatures interrupt their continuous song of praise just long enough to say in chorus, "Amen!"

And they sing a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals; because you have been slain, and have redeemed to God, by your blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made them to our God kings and priests; and they shall reign over the earth." And I saw, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and their number was ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice; "Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And every creature which is in the heaven and upon the earth and under the earth, and those that are upon the sea, and all things in them, heard I saying, "To him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing, and honor, and glory, and might, to the ages of ages." And the four living creatures said, "Amen;" and the elders fell down and did homage. Revelation 5:9-14

Revelation 6

The Seven Seals Opened

Introduction

As the Lamb opens each of the seven seals the vision that the Apostle John sees changes and the events on earth become ever more intense. Judgment is upon mankind and all creation. The seven seals constitute an outline of the entire message to God's new creation. The seventh seal contains the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet presents the seven bowls of wrath (chapter 16). All of this is happening while the Lamb is still in heaven in the midst of the throne; the Lord has not yet left heaven to return to earth at His second coming to deliver Israel.

The First Seal—The White Horse

(6:1-2) ("The rider upon the white horse under the first seal is a counterfeit. He is a *false Christ*, who goes forth to conquer. His conquest is a bloodless one, as he has only a bow. He will bring about a false peace among the Gentile nations that for a time may have been alarmed by the supernatural removal of the church" Gaebelein). When the Lamb opens the first seal, one of the four living creatures stops his song of praise and with a voice like thunder says, "Come and see." John does just that and beholds "a white horse." The white horse usually speaks of holiness, or that which sets God apart from sinful creation; here it is a phony sign.

The rider of the horse is armed with “a bow, and a crown was given to him.” The crown is the mark of one who rules through conquering his enemies. You will remember that the Word of God has been described in Hebrews as “piercing even to dividing the soul and the spirit, the joints and the marrow and is the perfect critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” The man who would not be pierced by the convicting ministry of the Word of God is now subject to being conquered by the piercing assault of the arrows of error from the bow of the rider of the white horse. Psalm 45:5 speaks directly to this: *“Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king’s enemies whereby the people fall under thee.”* The phrase “he went forth conquering and to conquer” means to achieve victory finally and decisively (Newell).

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying, as a voice of thunder, “Come and see.” And I saw: and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon it having a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering and that he might conquer. Revelation 6:1-2

The Second Seal—the Red Horse

(6:3-4) When Newell wrote his commentary on Revelation in 1935 he said: “We are sure that the peace of the earth has judicially been taken away, for there is

quietness and order for the most part—despite increasing sin.” In the interim we have seen WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, two Gulf Wars, and now the rise of Islamic Jihadists as a world-wide threat to all other religions and especially to Israel. And yet the Seals have not begun to be opened. The “red horse” speaks of conflict on a global basis that we can hardly imagine. Second Thessalonians 2 speaks of “He who hinders” or “restrains.” This is the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers dampening the destructive power that resides in the souls of the unbeliever. Take that restraining power out of the world and the full effect of evil will be unleashed—“to take peace from the earth and that they should slay one another.”

And when it opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, Come and see. And another, a red horse, went forth; and to him that sat upon it, to him it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should slay one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Revelation 6:3-4

The Third Seal—the Black Horse

(6:5-6) The Black Horse is the sign of poverty and famine. The denarius was about one day’s wages for the working man in the first century. John foresaw the

day when a quart of wheat or three quarts of barley would be all that a day's labors would buy. At the same time, oil and wine, the commodities of those with money, were to be spared. Read again the warning of the Apostle James (James 5:1-6) to those who are rich in this world's goods—"You have heaped treasure together for the last days."

And when it opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come [and see]." And I saw: and behold, a black horse, and he that sat upon it having a balance in his hand. And I heard as a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, A *choenix* (about one quart) of wheat for a denarius, and three choenixes of barley for a denarius: and do not injure the oil and the wine. Revelation 6:5-6

The Fourth Seal—the Pale Horse

(6:7-8) Death rides the Pale Horse *hippos chlōros*. This comes from *chloē* "tender green grass" or, in this case, greenish-yellow, which we would call a sorrel (Robertson). For lost men, Death takes the body, while Hades takes the soul, forever. While mankind engages in warfare, with their backs turned to God, one fourth of all living men will be taken in death by the sword, by famine, and by the beasts of the earth which are in maddened rebellion against men. Nature itself is involved in the judgment of sinful man.

And when it opened the fourth seal, I heard [the voice of] the fourth living creature saying, "Come [and see]." And I saw: and behold, a pale horse, and he that sat upon it, his name [was] Death, and Hades followed with him; and authority was given to him over the fourth of the earth to slay with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

The Fifth Seal—the Martyrs' White Robes

(6:9-11) There is an altar in heaven of which the altar in the tabernacle is patterned (Hebrews 9:23). It is at that altar that the ascended Lord Jesus presented Himself as our Great High Priest. Robertson says that this altar is the Brazen Altar of sacrifice, because at the base of that altar the blood of sacrifice is poured out. I am inclined to believe that this is the Altar of Incense in heaven, because that is the point from which the prayers of the saints rise to God the Father; "and they cried with a loud voice." Beneath that altar are the souls of those slain for their testimony, from Abel to the martyrs of the great tribulation period on earth. They await their full complement, which will arrive in "a little while." They are clothed in the white robes of the righteousness of Christ.

And when it opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a

loud voice, saying, How long, O sovereign Ruler, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell upon the earth? And there was given to them, to each one a white robe; and it was said to them that they should rest yet a little while, until both their fellow-bondmen and their brethren, who were about to be killed as they, should be fulfilled. Revelation 6:9-11

The Sixth Seal—Earthly Chaos; God's Wrath
(This occurs during the last half of the tribulation period)

(6:12-17) The chaos that begins with the opening of the Sixth Seal starts with "a great earthquake" (*seismos megas egeneto*), reminiscent of the shaking of the earth at the crucifixion. The surface of the earth is bombarded with falling heavenly objects and the rising plume of smoke and ash blots out the sun and moon. "Every mountain and island is moved" (*ekinēthēsan*) as the plates of the earth are forced against one another; volcanoes spew the contents of the earth into the atmosphere, filling the air with sulphuric fumes. The blue sky that we know disappears like a scroll "book" being "rolled up" and men live in total darkness. All mankind, in an attempt to find refuge, "hide themselves" in whatever caves they can find, and their cries to the rocks to cover them and hide them "from the face of Him that sits on the throne" (the Father) and "from the wrath of the Lamb" fill the earth. Peter told Israel of these things to come in Acts 2:19-20; *"and I will show wonders in heaven*

above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord comes” (see Joel 2:31).

And I saw when it opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as hair sackcloth, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of heaven fell upon the earth, as a fig tree, shaken by a great wind, casts its unseasonable figs. And the heaven was removed as a book rolled up, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great, and the chiliarchs, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman and freeman, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains; and they say to the mountains and to the rocks, Fall on us, and have us hidden from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; because the great day of his wrath is come, and who is able to stand?

Revelation 6:12-17

Note that God is on His Throne and the Lamb still stands in the midst of the throne in the circle of thrones of the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures. None have as yet moved into the realm of the earth.

Revelation 7

(These events happen at the beginning of the tribulation)

Introduction

The subject of 7:1-8 is *Israel's Inheritance*. We just left a view from earth looking heavenward; now the view is from Heaven towards the earth. The Seventh Seal will not be opened until 8:1; instead, two visions are recorded in Chapter 7. The first is the sealing of God Servants 7:1-8, and the Redeemed standing (*hestōtas*) before the throne of God 7:9-17. The subject of 7:9-17 is *Earth's Judgment-Salvation*.

The Election and Sealing of God's Remnant

(7:1-3) We watch politics develop around the world, including our own in these United States and it sickens us to see the lack of Godly, Biblical, standards. But the political convulsion following the opening of the sixth Seal is going to be so far-reaching that it strikes terror in the hearts of all classes.³ In 1906 Ottman could hardly have imagined the extent to which Islam would rise to hold virtually every nation hostage by means of terrorist plots and activities on a world-wide basis. Through the thoroughly corrupt United Nations, most nations are now pointing towards Israel as the instigator of world unrest and aggression. The storm-clouds that portend a demand

³ The Unfolding Plan of the Ages—Ford C. Ottman (1906) Kregel Publications p.164

for military action against that nation are gathering and nations will align against them.

Now John sees “four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth.”⁴ They are “holding fast” the winds that might keep on blowing from those directions. These are not the balmy trade winds with which we are familiar, but are destructive, tornado forces with the power to cause great damage on land and “upon the sea.” From the east (sun-rising) ascends yet a fifth angel with a message to the four angels holding back the winds; to hold them back “until we shall have sealed the bondmen of our God upon their foreheads.” The seal of God on the foreheads of His Chosen bondmen means that they will be protected from the deception of the Antichrist during the great period of tribulation that is soon to come on mankind and all creation. Without that seal, even the elect would be deceived.

And after this I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding fast the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascending from the sun-rising, having the seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it had been given to hurt the earth and the

⁴ This happens before the seven year period of judgment actually begins.

sea, saying, "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we shall have sealed the bondmen of our God upon their foreheads." Revelation 7:1-3

(7:4-8) Robertson treats this number of 144,000 as symbolical and not meant to be a complete number of those sealed. Newell says that the number is exact, and that we have "no indication" of symbolism here. William Kelly treats the 144,000 as literal. "Judah," the elect royal tribe is named first. "Reuben," the first-born after the flesh, is second. "Gad" and "Asher," are third and fourth respectively. They are Leah's sons by her handmaid Zilpah. "Naphtali," Rachel's son by her handmaid Bilhah, is fifth. Bilhah's first son, Dan, is omitted, as he was always an idolater. In God's grace, Dan is listed as an inheritor when the land is divided, but not a witness in this time of testing. God honors faith and keeps His commitments through grace. "Manasseh" is sixth and replaces Ephraim, who, like Dan, was one who practiced idolatry (Hosea). Also, like Dan, his tribe is preserved into the Millennial Kingdom, and given his inheritance according to grace, but is not sealed as a witness. "Simeon" and "Levi" are seventh and eighth. Jacob, their father, called them cruel men (Genesis 49:5-7), yet grace remembered them. "Issachar" and "Zebulun" are ninth and tenth, respectively. "Joseph" is eleventh and "Benjamin" is the last. Benjamin was the youngest of the brothers and the smallest tribe. It was

almost destroyed totally (Judges 19-21), yet was preserved to produce Israel's first king and also the great Apostle Paul (Romans 11:1).

There are several lists of the tribes, which should be reviewed—See passages beginning in Genesis 35:22; 46:8; Exodus 1:1; Numbers 1:2; 13:4; 26:34; Deuteronomy 27:11; 33:6; Joshua 13-22; Judges 5; 1 Chronicles 2-8; 12:24; 27:16; Ezekiel 48; (Robertson).

And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred [and] forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of [the] sons of Israel: out of [the] tribe of Judah, twelve thousand sealed; out of [the] tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Gad, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Asher, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Nephtali, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Manasseh, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Levi, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Zebulun, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand; out of [the] tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand sealed. Revelation 7:4-8

Pernicious Error

Is this intended to mean that literally twelve thousand from these named tribes of Israel are sealed? I believe so; but Johann Peter Lange (April 10, 1802 - July 9,

1884) says; "The people of Israel here are representative of the whole body of the people of God. It can be affirmed only that converts from Israel are included." He goes on to say; "the people of Israel is the *servant of God*, His elect, whose office it is to disseminate His law amongst the Gentiles before the Servant of God in the truest and fullest sense of the term, the Messiah, is spoken of. The New Testament, again, takes up this typical import of Israel, but only decisively to transfer it to the spiritual Israel, the New Testament faithful people, or people of faith." His view is a common error for most within Christendom today.

As Ottman rightly comments; "After this fashion, literal Israel has been disinherited, and the Church has taken possession of what was never intended for her. All the curses have been left to be borne by a literal Israel, but the promised *blessings* have been filched away and appropriated by a *spiritual* Israel. The Church, losing sight of her own riches, has nevertheless signally failed to enrich herself by this attempted robbery of Israel." Chasing this promise of earthly blessing is the ground on which too many evangelical church pastor/teachers, especially Pentecostal and Charismatic leaders, feed their congregations the *social gospel*. This necessarily keeps them rooted in law and pre-Cross thoughts and activities. Thus planted and fed, their growth is limited to a quasi-goal of 'walking as Jesus walked' rather than growing up into the mature man/woman

living as Jesus now lives, ascended and victorious—it is earthly thinking rather than heavenly.

Earth's Judgment and Salvation

(7:9-17) Please recall that in Acts 2 there were gathered in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration “devout men; Jews from every nation under heaven.” To thoroughly understand this, we are going to have to make a substantive diversion at this point. If we honestly and intelligently read the promises of God to Israel, then we will be convinced that the Church has never, in any adequate way, become the legitimate heir of them. Further, there is no Scriptural basis for the probability that it ever will. *If we give God credit for meaning what He says as the Divine Author of Scripture, then we will be delivered from the spiritualizing process that robs words of their meaning. Christ came “not to destroy, but to fulfill;” so we must trust the intention of God to thoroughly keep the covenants He has made with His ancient people. Whatever their failure, His love for them abides, and it is part of His eternal purpose that “Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.” They are a people with whom God is in a covenant relationship, and a “spiritual Israel” cannot, without a violation of the covenant, displace them.* They are spoken of variously as Hebrews, Jews, and Israelites; and as we observe the perfection of Scripture, there is a clear implication of a distinction to

be made in these terms. They were called "Hebrews" by the surrounding nations, and when in communication with them, they applied that same name to themselves. The name "Jew" springs from the royal tribe of Judah, and originally referred to one belonging to that tribe. After the division into Northern and Southern Kingdoms, this name applied to the separate kingdom of Judah, as distinct from the ten seceding tribes, who retained the name of "Israel" or "Israelites." The term "Israelites" derives from Israel, a name given to Jacob, the founder of the tribes. Note that Jacob himself did not answer to the meaning of this name until he returned from the land of his exile, and no more will the modern Israelites answer to it until they have returned from the place of their banishment. Before the kingdom split, following the death of Solomon, the people were known among themselves as the *twelve tribes of Israel*. When the revolt came, Judah and Benjamin were spoken of after the tribal head of Judah as *Jews*. The ten tribes in the separate monarchy of the north were afterwards alone known as "*Israelites*." For the centuries until Christ this distinction between the *Jews* and *Israelites* was maintained. The Israelites were never spoken of as Jews, for this would bring them under the tribal rod of Judah. The right of a Jew to the title of Israel antedated the division into north and south, and was based on the common origin of all the tribes in Jacob.

Before Solomon died, and because of the evils he did, the Lord said; *"I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it, for David, thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. However, I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen"* (1 Kings 11:11-13). It is evident that the "kingdom of Israel" was rent away from Solomon's son with the exception of one tribe in addition to his own, Judah, and that tribe was Benjamin. The two kingdoms continued without reconciliation until 725 B.C., when Israel was carried away in the Assyrian captivity. The kingdom of Judah continued for another 130 years and was then swept away into Babylonian captivity. The Israelites *never* returned from the Assyrian captivity. There was a return from the Babylonian captivity, and the descendants of these exiles constituted the *Jewish nation of our Lord's day*. There never was any national return of Israel to their land, and there never will be until the hand that scattered them, re-gathers them. This means that

*Israel, as distinct from Judah,
had no part in the crucifixion of Christ!*

Individual Israelites were there, as in the case of Paul, a Benjamite, the tribe assigned by God to Judah at the time of the split. Of interest, the only one of the disciples that was a *Jew* was Judas Iscariot. The tribe

of Judah (with Benjamin, as noted) was alone concerned with the crucifixion of Jesus. In this tribe was vested the title to the throne of David as King over all Israel; for

Christ belonged to the tribe of Judah, and the title to David's throne, both through Joseph and Mary, became legally His.

Jacob, in his dying prophecy said; "the scepter 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" (Genesis 49:10). Christ belonged to the tribe of Judah, and the title to David's throne, both through Joseph and Mary, became legally His.

Dying, He took the title away with Him.

He holds that title yet, and shall hold it until His coronation. He was owned by the Magi as "the King of the Jews;" but from the Jews themselves He obtained no recognition. When the chief priests objected to Pilate's designation of Christ as "The King of the Jews" it constituted Judah's rejection of Him. John precisely captured this in his statement; "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11)." Thus,

*upon Judah alone rests the responsibility
for the rejection of the Messiah!*

Israel as a separate nation had nothing to do with this rejection. The tribes of Israel were certainly lost; but

Jesus had a special interest in them—as He said to the woman of Canaan, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). Israel was not only lost morally, but was absent from the scene physically and scattered abroad among the nations. Where they are, or what they have become, cannot be determined until Christ does what He has prophesied; “shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds (Mark 13:37), from one end of heaven to the other.” Gathered they must be for the redemption of promises made to them.

To return to our text-- there were gathered in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration “devout men; Jews from every nation under heaven.” These Israelites heard the testimony of the Galileans from the upper room, men on whom the Holy Spirit had first descended. Many Israelites who heard them believed and were brought into the church in large numbers, and many of those same Israelites left Jerusalem and returned to their Gentile homelands with the story of what they had seen and heard, still contemplating the miracles and the resurrection. This is the grand company to whom James wrote his marvelous letter, begging them not to return to their practices of the Law, but to embrace grace and accept the ascended Jesus as Lord. What this tells us is that there were many faithful Israelites in the dispersion, scattered in the nations of the earth, practicing righteousness in

their daily lives according to the Mosaic code during the dispensation of Law. That was the case of many of those tradesmen who found their way to Jerusalem. This heavenly company that John sees is not the church of the New Testament, but the remnant of Israel. When John is questioned as to who they are, he responds to the elder who had asked, "You know" and the elder identifies them as ones who came to heaven as martyrs from the great tribulation.

It is important to see that the tribulation period began immediately on the heels of the rejection of Christ by Israel. The Church Age is often referred to as a "parenthesis," and this is the reason for that designation--Prophetically, it is not seen in the Plan of God for Israel. The end-time events of which John is speaking tack right onto the events that follow the crucifixion as if the Age of Grace was not even there.

After the sealing of the 144,000 is completed, John sees "a great crowd, which no man could number" *hon arithmēsai auton oudeis edunato* (Robertson). Swete calls this "a polyglot cosmopolitan crowd," and, like Robertson, believes that they are Gentiles "out of every nation and tribes and peoples and tongues." Kelly agrees with them that this is a Gentile company of believers. After much study, consideration, and prayer, I have come to accept their position. However, I am resolved that these are the converts of those Jewish tradesmen that were in Jerusalem (Acts 2) and

who returned to the respective nation in which they were born. They would, therefore, be mostly Israelites, who heard of the miraculous events following that Passover, but who were not yet drawn into the Church by means of receiving the Holy Spirit as did those later in the book of Acts (chapters 8 and 10). Having been martyred by the terrible oppression of Rome through 70 A.D., their position before the throne is the same as others martyred throughout the great tribulation and is different from the earthly nation of Israel and from the position of the Bride in union with Christ. This background explains the entreaty of James in his letter and of Peter in his two letters to this same company scattered in the nations. We should also not lose sight that this company also includes those who are delivered at the end of the tribulation by the return of Christ to usher those gathered into the millennial Kingdom, where eternal promises will be kept. But, from 7:9 through 7:17 we are seeing a Gentile band of martyrs before God. Note carefully in verse 15 that "He who sits on the throne shall spread His Tabernacle over them." This is exactly the action one would take to secure to himself one adopted under His care.

Immediately after speaking of their being gathered by "angel bands" (Mark 13:26), Jesus says *"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh; even at the doors"* (Mark 13:28-29). This parable is of

the utmost importance to the nation of Israel. To better appreciate these truths look at the older prophecy in Psalms, where the Psalmist says: *"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it. Thou prepared room before it and caused it to take deep root and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea and her branches unto the river"* (Psalms 80:12-16). Here it is of all Israel that the Psalmist speaks, not of the divided kingdom. Canaan was a land prepared for them by God. He had driven out the nations and turned their land into a vineyard for His vine. But the Psalmist goes on to see the land laid waste, for he says; *"Why have you broken down her hedges, so that they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood does waste it; and the wild beast of the field devours it. Return, we beseech Thee, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine; and the vineyard, which your right hand has planted, and the branch that you made strong for yourself. It is burned with fire; it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of your countenance"* (Psalm 80:12-16). The Assyrian captivity was the fulfillment of this prophecy, as the vineyard was trodden down by the Gentiles. But God had not failed in His purposes, for He started a fresh work in their behalf, which Jesus revealed in another parable—*"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit from it, and*

found none. Then he said to the dresser of his vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why should it cumber the ground?' And he answering said unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bears fruit, well; and if not, then after that you shall cut it down' (Luke 13:6-9). What is this fig tree, but the Jewish nation in the time of Christ? As their Messiah, He made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem to their shouts of "Hosanna," knowing that they would soon be shouting "crucify Him." In silence, He left the city for Bethany—"and on the next day, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry; and seeing a fig tree afar off, having leaves, He came, to see if it had any fruit on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for the time for figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said unto it; 'No man shall eat fruit of thee hereafter forever.' And the disciples heard it" (Mark 11:12-14). If you have ever planted a fig tree, you know the seasonal pattern—in the spring, the fresh buds of new growth sprout and soon the young leaves appear. At the juncture of new leaves, on the new growth, figs quickly follow. After summer is past, you cut off all that growth in preparation for the next season, for figs are produced only on new growth; never on old growth, including that of the previous year.

Now, let's consider the application of this account of the vineyard. Israel, as a nation, had utterly failed to represent God to the nations. The vineyard in which they had been planted had been laid waste, and the tribes scattered to the ends of the earth. A remnant of the nation, represented by Judah and Benjamin, had returned, and according to the image given, was as "a fig tree planted in the vineyard." But they were there as the root stock for new growth; i.e., "the time for figs was not yet." Out of Judah came their Messiah; but instead of blossoming, the nation they represented rejected Him. Out of Benjamin came Paul, who said; *"Has God cast away His people? God forbid, for I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people, which He foreknew. For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, 'There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob'"* (Romans 11:1, 2, 23, 26). Thus Paul speaks of the Second Coming of Christ to deliver His Chosen at the end of the great Tribulation. It is not speaking of the Rapture of the Bride, which occurs prior to that time of tribulation and at the end of the Church Age.

After these things I saw, and lo, a great crowd,
which no one could number, out of every nation

and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palm branches in their hands. And they cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood around the throne, and the elders, and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength, to our God, to the ages of ages. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying to me, 'These who are clothed with white robes; who are they, and whence came they?' And I said to him, 'My lord, you know.' And he said to me, these are they who come out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have 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 sits upon the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them. They shall not hunger any more, neither shall they thirst any more, nor shall the sun at all fall on them, nor any burning heat; because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them to fountains of waters of life, and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7:9-17

This passage ends with a description of God's providential care for Israel during the Millennial Kingdom. During His Millennial reign the whole earth responds to the glory of His presence. Isaiah speaks: *"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom like the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellence of our God"* (Isaiah 35:1-2).

The Sounding of the Jubilee Horns Revelation 8

Introduction

The seven trumpets introduce yet another series of judgments that make up and illustrate the sequence of events called "the Great Tribulation." When the seventh trumpet sounds, the rebellion of the world is over, and "great voices" are heard in heaven, saying, "The World-Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ has come, and He shall reign unto the ages of ages." The Seventh Seal begins this sequence of the seven trumpets.

The Seventh Seal—Silence in Heaven
(The *'Interlude of Grace'*) (See illustration on page 61)

(8:1) The seven seals summarize human history from the viewpoint of heaven and the church. There is war, famine and pestilence in general, and on believers in particular, there is persecution; then the end will come. This probably accounts for the silence of the seventh seal, which I believe is the final *Interlude of Grace* in the vast history of mankind before God. What is described is similar to the signs of the end of the age as described by Jesus in Matthew 24. The seven trumpets follow the persecution of the seals and are God's warning to unbelievers. Note that they *do not* affect the eternal spiritual security of the believer, which is why he/she is sealed first, although they will affect him/her physically. The seven trumpets are God's response to the prayers of his people (including those of the Church already in heaven), as the first section (8:1-5) shows. A number of authors note that in Leviticus 26, Israel is warned that their calamities will be multiplied seven times if they do not heed God's voice and continue in their apostasy.⁵ Here, it builds up to the return of Christ to rescue His remnant in an awe-inspiring climax of righteous battle against the forces of antichrist. We should also note that Jesus' voice sounds like a trumpet, (see 1:10).

And when it opened the seventh seal, there was silence in the heaven about half an hour.

Revelation 8:1

⁵ Beasley-Murray points out that this is tripled with the seven seals, trumpets, and bowls.

Seven Angels and Seven Trumpets

Introduction

The trumpets follow the plan of the plagues used to deliver Israel from Egypt. The plague of blood on the Nile however is split into two, one affecting the sea and the other the fresh waters (rivers and springs) that sustain life. Using Exodus as the model; when these disasters afflict the world it is a sign to the faithful that they will soon be free of their oppressors. The effects of the trumpets are worldwide, because the persecution of God's people is worldwide (Beasley-Murray). God's word to Pharaoh through Moses was "let my people go that they may worship me" (Exodus 8:1). Pharaoh refused and the plagues resulted. The trumpet judgments come upon the world because of their persistent refusal (by persecution) to allow God's people to worship Him and by their refusal to worship God themselves. They continue to demonstrate their preference for the idolatry offered by the antichrist instead (see 9:20).

The trumpets, like the seals, form into a group of four, two and one. The last three trumpets, which affect mankind directly, are also called the "three woes," clearly indicating a build up in severity.

The first four trumpets brings disaster onto the earth and heavens, (vegetation burned, sea, rivers and

springs; i.e. man's environment is rendered hostile to him) and extends to the universe (sun, moon and stars). The fifth and sixth trumpets affect mankind directly, demonic locusts torment mankind, and two hundred million horsemen kill a third of mankind. Why had these things occurred? The answer is found in the statement after the sixth trumpet—mankind still refused to repent of their sins and their denial of Christ as Lord. The purpose is clear that these judgments are God's final actions to bring mankind to repentance. How hardened to the gospel can mankind be? Despite these disasters men and women refuse to repent.

I should point out that those who do not believe that the church is taken out of earth to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb prior to the beginning of the Tribulation see this period differently. Here is one example—
“and the witness of the church occurs in the interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpet. When they have finished their witness the seventh trumpet ushers in the end of the world and the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of Christ and there is the judgment day.”

The trumpets are warnings because they only affect a third of mankind. The seven bowls that occur later in Revelation are similar and complimentary to the seven trumpets except that they are final outpourings of

wrath and affect all mankind who once again refuse to repent.

END OF THE INTRODUCTION.

(8:2) The number seven (7) figures prominently here. There are “seven angels (messengers) who stand before God.” This signifies that they are waiting for their orders from God. Seven trumpets were given to the angels; trumpets are the means by which they will deliver their messages to men. (Seven (7) is the number of completion!)

And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.
Revelation 8:2

(8:3-5) “And another angel came and stood at the altar,” speaking of the Altar of Incense. When the Tabernacle was created the Altar of Incense stood before the veil of separation, right in front of the Ark of the Covenant, which was behind the veil. The prayers of the Old Testament saints were thus *separated from* Shekinah Glory by the veil; but they were sanctified by the coals of fire from the Brazen Altar, which also fired the Altar of Incense. This signified that every prayer sent heavenward to the Father was *identified* with the sacrifice of the Lamb on the Brazen Altar and thus made acceptable by the offering of His own body for sin and our redemption.

Pay particular attention to this point, for if you misunderstand it you will surely find yourself praying to Jesus, rather than to the Father, from your position, which is identified with Jesus, the Only Begotten Son of God. The angel who came to the altar had “a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might give efficacy to the prayers of all saints.” The golden censer meant that the burning embers taken from the Brazen Altar to the Altar of Incense were transferred in purity and righteousness because the Father was expiated, His righteous demands were satisfied—the result is the identification of the prayers of the saint with the sacrifice of Christ. It’s like a personal check written by you, but drawn on the Treasury of the United States, and backed by the full faith and promise of a sovereign nation, secured by the sacrifice of every man or woman who ever stood in our defense. That is what Jesus the Only Begotten Son of God did for all mankind. Isn’t it incredibly sad that so many reject that price and insist on being good enough to stand on their works and intentions?

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might give efficacy to the prayers of all saints at the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense went up with the prayers of the saints, out of the hand of the angel before God. And the angel took the censer, and filled it from the fire of the altar,

and cast it on the earth: and there were voices,
and thunders and lightning, and an earthquake.
Revelation 8:3-5

The Seven Angels and their trumpets prepare to
sound

(8:6) These seven messengers stop and prepare to
“sound” with their trumpets. This is yet another
example of an [interlude of grace](#) that precedes
judgment.

And the seven angels who had the seven
trumpets prepared themselves that they might
sound with [their] trumpets. Revelation 8:6

The First Trumpet--

(8:7) When the first trumpet sounds, hail, fire, and
blood fall all over the earth and a third of the earth
are swallowed up in a conflagration unlike anything
seen fore. Could global warming be a prelude to this?
It certainly could. Could our manner of life and
inattention to the guardianship of our earthly home be
a cause? It certainly is possible! One third of the earth
will no longer sustain even green grass. That animal
life sustained by green and growing vegetation lies
dead and rotting in the dry, parched, ground.

And the first sounded [his] trumpet: and there was hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and the third part of the earth was burnt up, and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. Revelation 8:7

The Second Trumpet—

(8:8-9) The second angel sounds his trumpet and a “great mountain burning with fire” falls into the sea. That surely sounds like a volcanic eruption on a scale so vast and violent that one third of the sea becomes blood, filled with the carcasses of sea life cooked by the super-heated waters, and a third of all shipping was destroyed. Steel-hulled ships and hot water are not good companions.

And the second angel sounded [his] trumpet: and as 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 which had life died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed. Revelation 8:8-9

The Third Trumpet—

(8:10) When the third angel sounds his trumpet a great star hits the earth. This heavenly body is burning like a “torch” from its passing through our atmosphere.

The impact causes it to break up and the air is filled with the dust and gasses that are thrown into the air and circle the earth, polluting a third of all rivers and the springs that feed our fresh water sources. This water, now laden with toxic minerals, is deadly to mankind.

Why was it a “third part” that was stricken with judgment?

And the third angel sounded [his] trumpet: and there fell out of the heaven a great star, burning as a torch, 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 of the men died of the waters because they were made bitter.

Revelation 8:10

The Fourth Trumpet—

(8:12-13) The sound of the fourth trumpet signals the blotting out of the sun and moon by the smoke and dust storms of the previous events. But, through it all comes the voice of an eagle, a messenger from God, declaring; “Woe, woe, woe, to them that dwell on the earth,” because there are yet three more trumpets to be sounded.

And the fourth angel sounded [his] trumpet: and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so that the third part of them should be darkened, and that the day should not appear [for] the third part of it, and the night the same. And I saw, and I heard an eagle flying in mid-heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to them that dwell upon the earth, for the remaining voices of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound. Revelation 8:12-13

Revelation 9

What follows is a chart from Arthur Bloomfield's *All Things New*, a study of Revelation, 1959. The first thing I want you to notice here is that the Gospel preached to all the world occurs after the Rapture of the Church, not before the Rapture. Many Christians today are waiting, or working, for world-wide evangelism to be completed before Christ's return for His Church. As Bloomfield and others, myself included, point out; there is not one thing that needs to be accomplished prior to Christ's return and the Church taken to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The Fifth Trumpet—

(9:1-12) The fifth angel sounds his trumpet and a star falls to the earth out of heaven. Note that the star is spoken of as a “person” who has the key of the so-called bottomless pit, the “abyss” *abussou*. When he opens the pit with the “key” *kleis*, smoke thick enough to blot out the light from the sun masks the swarm of stinging “locusts” *akrides* that come out of the pit. They do not eat grass or crops, as is the nature of natural locusts (grasshoppers); but their targets are unbelieving men who do not have their foreheads sealed and marked by God, and it has been “given to them as the scorpions (*hoi skorpoi*) of the earth have power” to inflict great pain. I do believe that this is inflicted on males only, because of their specific standing before God as the heads of families, whether they are acting in that capacity or not! We cannot take lightly the order of things built into the cosmos by God from the beginning!

The “five months” of their “torment” *basanismos* (lit. ‘torture’) on those without the seal of God on their foreheads compares with the normal life-span of locusts. “And in those days shall men *hoi anthrōpoi* (‘the men’) seek death.”

And the fifth angel sounded [his] trumpet: and I saw a star out of the heaven fallen to the earth; and there was given to it the key of the pit of the abyss. And it opened the pit of the abyss; and there went up smoke out of the pit as [the] smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit. And out of the smoke came forth locusts on the earth, and power was given to them as the scorpions of the earth have power; and it was said to them, that they should not injure the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but the men who have not the seal of God on their foreheads: and it was given to them 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 it strikes a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall in no way find it; and shall desire to die, and death flees from them. And the likenesses of the locusts [were] like to horses prepared for war; and upon their heads as crowns like gold, and their faces as faces of men; and they had hair as women's hair, and their teeth were as of lions, and they had breastplates as breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings [was] as the sound of chariots of many horses running to war; and they have tails like scorpions, and stings; and their power was in their tails to hurt men five months. They have a king over them, the angel of the abyss: his name

in Hebrew, Abaddon, and in Greek he has a name, Apollyon. The first woe has passed. Behold, there come yet two woes after these things. Revelation 9:1-12

The Sixth Trumpet—

(9:13-21) When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, a voice comes “from” ek (‘out of’) the four horns on the corners of “the altar the golden, the one before the throne,” i.e., the golden Altar of Incense that stands outside the veil just before the Ark of the Covenant— This again reinforces that we are still dealing with judgment from a Jewish/Covenant perspective, not a church perspective. The voice from the horns of the Altar command that the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates be loosed. They go right to work slaying a third of all mankind and a “hosts of horses” numbering 10,000 x 10,000, or one hundred million (100,000,000). But, note that even with the attack of the horses breathing fire and burning sulphur and breastplates of fire that inflicted pain and death; [yet men are not willing to repent of their behaviors and worship of idols that have become their gods.](#)

And the sixth angel sounded his trumpet: and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel that had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound at the great river Euphrates. And

the four angels were loosed, who are prepared for the hour and day and month and year, that they might slay the third part of men; and the number of the hosts of horse was twice ten thousand times ten thousand. I heard their number. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those that sat upon them, having breastplates of fire and jacinth and brimstone (liquid sulphur); and the heads of the horses were as heads of lions, and out of their mouths goes out fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three plagues were the third part of men killed, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which goes out of their mouths. For the power of the horses is in their mouth and in their tails: for their tails [are] like serpents, having heads, and with them they injure. And the rest of men who were not killed with these plagues repented not of the works of their hands that they should not worship demons, and the golden and silver and brazen and stone and wooden idols, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And [they repented not](#) of their murders, nor of their witchcrafts, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts. Revelation 9:13-21

Revelation 10

Introduction

(10:1-3) I'm always fascinated by that term, "another strong angel," as if there are some weak ones around. This guy was clothed *peribēblēmenon* with a cloud *nephelēn*, wrapped up with it, and "the rainbow" *hē iris* [that's a halo, multicolored] "upon his head, and his countenance as the sun" *hōs ho hēlios* [brilliant]. This was an awesome sight. A guy walking on two "pillars of fire," and has a face like a sun – so brilliant that you couldn't even look at it and see features. "He had in his hand a little book *biblaridion*⁶, which was open, and He placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land." This was a big, big angel, with a big, big, voice! To add to his voice, when he began to cry out, "the seven thunders uttered their own voices" and the roar was *deafening!!!*

And I saw another strong angel coming down out of the heaven, clothed with a cloud, and the rainbow upon his head, and his countenance as the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, and having in his hand a little opened book. And he set his right foot on the sea, and the left upon the earth, and cried with a loud voice as a lion roars. And when he cried, the seven thunders uttered their own voices. Revelation 10:1-3

Seven Thunders (10-4)

⁶ The contents of this "little book" are found in 11:1-13.

(10:4) John was about to write down what he had just seen when a voice from heaven stopped him with the instruction to "Seal up the things which the thunders have spoken." All things are to be shown and known in their own time and order.

And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them." Revelation 10:4

(10:5-6) The very big angel standing on pillars of fire, on land and on sea, lifts up his right hand, because he holds the little scroll in his left, and swears by the God of creation that there is to be no longer a delay—but, a delay in what???

Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there shall be delay no longer, Revelation 10:5-6

(10:7) What was the mystery of God that was preached to the servants, the prophets of the

Old Testament? The mystery of God was that while God was dealing with His chosen earthly people, He at the same time was working out a plan for another people altogether who were destined to be heavenly rather than earthly; and that's really important to us, because that's *us*. We *are* God's heavenly people; and it was a mystery even to the prophets of the Old Testament. Now you have to understand that this Book [Conrad holding up the Bible] from here, Genesis 1, all the way into Acts chapter 2, *stayed a mystery* to all the Old Testament prophets. They didn't see it, and couldn't understand it; all they had were the words they wrote down. All waited for the Apostle Paul, and *the mystery was unfolded under his ministry*; because his ministry didn't begin based on Christ's commission to His disciples (Matthew 28); his ministry began with Christ's commission of him to take that 'Gospel of the unfolding mystery' to the Gentile nations; and that's what happened on the road to Damascus; Ok? That was completely different. So, that mystery that John sees now is beginning to be unfolded.

but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel,
when he is about to sound, then the mystery of
God is finished, as He preached to His servants
the prophets. Revelation 10:7

The Little Book (10:8-10)

(10:8-10) Now what you get with that “kept on saying to me,” is dealing with hesitation on the part of John. Because he didn’t say, take the book and eat it, and John immediately took it – he had to keep on saying it to him. He’s motivating and moving John to do what he’s telling him to do.

And the voice which I heard out of the heaven [was] again speaking with me, and saying, Go, take the little book which is opened in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the earth. Revelation 10:8

(10:9-10) So John takes the little scroll, eats it all, and it is sweet in his mouth and gives him a terrible heartburn when he swallows it. Doesn’t this remind you that it was not the hearers of the Word who were sanctified, but the doers. It’s not enough to simply hear and taste, but to take it in and do it. That’s what James was saying in his letter and what Paul was saying in Hebrews 5 and 6.

And I went to the angel, saying to him to give me the little book. And he says to me, Take and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth as honey, sweet; and when I had eaten it my belly was made bitter. Revelation 10:9-10

(10:11) And a cacophony of voices kept on saying to John that he “must prophesy” *prophēteusai* (predictive) again *palin* (speaking of what has preceded as well as what is to come in 11:15-Robertson) as to peoples and nations and tongues and many kings.”

And it was said to me, “You must prophesy again as to peoples and nations and tongues and many kings.” Revelation 10:11

Revelation 11

Introduction

The Temple Measured

(11:1-2) In John’s measuring of the temple we are reminded that God leaves nothing out of His view regarding His chosen. Every detail of our lives is under His constant and total scrutiny. Our prayers do not bring things to His attention; rather, they bring our minds into conformity with His. We are to consider our place and position in His plan as does Israel here with regard to the temple. His provision for us in His plan is seen in the Altar, and those with whom, or among whom, we walk in His plan compares with them that worship. We do not have to consider anything that the unbeliever (the Gentile nations) is involved with (human viewpoint or perspectives).

And there was given to me a reed like a staff, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship in it. And the court which [is] without the temple cast out, and measure it not; because it has been given [up] to the nations, and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty-two months. Revelation 11:1-2

(11:3-13) Who are the two witnesses? There is little disagreement that Elijah is one of the two. The second, however, is a subject of much interest and difference of opinion. Most commentators believe that he is Moses (LaHaye, Larkin, Kelly, Hamilton Smith,). But, they are uniform in their belief because Moses turned water into blood (Exodus 7) brought similar plagues on Egypt (Exodus chapters 7-11) and Pharaoh in Israel's history of development, etc. To a man, they speak of Moses' "power" to perform these miracles. It was exactly this view of the source of power that led to Moses' exclusion from crossing Jordan and entering the land, and which leads me to exclude him as the other witness. I am convinced that it is Enoch, because he typifies in the Old Testament the Pauline ideal expressed in 1 Thessalonians 4:11; "make it your ambition to live a quiet life, tend to your own business, and work with your own hands," which, although written to the church, presents us the Lord's heart for His followers. Enoch separated himself unto God (he "walked with God") in his life and was taken up to heaven without experiencing death. This

quietness of spirit and dedication to purpose suggests to me the kind of man God would choose to use through whom to display *His* awesome power to the world of unbelievers. While all would expect from Elijah some mighty work of God, none would attribute to the man Enoch such works as the witnesses do in support of their testimony, underscoring the real source, God!

And I will give [power] to my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred [and] sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. Revelation 11:3

(11:4-5) The “two olive trees” speak of them as the source of the power of God before men. Remember that the indwelling Holy Spirit is not in men since the Rapture of the church. The “two lamps” speak of the light of truth, the Gospel, entrusted to those men elected by God to this purpose, to evangelize the world. The special protection afforded them by God is seen in the fire that “goes forth out of their mouths,” which “devours their enemies.”

These are the two olive trees and the two lamps which stand before the Lord of the earth; and if any one wills to injure them, fire goes out of their mouth, and devours their enemies. And if any one wills to injure them, thus must he be killed. Revelation 11:4-5

(11:6-7) Pay careful attention to this next verse, because it speaks to the power of Satan through the Antichrist over even the prophets and servants of God still on earth. The two witnesses have “power to stop rain from falling” and they have the “power to turn water into blood, and smite the earth with every plague.” These two men are strong and work in concert with the will of God in their forth-telling of

These have power to shut the heaven that no rain may fall during the days of their prophecy; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth as often as they will with every plague. And when they shall have completed their testimony, the beast who comes up out of the abyss shall make war with them, and shall conquer them, and shall kill them:

Revelation 11:6-7

Jerusalem, Israel’s “city of refuge?” —Not!

(11:8) The two witnesses of God are killed by the Antichrist in Jerusalem and their bodies lie in the street for the entire earth to see. Men’s hearts are truly hardened against God and all who demonstrate any allegiance to Him.

and their body [shall be] on the street of the great city, which is called spiritually Sodom and Egypt,

where also their Lord was crucified. Revelation 11:8

The earth rejoices over Israel's loss of the two prophets

(11:9-10) There is wide-spread celebration when the two prophets of God are slain. The prophets are viewed as 'tormentors' who use their power to punish people. This general view of God as a harsh, dictatorial, ruler is even today being built up in the minds of men by those in media who have no concept of a loving Heavenly Father. It should not surprise us when we consider that most Christians insist that we are governed by some system of law and bear the burden of keeping that or facing punishment, even eternal damnation. The idea that sin has been dealt with totally, and that man is no longer accountable for it, but has been reconciled to God by the finished work of Christ, is as foreign to most as grits to a New Yorker for breakfast.

And [men] of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations see their body three days and a half, and they do not suffer their bodies to be put into a sepulcher. And they that dwell upon the earth rejoice over them, and are full of delight, and shall send gifts one to another, because these, the two prophets, tormented them that dwell upon the earth. Revelation 11:9-10

Earth's rejoicing is short-lived

(11:11-13) Immediately after the resurrection to life of the two witnesses, they are taken up in a cloud into heaven, in full sight of their enemies. As they are disappearing in the distance, there was a "great earthquake" that destroyed a tenth of the city and killed seven thousand men. This finally brought the remaining men to a point of fear and praising "the God of Heaven."

And after the three days and a half [the] spirit of life from God came into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon those beholding them. And I heard a great voice out of the heaven saying to them, Come up here; and they went up to the heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand names of men were slain in the earthquake. And the remnant were filled with fear, and gave glory to the God of the heaven.

Revelation 11:11-13

(11:14) Now we are reminded that this is just the second of the three woes pronounced against mankind. Note again that these disasters fall on all mankind, not just on those who are opposing God openly.

The second woe has passed; behold, the third woe comes quickly. Revelation 11:14

The Seventh Trumpet--

(11:15) We know that the number 7 figures prominently in Scripture signifying completion. At the end of the trumpet judgments the voices coming from heaven announce the coming of the kingdom having come to earth. They take the view that these events that are calamities for mankind are all intended to underscore one protracted truth—all creation is for the express purpose of magnifying God and bringing glory to Him, not for man's glory. [It's about HIM, not us.](#)

And the seventh angel sounded [his] trumpet: and there were great voices in the heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of his Christ is come, and he shall reign to the ages of ages. Revelation 11:15

(11:16) In Heaven this same theme is recognized and followed, first by the twenty-four elders, who praise God for His actions. From their thrones, they fall on their faces before God the Father and worship Him. They are saying, over and over, "We give thanks, Lord God Almighty, He who is, and who was, that you have taken your great power and now reign." This refers to the reign of the Father over all that is.

“His Christ is come” refers to the Lord Jesus, the ascended Only Begotten Son of the Father.

And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, Lord God Almighty, [He] who is, and who was, that thou hast taken thy great power and hast reigned. Revelation 11:16-17

(11:18) All the nations of the earth, Jewish and Gentile, have been filled with wrath, and now God’s wrath is evident within their borders. Men are filled with fear.

And the nations have been full of wrath, and your wrath is come, and the time of the dead to be judged, and to give the recompense to your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear Your Name, small and great; and to destroy those that destroy the earth. Revelation 11:18

The Temple of God in heaven

(11:19) Yes, there is a temple in heaven, which the temple on earth was patterned after. The purpose of the earthly is to prepare us for entering God’s Kingdom in Heaven. That was specifically true for all of Israel, from the time of their election by God as His nation, with the duty of displaying Him to all the

nations of the earth. This is important to us because these are the people over whom we reign forever as the Bride of the Only Begotten Son of God. I do not see us ruling, as the administrators of justice, for that is the position of the “overcomers,” but reigning. Rule implies direction, correction, and management; the Bride and the Son, are objects of honor and adoration. The overcomers have been given the ‘rods of iron,’ their insignia of rule.

And the temple of God in the heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen in his temple: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail.
Revelation 11:19

Revelation 12

The Grand Panorama of God’s Plan for Israel

Introduction

Note how in this chapter it begins with John’s vision of “a great sign *teras* (Lit. a ‘wonder’),” which he sees in heaven; “a woman *gunē* clothed with the sun is not simply with a halo around her head, but *peribēblēmenē ton hēlion* (lit. ‘arrayed with the sun’ completely.” Here the sun represents the source of

light or illumination and “the moon” is a type of the reflected glory and persona of God and His character, as seen reflected in creation. Psalm 104:1-4 tells us that God is “very great,” and is “clothed with splendor and majesty; covering Himself with light as with a cloak,” and that He “stretches out heaven like a tent curtain” under which to dwell. This woman is seen taking on the appearance and characteristics of God. Immediately, two women come to mind—one is the deceptive ‘Queen of Heaven,” the false *mother of God*, Semiramis. of the Babylonians (the wife of Nimrod, from Genesis 10:8-12). Watch how Satan returns to his original deceptive ruses to confuse God’s people and thwart God’s Plan for mankind. Moffat and Beckwith both see the basis for mythology in this description.

The second is Mary, the mother of Jesus, as redefined by the Catholic Church into the *Mediatrix of all grace*, who is said to facilitate our redemption by her intercession with the Son. On her head rests “a crown of twelve stars,” which correspond to the twelve sons of Jacob, the tribes of Israel, and in the days of Messiah’s coming, the twelve disciples named as apostles to evangelize Israel, even though the nation was scattered. That the enemy so easily co-opted this image of Semiramis is readily seen on the cover of the Jesuit Society of Jesus Handbook.

And a great sign was seen in the heaven: a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under

her feet; and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; and being with child she cried, [being] in travail, and in pain to bring forth. Revelation 12:1-2

(12:3) A second “sign” is seen by the prophet, “a great red dragon” with “seven heads and ten horns.” In verse 9, he will be further identified as “the ancient serpent, he who is called Devil and Satan.” He has “seven heads” on which are “seven diadems” *stephanos* or crowns, representing power or areas over which he rules with power. He also has “ten horns.” The horn is a means of announcing commands or directing his armies; so these are ten authorities under his command.

And another sign was seen in the heaven: and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems; Revelation 12:3

(12:4-5) Remember that this is not a chronological order of events; so after seeing the dragon, the next thing John sees is Satan’s fall from heaven and the fact that he draws a third of the “stars of heaven,” the angelic order that followed him in rebellion against God. (See; [Isaiah 14:12](#) : [2 Pet 1:19](#); [Rev 2:28](#); [22:16](#)). The dragon is intensely focused on the woman’s child, that he might “devour” him immediately. Such was the plan of Satan, the central thread of the entire Old

Testament, right up to the birth of Jesus and the decree to slay all of the male children of Israel two years old and younger—an entire generation consumed in one fit of rage.

and his tail draws the third part of the stars of the heaven; and he cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bring forth, in order that when she brought forth he might devour her child. And she brought forth a male son, who shall shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to his throne. Revelation 12:4-5

(Isaiah 14) In Isaiah 14:13-14 we have the five “I wills” of Lucifer, stating his intentions to assume the place and station of God over all creation—“But you said in your heart,

- (1) I will ascend to heaven;
- (2) I will raise my throne above the stars of God;
- (3) And I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north;
- (4) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
- (5) I will make myself like the Most High.

These declarations were made before Lucifer was cast out of heaven to earth. They were the statements of pride that brought him down from his status as guardian of God's throne to his low estate in the dust of the earth (Ezekiel 28:12-19)—The message from God to the King of Tyre begins with a spiritual assessment that sounds like one condemning a man, albeit a powerful ruler. It will soon change in tone to something much more dire and overarching.

Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him; "Thus says the Lord GOD, You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12

Verse 13 tells us that this individual was "in Eden, the garden of God," and that he was a magnificent creature ("the workmanship of your settings and sockets; (i.e. joints and limbs) were prepared in you on the day that you were created).

"You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold. The workmanship of your settings and sockets was in you on the day that you were created they were prepared." Ezekiel 28:13

Verse 14 tells us that this individual was the guardian of the throne of God; anointed for the job of protecting the holiness and righteousness of the Father. His position is pictured in the tabernacle by the two angels with wings folded over the Mercy Seat on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. The "holy mountain of God" refers to that spot in all creation from which God rules and reigns. Within the congregation of God prior to Pentecost that place was in the Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah Glory blazed with the fire of judgment that satisfied the holiness of God. The "midst of the stones of fire" speaks of the presence of God and is seen in the urim and thummin on the breastplate of the High Priest.

"You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire." Ezekiel 28:14

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God and I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Ezekiel 28:15-16

(28:17) The “heart” is not an emotional source, but the center of the inner-being, ego, the core of one’s innermost thought processes. The self-image of Lucifer was beauty, based on splendor or appearance. The result of that pride of self was that God cast him “to the ground” and reduced him “before the kings of the earth.”

“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. Ezekiel 28:17

(Ezekiel 28:18-19) Ezekiel’s prophecy comes to an end with the destruction of the King of Tyre and the prophecy of Satan’s end in the future. The scope is too broad for the King of Tyre to satisfy all that is foretold. “Fire from the midst of you” refers to the intensity of sin that consumes in judgment as the fire of God’s righteousness is brought to bear—it brings to mind the firing of the Brazen Altar with the Shekinah Glory, the presence of God. There is no sanctuary that is not profaned by the presence of sin, no place to hide from the sure judgment of God. The final result-“You will cease to be forever.” Some take this to mean annihilation; I believe this means to be cut off from the created world and banished to the lake of fire forever.

“By the multitude of your iniquities, in the

unrighteousness of your trade; you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth. In the eyes of all who see you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified and you will cease to be forever. Ezekiel 28:18-19

(12:6) After 12:5 the next scene is of the woman (Israel) fleeing into the wilderness to a “place prepared of God.” The Rapture of the church has taken place and Israel is gathering in the land. They move into the wilderness to escape the persecution of the antichrist and his followers; and will be sustained there for 1260 days.

And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place prepared of God, that they should nourish her there a thousand two hundred [and] sixty days. Revelation 12:6

(12:7) Now the view changes from Israel fleeing in the Tribulation back to the “war in the heaven” between Michael (*ho Michaēl kai hoi aggeloi*) and the dragon (*meta tou drakontos*) and their angelic followers. The phrase, (*egeneto polemos en tōi ouranōi*) is literally, “there came to be war in heaven.” At issue is whether this refers to the original rebellion of Lucifer, or the reaction of Satan to the birth of Christ (See Mark 1:13;

Luke 22:3; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). I am positive that this battle happened before the creation week in Genesis and resulted in the chaotic upheaval of Genesis 1:2, "and the earth became without form and void [a waste and a dump]." These shifts of scene (tableaus) are important reminders that Satan, the archenemy of God, is not just reacting across time to *man's* historical development, but that he is and always has been maliciously involved in defeating God's plans and impugning His judgments.⁷ It is a battle rooted in pride of a magnitude that only heaven could contain. **Man is but a pawn in this contest, but a pawn that the Father has chosen to raise to the status of Crown of His Creation, His Masterpiece (Ephesians 2:10).**

And there was war in the heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon fought, and his angels; and he prevailed not, nor was their place found any more in the heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent, he who is called Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole habitable world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:7-9

The Plan of God for Man is nearing completion

⁷ Daniel 10 identifies Michael the archangel as the champion of the Jewish people across history.

(12:10-11) There is a resounding voice throughout heaven declaring that "Now is come" *arti egeneto* (aorist tense) shows the immediacy of God's actions on the heels of Satan's downfall and that the "accuser of our brethren has been cast out" of heaven, where he raised his accusations "before our God day and night." But "they" (the brethren) "have overcome him by reason of the blood of the Lamb." This is the heart of the testimony of the gospel preached by the 144,000 in the Tribulation, which produced the *overcomers*, who were given rods of iron with which to rule over the Gentile nations during the Millennial Kingdom. This is the entire history of Israel compressed into the battle for their souls between Satan and God, their Father.

And I heard a great voice in the heaven saying, "now is come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren has been cast out, who accused them before our God day and night: and *they* have overcome him by reason of the blood of the Lamb, and by reason of the word of their testimony, and have not loved their life even unto death. Revelation 12:10-11

Satan's hatred and persecution of Israel

(12:12-13) The proclamation goes out to the heavens to be filled with joy for the source of evil has been cast out; and woe to the earth because the devil has been cast into this cosmos with great rage and the knowledge that he has been judged and has but "a short time." This is why he has such rage against Israel and the Lord born of her.

Therefore be full of delight, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the earth and to the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great rage, knowing he has a short time. And when the dragon saw that he had been cast out into the earth, he persecuted the woman which bore the male [child]. Revelation 12:12-13

God's Provision for Israel's Protection

(12:14) "were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle" *hai duo pteruges tou aeyou tou megalou*, and as Robertson points out, this is not the eagle of 8:13, but a generic eagle, or symbolic creature. "That" *hina* (indicating purpose) "she might fly" *petētai* (present middle subjunctive "that she might be flying"), "into her place" specifically prepared by God in the wilderness. There, "she is nourished there a time, and times, and half a time," *kairon kai kairous kai hēmisu* "from [the] face of the serpent."

And there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the desert into her place, where she is nourished there a time, and times, and half a time, from [the] face of the serpent. Revelation 12:14

Satan's deception in pursuit of Israel

(12:15) So, the serpent, not able to follow or to capture the woman, (and this has been true since the promise of God for the Messiah to come) "cast out of his mouth behind the woman water as a river" *hudōr hōs potamon* (lit. 'water as a flood'), "that" (purpose) "he might make her be as one carried away by a flood." For those who follow the types, this was illustrated in the promise of Christ to those who would come to Him to satisfy their thirst for truth, that out of their bellies would flow rivers of living water, now they are pursued by the angry waters of Satan's persecution. But, it is God's own creation, the earth itself that absorbs the flood and provides rescue.

And the serpent cast out of his mouth behind the woman water as a river, that he might make her be [as] one carried away by a river. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth. Revelation 12:15-16

(12:17) This pursuit of Israel began immediately with the birth of Jesus and His escape from the slaughter of males two years old and younger. It begins with the oppression of Rome, continues across the entire Church Age, and intensifies during the Tribulation. It includes those Jews who “kept the commandments of God” while under the Law and those who “have the testimony of Jesus,” His claim as Messiah and Kinsman Redeemer.

And the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 12:17

The Rise of the Antichrist and the False Prophet

Revelation 13

Introduction

(13:1) John is standing on the shore, and he sees a beast rising “out of the sea” *ek tēs thallasēs* (Daniel 7:3), “having ten horns and seven heads” but note that unlike the dragon of 12:3, the horns have crowns. This is a mighty empire with strong nations at its command. The seven heads have displayed on them “names of blasphemy” *onomata blasphēmias*—[what are these names but the names of recognized world-wide religious organizations that are endorsing the persecution of Israel, the woman, joining with the forces of the antichrist against the Plan of God!](#)

And I stood upon the sand of the sea; and I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and upon its horns ten diadems, and upon its heads names of blasphemy. Revelation 13:1

(13:2) "And the beast that I saw was like to a leopardess," recalling to us that many of the idolatrous religions of the world have a woman as their object of worship or head of their religious order. "And its feet" *podes autou* "as of a bear" *arkou*, "and its mouth," *stoma*, "as a lion's mouth" *stoma leontos* (Daniel 7:4), "and the dragon gave to" this beast rising from the sea three things; (1) "power" *dunamin* (2) "his throne" *thronon*, and (3) "great authority" *ekousain*—the dragon, you see, works through the beast. However clever, grand, or effective these false (blasphemous) church bodies seem to be, they are continually the tools of Satan. ("It is necessary to state, that no great and miracle-working preacher of repentance, in the spirit of Elijah, is promised to Christendom"—A. C. Gaebelien)

The only way to know them is to know the content of their gospel!

And the beast that I saw was like to a leopardess, and its feet as of a bear, and its mouth as a lion's mouth; and the dragon gave to it his power, and his throne, and great authority; Revelation 13:2

(13:3-5) Note carefully, that the beast itself was not killed, but one of its seven heads, the king or head of one of the national entities. "And the whole earth wondered after the beast" because he could not be brought down—he healed his wounds. So the earth paid homage to the dragon who gave the beast (the Leopardess) her power and authority! And then, they did homage to the beast that healed the head that was injured to death. There was no one who believed that they could be successful in going to war with this beast, this evil empire under the command of the dragon, Satan. Authority was given this leader of the evil empire to expand his hold on the people of the earth for three and one-half years (42 months).

and one of his heads [was] as slain to death, and his wound of death had been healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast. And they did homage to the dragon, because he gave the authority to the beast; and they did homage to the beast, saying, Who [is] like to the beast? and who can make war with it? And there was given to it a mouth, speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to it authority to pursue its career forty-two months. Revelation 13:3-5

(13:6) There spewed forth from his mouth a constant barrage of curses against God, His Name, His Tabernacle, and against all whose name is written in God's Book of Life in heaven.

and it opened its mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle, and those who have their tabernacle in the heaven. Revelation 13:6

(13:7) This vile creature beat down the saints of “every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation” in a world-wide process of persecution and oppression.

And there was given to it to make war with the saints, and to overcome them; and there was given to it authority over every tribe, and people, and tongue, and nation; Revelation 13:8

(13:8-9) Not one unbeliever could escape the required homage that was demanded by the beast.

and all that dwell on the earth shall do it homage, [every one] whose name had not been written from [the] founding of [the] world in the book of life of the slain Lamb. If any one has an ear, let him hear. Revelation 18:8-9

(13:10) The ethic of these days is this; eye for eye; in other words; if captivity is how you treat others, then by captivity you shall fall; or, if you kill by the sword, then by the sword you will be killed. “Here,” or under these conditions, is where the “endurance and the faith of the saints” will be found or revealed.

If any one leads others into captivity, he goes into captivity. If any one shall kill with the sword, he must with the sword be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints. Revelation 13:10

The False Prophet--

(13:11-12) John then “saw another beast rising out of the earth.” Its “two horns” were like a lamb’s horns, (not suitable for battle), but it “spoke like a dragon.” Instead of overcoming with might, it won its way by words and reasoning. But it did “exercise all the authority of the first beast” and caused the earth and all who live on the earth to “do homage to the first beast whose wound of death was healed.” Here is the person of the false prophet revealed—he speaks with authority; he claims to have special access to God; he calls attention to the first beast, the antichrist; he requires his followers to do homage to the antichrist, who died from a wound and rose from the dead.

And I saw another beast rising out of the earth; and it had two horns like to a lamb, and spoke as a dragon; and it exercises all the authority of the first beast before it, and causes the earth and those that dwell in it to do homage to the first beast whose wound of death was healed.

Revelation 13:11-12

(13:13-14) The false prophet can work “great signs” causing “fire to come down from heaven to the earth before men,” thus claiming access and control over heaven. These signs are done “before,” or in honor of, the first beast as the false prophet is telling men to “make an image of the beast” that was killed and rose again.

And it works great signs that it should cause even fire to come down from heaven to the earth before men. And it deceives those that dwell upon the earth by reason of the signs which it was given to it to work before the beast, saying to those that dwell upon the earth to make an image to the beast, which has the wound of the sword, and lived. Revelation 13:13-14

(13:15) The false prophet even has the power to give life and breath to the image of the antichrist that it “should speak” and that it should cause all who “do not do homage to the image” of the antichrist to be killed. The sin of Babylon was idolatry. Here, idolatry is raw and open; the tool by which Satan brings men down from any possible relationship to God and destroys their souls.

And it was given to it to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should also speak, and should cause that as many as

should not do homage to the image of the beast
should be killed. Revelation 13:15

(13:16-17) The false prophet calls for every person, regardless of station or title, to have "a mark, on their right hand or upon their forehead" and no one could buy or sell without the mark, either the name of the antichrist or the number of his name.

And it causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free and the bondmen, that they should give them a mark upon their right hand or upon their forehead; and that no one should be able to buy or sell save he that had the mark, the name of the beast, or the number of its name. Revelation 13:16-17

(13:18) The number of the Antichrist is a man's number; 666.

Here is wisdom. He that has understanding let him count the number of the beast: for it is a man's number; and its number [is] six hundred [and] sixty-six. Revelation 13:18

Revelation 14

Introduction

(14:1) "And I saw, and behold, the Lamb" *to arnion*, "standing upon the mount Zion" *hestos epi to oros Siōn*; the picture here is of Christ, the Lamb, claiming

mount Zion as the new site of the new City of God spoken of in Hebrews 12:22. In contrast to those who have the mark of the beast in the previous chapter, here the hundred and forty-four thousand, have Christ's name and the name of God the Father "written upon their foreheads," their seal of protection (9:4).

And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing upon mount Zion, and with him a hundred [and] forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads.

Revelation 14:1

(14:2) John "heard a voice out of the heaven" and the sound was like "a great waterfall" *hudatōn pollōn*, or massive waves crashing on the shore and as the "booming thunder" *brontēs megalēs* of a rolling summer storm.

And I heard a voice out of the heaven as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of great thunder. And the voice which I heard [was] as of harp-singers harping with their harps; Revelation 14:2

(14:3) The song that the harpists are playing and singing "before the throne" is a "new song" never heard before, and which could not be learned except by "the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth." That song could not

be learned by either the four living creatures or the twenty-four elders; by none except the 144,000 men.

and they sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders. And no one could learn that song save the hundred and forty-four thousand who were bought from the earth. Revelation 14:3

(14:4-5) The term, “not defiled with women” does not refer to physical defilement, but to spiritual defilement of purpose. They are men solely committed to following the Lamb wherever He goes. Normal love for a woman would be a competing interest, because it should be the first priority of a man’s life. Christ’s own instruction was for husbands to “love their wives as Christ love the church and gave himself for her.” That interest is already assigned in their lives to Christ, to follow Him wherever He goes. They are, therefore, “first-fruits” out from mankind “to God and to the Lamb” during this tribulation period.

These are they who have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins: these are they who follow the Lamb wherever it goes. These have been bought from men as first-fruits to God and to the Lamb: and in their mouths was no lie found; [for] they are blameless. Revelation 14:4-5

The Gospel Preached During the Tribulation

(14:6-7) "The everlasting gospel" is the good news of salvation based on faith in Jesus Christ – that has been true in every dispensation, every age, including that preached by Paul. There are variations as to times, conditions, and certainly destinies, but at the core, faith in Christ is ubiquitous. This everlasting gospel will be preached the entire time that Antichrist is persecuting the saints. It is through this preaching that the saints are multiplied, for no preaching is done by the apostate assembly. No missionary work is done by those who are saved, including the 144,000. The preaching will be done by heavenly messengers who fulfill the words of Jesus; "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world . . . then the end shall come:" (Matthew 24:14).

This first 'messenger' begs men to "fear God and give Him glory" because the "hour of His judgment has come." Men should pay homage to the God of Creation. This angel mentions four things; heaven, earth, sea, and waters; these are the first things affected when the judgment of God falls upon the earth. This messenger flies from heaven right after the Rapture.

And I saw another angel flying in mid-heaven, having [the] everlasting glad tidings to announce to those settled on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God and give him glory, for the

hour of his judgment has come; and do homage to him who has made the heaven and the earth and the sea and fountains of waters. Revelation 14:6-7

(14:8) This Second Messenger announces the fall of Babylon, which occurs just prior to the coming of Christ. (See Isaiah 21:9) Note that “all nations” (Gentiles) have been made to drink of her fornication (sexual deviance).

And another, a second, angel followed, saying, Great Babylon has fallen, has fallen, which of the wine of the fury of her fornication has made all nations drink. Revelation 14:8

Eternal Torment in the Lake of Fire

(14:9-11) The Third Messenger warns the peoples of the world about the beast and the false prophet. After hearing this warning, perhaps thousands who never actually accept the gospel will likewise avoid the mark of the beast. The ‘real-time’ application of the warning of this third herald-angel is to those Cæsar-worshippers of Christ’s day and to those who “do homage to the beast and its image” during the tribulation. “If” is a first-class condition, a declaration of an on-going situation. Since this is looking at the pouring out of the wrath (“fury”) of God, it is looking at the last half of the Tribulation, where men might “receive a mark” *kai lambanei charagma* again, a first

class condition, 'and they do' "upon his forehead or upon his hand." The wine of God's fury is "prepared unmixed" *tou kekerasmenou akratou*, a bold and powerful oxymoron (Robertson), speaking of wine mixed with spices to make it stronger, but then unmixed with water for drinking, as was the custom. God's full wrath not tempered by mercy is a terrible thing to contemplate. That torment is to continue (future passive) "forever" *eis aiōnas aiōnōn* (for ages of ages). To underscore this, it is added that there is "no respite day and night." This is a specific answer to those who say that punishment for unbelief is annihilation.

And another, a third, angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any one do homage to the beast and its image, and receive a mark upon his forehead or upon his hand, he also shall drink of the wine of the fury of God prepared unmixed in the cup of his wrath, and he shall be tormented in fire and brimstone before the holy angels and before the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up to ages of ages, and they have no respite day and night who do homage to the beast and to its image, and if any one receive the mark of its name. Revelation 14:9-11

The Perseverance of the Saints

(14:12-13) The perseverance of the Saints is one of the most misunderstood doctrinal tenets within the Church today! First; (1) the Church, the Bride of Christ, has been taken to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. That happened at the Rapture. So, (2) these saints are those of the Tribulation Period, inclusive of the faithful of the 144,000 and those who refuse the mark of the beast and are martyred for their faith and testimony. The content of their gospel is two-fold; (a) they “keep the commandments of God” that are iterated in the Mosaic Law. The Law *is* their ethic for living. This should not be hard to understand, because a very large segment of Christianity today believes that God sent the Holy Spirit so that the Church would be enabled by His presence to do exactly that; Keep the Law! **Nothing could be further from the truth!** Christ satisfied every claim and aspect of the Law. The Christian today lives in light of that freedom won at so high a price by the Only Begotten Son of God! Those saints in the Tribulation are there precisely because they *did not* accept his death as sufficient to pay for their sin and sins, and rejected Him as their Kinsman Redeemer and Savior, until their eyes were opened at the Rapture of His Bride! Now they are saddled with *The Law* as their *Rule of Life!* The second element in their two-fold gospel is; (b) they testify to the Faith of Jesus! So while they struggle to observe all of the requirements of the Law they are additionally burdened with the

need to point back to the life of the Lord Jesus who, alone among men, kept the Law, satisfied its every demand, and was rejected by them thoroughly! That is the "*faith of Jesus*," which they now so desperately seek to grasp as their own. The cost??? "Write, Blessed the dead who die in the Lord from now on." There is the price of their redemption out from among lost mankind – they must persevere in their faith until either the end of their lives, or the return of their Kinsman Redeemer to Mount Zion! Then, "they may rest from their labors" (the works of the Law); "for their works follow with them."

Here is the endurance of the saints, who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

And I heard a voice out of the heaven saying, Write, Blessed the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. "Yea," says the Spirit "that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them." Revelation 14:12-13

(14:14) There is no article before "Son of man," calling attention to the character of the one sitting on the cloud. "On his head is a golden crown," *stephanon chrusoun*, (not the diadem of 19:12, but a 'golden wreath'). "And in his hand" he holds "a sharp sickle" *drepanon oxu* (a 'pruning hook') for he is prepared for reaping (See Hebrews 9:28).

And I saw, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud one sitting like a Son of man, having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. Revelation 14:14

A Time for Everything - Ecclesiastes 3

There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven--

A time to give birth and a time to die;

A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

A time to kill and a time to heal;

A time to tear down and a time to build up.

A time to weep and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;

A time to embrace and a time to shun embracing.

A time to search and a time to give up as lost;

A time to keep and a time to throw away.

A time to tear apart and a time to sew together;

A time to be silent and a time to speak.

A time to love and a time to hate;

A time for war and a time for peace.

(14:15-16) Yet "another angel came out of the temple"

– note that all from 1:12 through chapter 20 is associated with the priestly ministry of Christ. This messenger is "crying with a loud voice to him that sits on the cloud, 'Send' *pempson*, (lit. 'thrust in your sickle **now!**') *first aorist active imperative*, (it is a command of urgency) "your sickle and reap.'" The finality of the command is contained in the words – "for the hour of reaping is come, for the harvest"

therismos (from *theros*, 'summer') "of the earth has dried" *exēranthē* (over-ripe). That slight time of delay is yet another example of the interlude of grace that always precedes judgment, as in the 120 years of Noah's preaching prior to the flood.

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud,
Send your sickle and reap; for the hour of reaping is come, for the harvest of the earth has dried.
And he that sat on the cloud put his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Revelation 14:15-16

(14:17) Another angel comes out of the heavenly temple with a sharp sickle in his hand, prepared to reap. This is not an action of man upon man, but of God's execution of judgment.

And another angel came out of the temple which [is] in the heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

Revelation 14:17

(14:18) "Another" *allos* (indicates another angel, similar, but with a different function or mission) "angel" *aggelos* (messenger) appears. This sixth angel comes out from the Altar of Incense where he "has power over fire" *exousian epi tou puros*. I believe that this refers to the Altar of Incense because it is God who fired the Brazen Altar with fire from within the

Holy of Holies, but it was the priests who fired the Altar of Incense with coals from the Brazen Altar. You will note that it is the vine that is gathered in bunches, with the ripened fruit, not just the fruit. This is a prophetic vision of Armageddon. "The vine" is mankind, from which the Redeemer sprang. Its task is accomplished and its fruit is fully borne and ripened.

And another angel came out of the altar, having power over fire, and called with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Send thy sharp sickle, and gather the bunches of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripened.

Revelation 14:18

The Great Wine-Press of God

(14:19-20) The "vine of the earth" *tēn ampelon tēs gēs* is mankind, Adam's progeny. These rebellious ones are "cast into the great wine-press." The prophet Joel identifies the valley of Jehoshaphat as the place where God's enemies are slaughtered (Joel 3:12; Zechariah 14:4ff). (1600 stadia is about 170 miles). From Joel 3 we read:

"Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones.

Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, tread, for

the wine 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.

The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars lose their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion and utters His voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth tremble

But the LORD is a refuge for His people and a stronghold to the sons of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain so Jerusalem will be holy, **Joel 3:11-17**

And the angel put his sickle to the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast [the bunches] into the great wine-press of the fury of God; and the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood went out of the wine-press to the bits of the horses for a thousand six hundred stadia. Revelation 14:19-20

Revelation 15

Preparation for the Seven Last Plagues

Introduction

In this chapter we see the wrath of God poured out in some detail. It is divided into the seven golden bowls, which are distributed to the seven angelic messengers. We will also see that each phase of God's Plan of Redemption is preceded by a service of worship.

(15:1) “Another sign” *allo sēmeion* (indicates a similar sign, but with a different emphasis). These seven plagues (bowls, or vials) parallel the seven seals (chapter 6) and the seven trumpets (chapter 8 to 11). The number seven (7) seems entirely appropriate here as connected with finality or completeness. When these seven vials are over, the Millennium will have arrived! Note that the seven angels have seven plagues *before* they receive the seven golden bowls.

7

And I saw another sign in the heaven, great and wonderful: seven angels having seven plagues, the last; for in them the fury of God is completed.
Revelation 15:1

The Overcomers Song

(15:2-4) Here is a parenthetical picture of the martyrs of the tribulation in their state of bliss (Robertson). The floor of heaven under their feet is as a “glassy sea” *hōs thalassan hualinēn*, except this time it is “mingled with fire” *memigmenēn puri*—think of a crystalline floor with the Northern Lights flickering through it! Those who were the overcomers (from the era of the Philadelphia church forward- see Revelation 3:7-13) are standing with “harps of God” and are singing “the song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-18) and the song of the Lamb,” a single song with a gospel that spans the entire dispensation of Law. Praises include;

"Great" *megala* (Psalm 111:12) "and wonderful" *thaumasta* (Psalm 139:14) "are your works, O Lord God Almighty" *Kurie ho theos ho pantokratōr* (Amos 4:13); "righteous and true" *dikai kai alēthinai* (Deuteronomy 32:4) "are your ways, O King of the ages" *ho basileus ton aiōnōn* (Jeremiah 10:10 and 1 Timothy 1:17). It ends with; "Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name;" reminding Israel, as well as us today that the entirety of time and history is about glorifying God!

And I saw as a glass sea, mingled with fire, and those that had gained the victory over the beast, and over its image, and over the number of its name, standing upon the glass sea, having harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses bondman of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and wonderful are your works, Lord God Almighty; righteous and true are your ways, O King of nations. Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? for you only are holy; for all nations shall come and do homage before you; for your righteousnesses have been made manifest." Revelation 15:2-4

The Seven Last Plagues (Vials)

(15:5-6) John sees the temple in heaven opened and "the seven angels" *hoi hepta aggeloi* "who had the seven plagues" *tas hepta plēgas* come out "clothed in

pure bright linen," with "breastplates of gold" *zōnas chrusās*.

And after these things I saw, and the temple of the tabernacle of witness in the heaven was opened; and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in pure bright linen, and girded about the breasts with golden girdles. Revelation 15:5-6

(15:7) And note that it was "one of the four living creatures [that] gave to the seven angels seven golden vials full of the fury (wrath) of God." Please note carefully that the wrath (fury) of God is not synonymous with the plagues that the angels already had before meeting one of the four living creatures.

And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls, full of the fury of God, who lives to the ages of ages.
Revelation 15:7

(15:8) The Shekinah Glory fills the temple with "smoke" *kapnou* signifying the presence of God, just as did the pillar of smoke that they followed across the wilderness after escaping from Egypt (See Exodus 19:18). It also shields men from God's holiness, just as God did for Moses when He hid him in the rock as He passed by. "Glory" comes from *doxa* from which we get doxology; 'Praise God from whom all blessings

flow.’ This demonstration of God’s presence is enough to keep everyone out of the temple while the vials of God’s fury and the plagues are completed.

And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power: and no one could enter into the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

Revelation 15:8

Revelation 16

Introduction

(16:1) This is the beginning of the last half of the Tribulation. A “great voice” *megalēs phōnēs*, rolls out of the temple telling the seven angels to “pour out” *ekcheete* (an aorist active imperative command), “the seven bowls.”

And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go and pour out the seven bowls of the fury of God upon the earth.

Revelation 16:1

(16:2) When the first angel emptied his bowl “into the earth” *eis tēn gēn*, “there came” *egeneto* (is lit. ‘it became’), “an evil and grievous sore” *helkos*, (old word for a suppurated wound). This is very much like the sixth Egyptian plague of Exodus 9:10, sores that attack the nerve ends, like the fever blisters of herpes.

Only those who had the mark of the beast or who worshipped his image were afflicted.

And the first went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and there came an evil and grievous sore upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped its image. Revelation 16:2

(16:3) The second angel pours his bowl "Into the sea" eis tēn thalassan, "and it became blood as of a dead man," a sticky clotted mass. Every thing that lived in the sea died and nothing moved on its surface.

And the second poured out his bowl on the sea; and it became blood, as of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea. Revelation 16:3

(16:4-7) When the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and springs of fresh water, "they became blood" and ceased to flow water throughout the lands. This angel declares the righteousness and justice of God and proclaims that this is the just punishment of those who killed the saints and prophets. From the Altar of Incense comes the booming declaration that God is perfect in His justice and judgments.

And the third poured out his bowl on the rivers, and on the fountains of waters; and they became

blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, You are righteous, who are and was, the holy one, that you have judged so; for they have poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink; they deserve it. And I heard the altar saying, Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.

Revelation 16:4-7

(16:8-9) The fourth angel pours his bowl into the sun and the output increased so much that it burned men with unrelenting heat. This could be caused by a total breakdown of the ozone layer that protects us now; or by sun flares, bursts of sun-spot energy. But, as they cursed God for causing their misery, **they did not repent, to give Him glory!**

And the fourth poured out his bowl on the sun; and it was given to it to burn men with fire. And the men were burnt with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues, and did not repent to give him glory. Revelation 16:8-9

(16:10-11) The fifth angel pours out his bowl directly into the throne of the beast, causing his entire kingdom to be plunged into darkness; men were so afraid and pained that they chewed their tongues in their distress; but, still they cursed God "and did not repent of their works." Recall the letters to the seven

churches of Asia, where God repeatedly warned the church against being occupied with their works instead of returning to walking in His works.

And the fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast; and its kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues with distress, and blasphemed the God of the heaven for their distresses and their sores, and did not repent of their works. Revelation 16:10-11

Armageddon

(16:12-16) The sixth angel pours out his bowl into the great river Euphrates. The sun has rendered it dry, a passageway for the kings from the East to approach Jerusalem. From the mouth of the dragon pours three unclean spirits, demons, performing miracles that amaze people. They rapidly visit all of the leaders of nations worldwide and call them to war against Israel on the plains of Megiddo. The grand plan is to swarm over the land and annihilate all of the children of Israel, God's favored nation and the cause of all their misery. Napoleon called this plain the greatest natural battlefield in the world. It is approximately 65 miles wide and 185 miles long, squeezing into a narrow pass at its southern tip under the Golan Heights. Two hundred million men are assembled for the effort and staged across the vast plain. This is not going to be a nuclear attack, but a bloody assault of cavalry, men,

and machines—an infantry assault that takes no prisoners and gives no quarter! Armies are driven to a fever pitch by demonic inspiration and hate is a common commodity in the ranks of tormented, blistered, thirst-ridden, parched, men.

And the sixth poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way of the kings from the rising of the sun might be prepared. And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as frogs; for they are [the] spirits of demons, doing signs; which go out to the kings of the whole habitable world to gather them together to the war of that great day of God the Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, that he may not walk naked, and that they [may not] see his shame.) And he gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. Revelation 16:12-16

(16:17-19) And the last bowl was poured into the air! Visible to all, the open temple in Heaven is the source of a thunderous voice coming directly from the throne, saying, **IT IS DONE!** Lightning cracks in the darkened sky, voices are mixed with thunder throughout the heavens and the entire earth shakes, splits open and spews out magma and burning

sulphur. Jerusalem was split into three parts, separated by fissures. In Revelation 10:7 we read; "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 has declared to His servants, the prophets."

Babylon was wiped off the face of the earth as every island and mountain in the world disappeared. The most likely cause is a shift in the magnetic poles, a reversal of the conditions that brought on the great flood of Noah's day. Isaiah 24:20 says; "And the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard." And, at that moment, it begins to hail—huge 60 pound blocks of ice that buried men under the weight of it, and there was no where to hide.

And the seventh poured out his bowl on the air; and there came out a great voice from the temple of the heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, such an earthquake, so great. And the great city was [divided] into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. And every island fled, and mountains were not found; and a great hail, as of a talent weight, comes down out of the heaven

upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of hail, for the plague of it is exceeding great. Revelation 16:17-21

Revelation 17

Introduction: The Great Harlot Judged!

In the letters to the churches, Thyatira is a type of church in the dark ages when Romanism had almost extinguished the light of the gospel. Jezebel was the agent of Satan's deception and work. Prophecy does not teach us that the church came out of Romanism, but that Romanism grew up within the church as a parasite (Bloomfield). Though cast out during the revival period of the early nineteenth century, she did not cease to exist but has become Satan's grand counterfeit of the church. Moving away from the stiff liturgy and cloistered leadership, she now offers to embrace all and bring excitement and practical solutions to life's problems, uncluttered with doctrines that separate us from the masses. Unity and comity are the order of the day; Thou *shall not* judge, has become Thou *cannot* judge; so that the church accepts anything in the name of growth, as the world gathers under the comforting folds of the skirt of Jezebel! Satan will take the evangelical church today by storm, from the pulpit out to the pew, wooing her with the

vision of doing a great work *for* God! What could be grander than **completing the mission; taking the gospel to all the world; achieving the goal; winning the brass ring; finishing big!** Where are these kinds of things to be found in Ephesians 2:10—"For we are His poiema (Masterpiece) created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

(17:1-2) Here is God's pronouncement (14:8) of judgment on Jezebel, "the great harlot," *tēs pornēs tēs megalēs* she who seduced the church to engage in false religious practices instead of worship and adoration of the Only Begotten Son of God. "That sits upon many waters" *tēs kathēmenēs epi hudatōn pollōn* (See also Jeremiah 28:13). The Antichrist has taken this false religious association of the seductress and her cohorts, which is the apostate church, and is now beating Israel down with those same world leaders, "the kings of the earth" that have "committed fornication" *eporneusan* "with her," which is to say that they have taken in the false doctrine, lies, allowed the gospel to be corrupted, and busied themselves with doing while ignoring completely the work that God had prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. *Eporneusan* means to engage in something totally unnatural—it is the churches unique responsibility to guard and protect the gospel and the purity of its doctrine, two tasks that it is actively and aggressively pushing away from today. It should break our hearts to realize that

our failures today will be used as the battering rams against Israel after we are taken out at the Rapture. Words do indeed have meaning and actions have eternal consequences!

And one of the seven angels, which had the seven bowls, came and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the sentence of the great harlot who sits upon the many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication; and they that dwell on the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. Revelation 17:1-2

(17:3) God's prophet John is carried by the Angel "in spirit" *en pneumati* "into a desert" *eis crēmon*; (in Isaiah 14:23 Babylon is called *crēmon*) where he saw a woman "sitting" *kathēmenēn* (present middle participle, to manage and control-Vincent) "upon a scarlet beast." Isn't it ironic that the woman created by Satan for the purpose of deceiving the nations is now depicted as attempting to control the beast, who *is* the Antichrist personified. The beast is a composite symbol of,

1. All the world empires of all time – the seven heads.
2. The world empire of the last days – the ten horns.
3. The real head of all human governments – the prince of this world, the devil.

4. The human head of the last world empire –
Antichrist, the carnal manifestation of Satan.

This woman is Satan's own church, his ecclesiastical system, which was first revealed under Nimrod at Babel and was the mother of all idolatry. By Christ's day it had moved to Pergamos "where Satan's seat is" (Revelation 2:13), from there to Rome, where it ruled through the Middle and Dark Ages, and now is "Mystery Babylon," to be revealed during the Tribulation.

And he carried me away in spirit to a desert; and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. Revelation 17:3

(17:4-5) The great metaphor is displayed as he sees the woman adorned with precious stones, fine silks and gold, holding a golden cup in her hand; but the content of it all is abominations and things made unclean by her "fornication" *porneias* a relationship that is inherently evil (idol worship). The church system that is outwardly successful, wealthy, and growing in the world's eyes, but is inwardly a cesspool of misdirected worship of idols, some soft and easy to cuddle and some vile and loathsome.

And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and had ornaments of gold and precious

stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication; and upon her forehead a name written, Mystery, great Babylon, the mother of the harlots, and of the abominations of the earth. Revelation 17:4-5

(17:6-7) The woman is "drunk" *methuouсан ek tou haimatos tōn hagiōn* (intoxicated with the blood of the saints), and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus *tōn marturōn Iēsou* (lit. 'the martyrs of Jesus'). John's wonderment is "great" *mega*, prompting the response from the angel. The Pulpit Commentary makes these interesting comments on these first five verses:

"At the same time, we cannot fail to see that there is one special form of evil which more than anything else in the world is pointed out in the symbolism of this chapter, and that is the apostasy of the Church of Rome. Not that we can agree with those who think papal Rome the sole enemy of God here referred to. For we shall find in the lamentation over Babylon's fall much that leads us to think not only of a huge ecclesiastical Babylon but also of a huge commercial one. That papal Rome is but one form of this mystic Babylon, we can entertain no doubt whatever. The student of history can follow out at leisure . . . lines of inquiry on which we can give but a few illustrative remarks."

"1. The woman was seated on the beast as if supported by it (ver. 3). Rome has relied on the worldly power to put her decrees into execution by brute force; both in using temporal powers and in herself claiming temporal power as well as spiritual." Many in the evangelical community think that we should politicize issues of morality, such as abortion and/or social programs of the state, to conform to Christian standards, without realizing that this is exactly the same thing.

"2. She (Rome) rules over the kings of the earth (v. 18). Kings are but the 'sons of the Church,' to do the bidding of their holy (?) mother; otherwise she may absolve subjects from allegiance to their sovereign." Today, Islam takes the same stance in countries where it is the majority religion; but, is this not the same seed as our expectation that an American president or congressman will likewise support the church's stand on issues?

And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And I wondered, seeing her, with great wonder. And the angel said to me, Why have you wondered? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast which carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.

Revelation 17:6-7

(17:8) "Was and is not" *ēn kai ouk estin* is a picture of the beast that the woman is riding from chapter 13:1ff. It is not the empire, but one of the emperors that died; "is not" (*ouk estin*) and which is about to come up "out of the abyss" *ek tēs abusou* "and go into perdition" *kai eis apōleian hupagei* (See 20:1, 2, 7, 10). As the *Prince of this World*, Satan has an earthly history symbolized by the seven heads. Those seven heads are; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Roma, and the Revived Roman Empire, which is to come.

The beast which you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go into destruction: and they who dwell on the earth, whose names are not written from the founding of the world in the book of life, shall wonder, seeing the beast, that it was, and is not, and shall be present. Revelation 17:8

(17:9) Some have thought that the "seven mountains" refer to the seven hills of Rome, but here we learn that they are specifically speaking of seven kings, or empires. In John's day, five empires had already fallen; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Greece; and Rome ruled forcefully. The seventh would be the new empire of the Antichrist.

Here is the mind that has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains, whereon the woman sits. And there are seven kings: five have fallen,

one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes he must remain only a little while.

Revelation 17:9-10

(17:11) Out of the seven will emerge the eighth, the devil in the person of the Antichrist. Here, Satan will not create an empire, but will assume control of an empire already in existence and powerful by world standards.

And the beast that was and is not, he also is an eighth, and is of the seven, and goes into destruction. Revelation 17:11

(27:12-14) As Armageddon approaches, the "ten kings," have given their power to the Antichrist for a short time ("one hour") and with "one mind." Many pastors have identified Domitian, who was ruling Rome when John wrote, as the Antichrist, and they cite the ten nations over which Rome then ruled as the "ten kings." I think that this is inconsistent with the Lamb overcoming them *nikēsei* (future active of *nikaō*), since Rome fell politically, but still is the most visible and influential religion in Christendom today. So push this prophecy forward into the future, yet to be fulfilled. Those that are the Lord's are "called and chosen, and faithful" *klētoi kai ekletoi kai pistoi*.

And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings, which have not yet received a kingdom, but

receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and give their power and authority to the beast. 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 called, and chosen, and faithful. Revelation 17:12-14

(17:15-17) "The waters" *hudata* "which you saw" (in verse 1) "where the harlot is sitting" (present middle indicative-she sits there for her own purpose and benefit) "are peoples" *laoi* "and multitudes" *kai ochloi eisin*, "and nations" *kai ethnē* "and tongues" *kai glōssai*.

Note several things carefully: The prince of the power of the air, Satan, works through governance of man, the state! Religions work through gaining power over the people of the state! Religious leaders invariably attempt to extend their power by using the people to influence state leaders. That is what is happening today in Iran, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, Italy, etc. It is what is pictured here with the harlot on the back of the beast. The beast, and any other political leader, (kings, princes, etc.) will tolerate the harlot until the time is right, and then totally destroy her (as has happened in Russia, China, and France). What has been covert until now will become open and purposeful in the tribulation.

And he says to me, The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire; for God has given to their hearts to do his mind, and to act with one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast until the words of God shall be fulfilled. Revelation 17:15-17

(17:18) "The great city" brings us to several historical and/or biblical possibilities. The original city of world religious influence was Babylon of Nimrod's day. In Christ's day that was Pergamos, then by the time that the Roman Empire broke up it had moved to Rome, with the world-wide influence of the Catholic Church. There is good Biblical evidence that Babylon will be rebuilt to its former state of glory and could once again become the center of religious and commercial influence.

And the woman which you saw is the great city, which has kingship over the kings of the earth.
Revelation 17:18

Revelation 18

(18:1-3) "Another angel" descends "out of heaven" and his "glory" *doxēs* (shining appearance) "lightens"

ephōtisthē (from *phōs* 'light') the earth. His cry echoes across the nations; "has fallen, has fallen, Babylon the great" *epesen epesen Babulōn hē megalē*; "having become" *egeneto* "the habitation of demons." A "hold" *phulakē* is a watchtower, not a prison. In the ruins of the city, some tall buildings rise above the rubble and in those *phulakē* the birds of prey watch for their next meal. When these great world-religions crumble, without the strength of the gospel ever having been included in their message, the people they have drawn to themselves are just so much carrion to those flesh-eaters who feed on the carcasses. This scene is virtually universal, "because all the nations" (speaking specifically of Gentiles) "have drunk" *pepōkan* "of the wine of the fury of her fornication" *tou strēnuous autēs* (lit. 'the wantonness of her') "the merchants of the earth" *hoi emporoi tēs gēs* (from *en, poros*, 'traveling salesmen').

After these things I saw another angel descending out of the heaven, having great authority: and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried with a strong voice, saying, Great Babylon has fallen, has fallen, and has become the habitation of demons, and a hold of every unclean spirit, and a hold of every unclean and hated bird; because all the nations have drunk of the wine of the fury of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and

the merchants of the earth have been enriched
through the might of her luxury. Revelation 18:1-3

(18:4-5) Out of heaven comes the cry, "Come out of her my people" *exelthate, ho laos mou, ex autēs* (second aorist (urgency) active imperative-Robertson); this is not simply a request; nor is it just a command, but it is rather an urgent pleading, an instruction for their own benefit. In the midst of all this chaos, a loving God yet pleads with His chosen. This is the same thing He did with Abram in Genesis 12:1 when He called him out of Ur to go to the land of promise, or the rescue of Lot (Genesis 19:12ff). "That you" *hina mē* (introduces the purpose clause) "have no fellowship in her sins" *sunkoinōnēsēte* (*sun*, together; *koinōnos*, partner), "and that you" do not receive of her plagues" *kai ek tōn plēgōn autēs hina mē labēte*. "Her sins have been heaped on one another up to the heaven" *ekollēthētan* ("have reached" KJV, from *kolla*, gluten, to cleave to). "Unrighteousnesses" (iniquities-KJV).

And I heard another voice out of the heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that you have not fellowship in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues: for her sins have been heaped on one another up to the heaven, and God has remembered her unrighteousnesses.
Revelation 18:4-5

(18:6-8) Context demands that “recompense her even as she has recompensed” *apodote hōs apedōken* refers primarily to the martyrdom of believers by Rome, and double payback is according to Levitical law, (Exodus 22:4; Isaiah 40:2; Jeremiah 16:18). Make her grief and torment double the pleasure that she gave herself in luxury and life. The plagues of death, mourning, and famine will come quickly upon her because she has presumed to “sit as a queen,” not a widow when her ‘church’ is destroyed. “She shall be burnt” (utterly burned) “with fire” (lit. ‘in fire’).

Recompense her even as she has recompensed;
and double [to her] double, according to her
works. In the cup which she has mixed, mix to
her double. So much as she has glorified herself
and lived luxuriously, so much torment and grief
give to her. Because she says in her heart, I sit a
queen, and I am not a widow; and I shall in no
wise see grief: for this reason in one day shall her
plagues come, death and grief and famine, and
she shall be burnt with fire; for strong [is the]
Lord God who has judged her. Revelation 18:6-8

(18:9-10) “Fornication” *porneusantes* (intrinsic and unnatural) here pointed at the abuse of position, the self-enrichment schemes by those responsible for the protection of others. Though they “Weep and wail” *klausousin kai kopsontai* (middle voice-to cut and/or beat

one's self) these chicken-hearted 'kings' are "standing afar off" looking at "the smoke of her burning."

And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived luxuriously with her, shall weep and wail over her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off, through fear of her torment, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour thy judgment is come. Revelation 18:9-10

(18:11-14) The lament over loss of sales is staggering as the merchants "weep and grieve" *klaiousin kai penthousin*. There are twenty-nine items listed here in which commerce has stopped, including thyine wood (Thuya burl) for inlays on tables, etc., and spices like Amomum (silky dogwood, Cardamom).

And the merchants of the earth weep and grieve over her, because no one buys their lading any more; lading of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearl, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet dye, and all thyine wood, and every article in ivory, and every article in most precious wood, and in brass, and in iron, and in marble, and cinnamon, and amomum, and incense, and unguent, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and

cattle, and sheep, and of horses, and of chariots, and of bodies, and souls of men. And the ripe fruits which were the lust of your soul have departed from thee, and all fair and splendid things have perished from thee, and they shall not find them any more at all. Revelation 18:11-14

(18:15-19) Even the seamen are afraid and their ships stand offshore as they watch the smoke of her burning as in one hour the city is brought down in ruins and ashes. This was true of Rome's fall according to Gibbon, and it will be true of Babylon's fall as well. In John's day the lament, "for in one hour she has been made desolate" was a metaphor for the speed of destruction. In light of today's weapons of mass destruction, this could be a matter of minutes, rather than hours.

The merchants of these things, who had been enriched through her, shall stand afar off through fear of her torment, weeping and grieving, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, which was clothed with fine linen and purple and scarlet, and had ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls! for in one hour so great riches has been made desolate. And every steersman, and every one who sailed to any place, and sailors, and all who exercise their calling on the sea, stood afar off, and cried, seeing the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like to the great

city? and cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and grieving, saying, Woe, woe, the great city, in which all that had ships in the sea were enriched through her costliness! for in one hour she has been made desolate. Revelation 18:15-19

(18:20) The word used here for “judgment” is *krima*, a case *approved for trial*, (here “approved” *ekrinen* (judged) by God).

Rejoice over her, heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets; for God has judged your judgment upon her. Revelation 18:20

(18:21) “Sorcery” is *pharmakiāi* referencing drugs—as they are used today legally and/or illegally and the use here is both metaphorical and literal. Note that the “strong angel” has no trouble taking a millstone, perhaps weighing a ton or more and casting “it into the sea.”

And a strong angel took up a stone, as a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall Babylon the great city be cast down, and shall be found no more at all; and voice of harp-singers and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters shall not be heard any more at all in you, and no artificer of any art shall be found any more at all in you, and voice of

millstone shall be heard no more at all in you,
and light of lamp shall shine no more at all in
you, and voice of bridegroom and bride shall be
heard no more at all in you; for your merchants
were the great ones of the earth; for by your
sorcery have all the nations been deceived.

Revelation 18:21-23

(18:24) “In her” *en autēi* “was found” *heurethē* (blood
already shed) “of all that had been slain” *pantōn
esphagmenōn*. The word for slain is from *sphazō*, used
of the Lamb sacrificially slain, (5:9, 12; 13:8). It is also
used of Cain killing Abel by cutting his throat, just as
the animal sacrifices were offered.

And in her was found the blood of prophets and
saints, and of all the slain upon the earth.

Revelation 18:24

Revelation 19

(19:1-2) John hears a grand chorus from a “great
multitude in heaven” the hosts of heaven (Revelation
5:11); “saying” *legontōn* (present active participle of
legō)—I put this in here for one reason only—this is
another of those sweet ironies of Scripture that only
omniscience could fathom. At the consummation of
all things earthly; judgment is pending and all heaven
and earth are anticipating the sweet victory of
righteousness over corruption, and the heavenly choir

opens with **legō** *allēlouia*, which means “Praise ye the Lord.” It amuses me that **“lego”** is a child’s toy, and that reminds me of Christ saying “except you come as children, you will in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.” I find this both amazing and amusing that the introduction of heaven’s most raucous song of praise (the Great Hallel, Psalm 104-109) is the very contemporary name of a child’s toy! Don’t you love our God! He is serious to the nth degree about matters of belief; but possessing of a delicious sense of humor.

After these things I heard as a loud voice of a great multitude in the heaven, saying, Hallelujah: the salvation and the glory and the power of our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he has judged the great harlot which corrupted the earth with her fornication, and has avenged the blood of his bondmen at her hand. Revelation 19:1-2

(19:3-4) “A second time” *deuteron*, a heavenly encore- (Robertson), “they have said, Hallelujah.” “And her smoke goes up” *anabanaī* (present linear active-‘keeps on going up) “to the ages of ages” *aions* (that site smokes forever as testimony to God’s faithful judgment on behalf of His bondservants. And the four living creatures, who declare His holiness and worthiness forever and ever interrupt their song of praise long enough to say, Amen, and Hallelujah.

And a second time they said, Hallelujah. And her smoke goes up to the ages of ages. And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and did homage to God who sits upon the throne, saying, Amen, Hallelujah. Revelation 19:3-4

(19:5) "And a voice came out of the throne," *phōnē apo tou thronou* (lit. 'voice from the throne') [note; this is not the voice of God, nor of the Lamb, but from an angel of the Presence-Robertson]. This angel is calling all the servants of God to join in the antiphonal praise to God. And the responsive melody of praise begins—

"Praise our God, all ye his bondmen,
and ye that fear Him, small and great."

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his bondmen, and ye that fear him, small and great. Revelation 19:5

(19:6-7) And as the crowd gathers, in heaven and on earth, the response "as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of strong thunders," rises—

"Hallelujah, for the Lord our God
The Almighty has taken to himself kingly power.
Let us rejoice and exult, and give him glory;
For the marriage of the Lamb is come,
And his bride has made herself ready."

And I heard as a voice of a great crowd, and as a voice of many waters, and as a voice of strong thunders, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty has taken to himself kingly power. Let us rejoice and exult, and give him glory; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride has made herself ready.

Revelation 19:6-7

(19:8) And it was "given to her" *edothē* "in order that" (purpose clause) "she might array herself" *hina peribalētai* this bridal dress is a gift from the Groom, Christ; "fine linen, bright and pure" *bussinon lampon katharon* (See 15:6 and 19:14). "Righteousnesses" does not refer to acts that we have done on His behalf, but works that He has done for which He has blessed us!

And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

Revelation 19:8

(19:9-10) The angel of the Presence tells John to "Write," and John fell at his feet to "do him homage." But this angel quickly stops him with these words; "I am thy fellow-bondman, and the fellow-bondman of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus." He tells John that he is also a fellow-bondman of his, in service to God on the same basis as all true believers.

He is also the fellow-bondman of Jews, who have the testimony of Jesus, on the very same basis. This is something that we will have in common with the angelic host in the future. "Do homage to God. For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus" is the unifying theme of all creation, while there is such diversity in our destinies through differentiation, as we have studied.

And he says to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the supper of the marriage of the Lamb. And he says to me, These are the true words of God. And I fell before his feet to do him homage. And he says to me, See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-bondman, and the fellow-bondman of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Do homage to God. For the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 19:9-10

(19:11-13) Heaven opens up and a "white horse" *hippo leukos* is seen "and one sitting on it, called Faithful and True" *pistos kai alēthinos* (1:5; 3:7) "and he judges and makes war in righteousness" *en dikaiosunēi krinei kai polemei* (lit. 'in righteousness he judges and makes war'). His description takes us back to Chapter One, but note that the blood on His garment is not His own, but here is the blood of His enemies. "Dipped" is literally "sprinkled." His name, "The Word of God" is His title with respect to all creation and was

assigned when the Father first issued His will in eternity past.

And I saw the heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and one sitting on it, called Faithful and True, and he judges and makes war in righteousness. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head many diadems, having a name written which no one knows but himself; and he is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. Revelation 19:11-13

(19:14-16) Christ and His white-robed army defeat the Antichrist. Out of his mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword that is used to “smite the nations” (Gentiles); and he will “shepherd” (move or guard) “them with an iron rod.”

And the armies which are in the heaven followed him upon white horses, clad in white, pure, fine linen. And out of his mouth goes a sharp two-edged sword, that with it he might smite the nations; and he shall shepherd them with an iron rod; and he treads the wine-press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. And he has upon his garment, and upon his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Revelation 19:14-16

(19:17-18) This is the call of the angel to the birds of the air, to come feed on those killed during the great battle of Armageddon, when Christ defeated Antichrist and his armies.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven, Come, gather yourselves to the great supper of God, that you may eat flesh of kings, and flesh of chiliarchs, and flesh of strong men, and flesh of horses and of those that sit upon them, and flesh of all, both free and bond, and small and great. Revelation 19:17-18

(19:19-21) John “saw the beast” (Antichrist) and the “kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war” against Christ and the heavenly armies on white horses. His doom is so sure that the birds have already been summoned to the feast. Both the Antichrist and the false prophet were “cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone (burning sulphur).”

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and the false prophet that was with him, who wrought the signs before him by which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and those that

worship his image. Alive were both cast into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone; and the rest were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which goes out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Revelation 19:19-21

Judgment and the Abyss

Revelation 20

(20:1-3) Chapter 20 begins with Satan being chained and cast into the abyss, together with the angelic host who followed him (Isaiah 24:21-24), for one thousand years, so that he cannot deceive any man, woman, or child born during the Millennial reign of Christ. After that time is over, he is “loosed for a little time” to test those who know only the subdued earth as their personal environment. John sees “an angel” coming down out of heaven, holding a “great chain in his hand,” and he binds Satan with the chain and casts him “into the abyss” where he is sealed for one thousand years. After the one thousand years “he must be loosed for a little time.”

And I saw an angel descending from the heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into

the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, that he should not any more deceive the nations until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be loosed for a little time.

Revelation 20:1-3

Prophecies of Christ reigning with His Saints

Psalms 2

The Reign of the LORD'S Anointed.

The nations of the earth rebel at the reign of the overcomers with their rods of iron.

- 1 Why are the nations in an uproar
And the peoples devising a vain thing?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,
- 3 "Let us tear their fetters apart
And cast away their cords from us!"

God the Father responds to their boasts of strength--

- 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs,
The Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger
And terrify them in His fury, saying,
- 6 "But as for Me, I have installed My King
Upon Zion, My holy mountain."

The Only Begotten Son declares--

- 7 "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD:
He said to Me, 'You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.

The Father says to the Son--

8 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance,

And the very ends of the earth as Your possession.

9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron,

You shall shatter them like earthenware."

The Son says to the nations and kings of the earth--

10 Now therefore, O kings, show discernment;

Take warning, O judges of the earth.

11 Worship the LORD with reverence

And rejoice with trembling.

The Father says to the nations and kings of the earth--

12 Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and
you perish in the way,

For His wrath may soon be kindled

How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Psalm 110 A Psalm of David

**The Father Gives Dominion to
The Only Begotten Son, the King.**

The Father says to the Son--

¹The LORD says to my Lord:

"Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

2 The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from
Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies."

3 Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your
power; in holy array, from the womb of the dawn,
Your youth are to You as the dew.

4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,
"You are a priest forever, according to the order of
Melchizedek."

The Son responds to the Father--

- 5 The Lord is at Your right hand;
He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
6 He will judge among the nations,
He will fill them with corpses,
He will shatter the chief men over a broad country.
7 He will drink from the brook by the wayside;
Therefore He will lift up His head.

(20:4) The souls of tribulation martyrs sat on thrones given to them for their "testimony of Jesus" and the "word of God," and those who had resisted the Antichrist to the end, and were delivered from death by Christ's return, "lived and reigned with Christ" for the one thousand years. Remember that the church, believers from Pentecost to the Rapture, was "translated, receiving instantly glorious bodies suited for life in heaven," (Walvoord)⁸ they return to heaven with Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:6-10); so this is referring to martyrs of the tribulation only.

And I saw thrones; and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them; and the souls of those beheaded on account of the testimony of Jesus, and on account of the word of God; and those who had not done homage to the beast nor to his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and hand; and they lived and

⁸ The Return of the Lord, p80

reigned with the Christ a thousand years:
Revelation 20:4

The Order of Governance for the Millennium

1. **Christ** will reign as King and sit as “a priest upon His throne”-Zechariah 6:13, fulfilling the Melchizedek priesthood promise.
2. **David** will rule as Prince during the Millennium (Ezekiel 46:4-12).
3. **The Church** will reign with Christ in glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).
4. **Tribulation martyrs** “the souls of them beheaded” (see the fifth seal in 6:9).
5. **Overcomers** are those who (worshipped not the beast), which I believe started just prior to the cross and was picked up by the Tribulation saints.

(20:5-6) “The rest of the dead” *hoi loipoi tōn nekrōn* are not resurrected until the thousand year reign is over. That would include those who died in the great rebellion Satan induces at the end of the thousand years and the souls of all unbelievers who must now stand before the Great White Judgment to have their works judged. Therefore; “this is the first resurrection” of saints; other than the church, which is the Bride of Christ; and this occurs at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. Those are called “blessed and holy,” because “over these the second death has no power,” speaking of the Great White Throne

judgment. They shall assume their priestly function for the duration of the one thousand years together with Christ.

the rest of the dead did not live till the thousand years had been completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy he who has part in the first resurrection: over these the second death has no power; but they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. Revelation 20:5-6

(20:7) After the one thousand years have been completed, Satan will be loosed from the pit in which he has been chained, and will go out to the “four corners of the earth” to deceive the nations and “gather them together to the war.” In Ezekiel 38-39 the names Gog and Magog are found; Magog is the name of a man (Genesis 10:2), and Gog the name of Satan, who possesses him and rules the kingdom opposed to God (Bloomfield).⁹

And when the thousand years have been completed, Satan shall be loosed from his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war, whose number is as the sand of the sea. Revelation 20:7-8

⁹ *All Things New*, Arthur Bloomfield, p304

(20:9) In Gog and Magog you have a single commander (Magog) and a single national army (Gog) gathered from the four corners of the earth. They come together to war, so they spread across the earth, surrounding the “camp of the saints” who guard the beloved city in preparation for their assault. Fire pours down from God out of the heaven above them and utterly devours them.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city: and fire came down [from God] out of the heaven and devoured them. Revelation 20:9

(20:10) Satan is cast into the lake of fire forever.

And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where [are] both the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for the ages of ages.
Revelation 20:10

The Great White Throne

(20:11) When the “Great White Throne” *thronon megan leukon* appears with God sitting on it, the Earth and heaven that we knew “fled away” *ephugen* (prophetic aorist active). They no longer have any place. All the dead who were not included in the first resurrection of believers are resurrected and stand before the throne.

The book of works is opened, and "another book," which is the "book of life" was opened. All the dead "were individually judged" *ekrithēsan* (first aorist passive indicative of *krinō*) by their works according to the opened books. Of the book of life Swete says, "it is the roll of living citizens in Jerusalem," "the church of the first-born enrolled in heaven" (Hebrews 12:23). According to Alford, this speaks of "the vouchers for the book of life." In his Word Pictures in the New Testament, A. T. Robertson comments; "**We** are saved by grace, but character at last (according to their works) is the test as the fruit of the tree." Here is a subtle, but huge difference between an Armenian perspective and a Pauline (dispensational) perspective. What if we changed his comment from, "We are saved" to "**they** are saved?" All at once we are not talking about testing our salvation by our works, but testing their salvation by their works in the period of the tribulation. Under Law, which is the ruling ethic for that day, that would be completely appropriate; but, today, the only work that endures and counts for righteousness is the work of the Spirit, which works we are expected to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). The only works for which the believer today receives a reward are those of the Holy Spirit, for which we are given crowns at the Bema Seat of Christ.

And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled, and place was not found for them. And I

saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is that of life. And the dead were judged out of the things written in the books **according to their works.** And the sea gave up the dead, which were in it and death and hades gave up the dead, which were in them; and they were judged each **according to their works:**
Revelation 20:11-13

(20:14-15) At this point even “death and hades were cast into the lake of fire,” which “is the second death.” In Genesis 2:17 God told Adam that he should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Evil, for if he did, “he would surely die;” and the exact phrase was “dying you will die,” indicating two deaths. This is consistent with Genesis 2:7 where God formed man’s body and breathed into his nostrils the breath of “lives” (plural), soul life, by which man is compatible with the world in which he lives, and spirit life, by which man is able to communicate with God and the heavenly host that serves God. The first death was physical, a condition of life that ensued immediately upon Adam and Eve’s sin and expulsion from the Garden. The second death is that of the soul, when here, at the Great White Throne judgment unbelievers are finally cast aside with Satan and the horde that followed him in his rebellion. When God’s Book of Life was opened, all

who were not listed therein are cast into the lake of fire.

and death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.
Revelation 20:14-15

Revelation 21-The New Heaven and New Earth

(21:1-2) After the Great White Throne judgment John sees “a new heaven and a new earth” for the first heaven and the first earth “had passed away.” Why both new? It is because [Israel has been promised a land forever with fixed boundaries—David has been promised an earthly Kingdom forever with earthly Jerusalem as its center—those Gentiles who accepted and gave homage to the God of Israel were promised blessing on earth, forever—and the Bride of Christ has been promised union with the ascended Jesus; King of Kings and Lord of Lords, forever, in the Father’s house the heavenly New Jerusalem.](#) The sea exists no more, for it was a tool used by God to separate nations and peoples as they began to spread across the face of the earth.

The exact phrase introducing Jerusalem is “the city, the holy, Jerusalem, new” *tēn polin tēn hagian Ierousalēm kainēn*. New Jerusalem is seen “coming

down out of the heaven from God, adorned as a bride for her husband." In this instance the Bride is not the people of God, but the abode of the people of God, the home of the Bride made ready. This is because no one outside the church of the Age of Grace could even contemplate a relationship IN UNION with God in Christ that is the privilege and position of every believer.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea exists no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. Revelation 21:1-2

(21:3) The loud voice of an angel from the presence of God is heard announcing that "the tabernacle" *hē skēnē* (the dwelling) "of God is with men, and He shall tabernacle" *skēnōsei* (dwell) with them."

And I heard a loud voice out of the heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. Revelation 21:3

(21:4) "And He shall wipe out every tear out of their eyes." This is not prevention, but correction of an existing condition. Those tears will not return, for the

causes have been done away with, i.e., death, grief, crying, distress, all are nonexistent, for “former things have passed away.”

And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall not exist any more, nor grief, nor cry, nor distress shall exist any more, for the former things have passed away.

Revelation 21:4

(21:5-6) “Behold, I make all things new” *Idou kaina poiō panta* is significant because this is the first time since 1:8 that God is represented as speaking directly (Robertson). Voices that have come out from the throne (21:3) or from out of the sanctuary (15:1, 17) are more likely to have been from one of the angels of the Presence. Note that this message is not just to John, but to the entire world of the blessed of God. Listen to the words of prophecy regarding creation of a new heaven and a new earth, from Isaiah 65:17-18—

*“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth;
and the former things
shall not be remembered or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing,
and her people for gladness.”*

And he that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he says to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And he said to me, It is

done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to him that thirsts of the fountain of the water of life freely. Revelation 21:5-6

(21:7-8) Here are the overcomers again. This time they are designated as the recipients of all that God has prepared. They are to be treated as a son. In contrast "but;" and what follows is a laundry list of those who failed to meet the challenge of dealing with the antichrist and his deceptions, and therefore, have earned their part in the Lake of Fire, "which is the second death."

He that overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son; But to the fearful and unbelieving, [and sinners], and those who make themselves abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars; their part is in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Revelation 21:7-8

(21:9) One of the seven angels from chapter 15-16 spoke with John and said that he would show him the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

And there came one of the seven angels which had had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, and spoke with me, saying, Come here, I

will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Revelation 21:9

(21:10-12) He took the prophet "in Spirit" *en pneumati* to a "mountain great and high" *epi oros mega kai hupsēlon* where he could have an unobstructed view of heaven; he saw the "holy city, Jerusalem, descending out of the heaven from God." This underscores that 'newness' of the city. It was not the original, simply cleaned up. The city was brilliant, not simply 'with' but, (note the precision of the text), "having" *echousan* (the feminine accusative singular participle) indicating that God's very presence is in the holy city (the Bride) "the glory of God" *tēn doxan tou theou*. Her "shining" *phōstēr* (luminary, 'source of light,' from *phōs* "light" as in Christ is the light of the world (John 8:12)). There was "a great and high wall" with "twelve gates," and at each of the gates an angel was stationed, and on the gate a name of one of the twelve sons of Israel and his tribe was inscribed.

And he carried me away in the Spirit, and set me on a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of the heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her shining was like a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper stone; having a great and high wall; having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed, which are those of

the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. Revelation
21:10-12

(21:13-14) There were three gates on each of the four sides of this celestial city; suggesting that it was through Israel's twelve tribes that entrance was gained by all who enter. The great wall surrounding the city has twelve layers to its foundation, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; suggesting that it was through them that the word of God was delivered to the people who were saved and now have entrance into the great city. This entire scheme is a testimony to God's honoring Israel, his Chosen Earthly Nation, for the part it played in establishing God's Heavenly dwelling for the Bride of the Lamb.

On [the] east three gates; and on [the] north three gates; and on [the] south three gates; and on [the] west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Revelation
21:13-14

(21:15-17) Now the heavenly city is proscribed, as the angel speaking with John reveals "a measure for the purpose of measuring the city, and its gates, and its wall." The city is a cube of twelve thousand stadia.

And he that spoke with me had a golden reed as a measure, that he might measure the city, and its

gates, and its wall. And the city lies four-square,
and its length is as much as the breadth. And he
measured the city with the reed -- twelve
thousand stadia: the length and the breadth and

hundred [and] forty-four cubits, [a] man's measure, that is, [the] angel's. Revelation 21:15-17

(21:18-21) The material of the wall was jasper, a stone of many colors and varieties (see first inset). This multi-hued stone brings infinite colors to the visual pallet of God's city and the heavenly Temple. The material of the city is pure gold, transparent like glass (crystal). The twelve layers of the foundation of the wall around the city were adorned with precious stone: first, jasper; second, sapphire, which you can see may be in many colors. The most common are the blue stones, and second are the greens. The third layer is chalcedony; the predominant color seen in the square stone in the upper left corner.

The fourth layer is emerald; which brilliant green is seen here in an array of cut stones.

The fifth layer, sardonyx; is a sand-colored varied stone of the chalcedony group. Sardonyx may also be found in brilliant reds, but the sand hues are those most often quarried and polished. The beauty of the sardonyx is in the veins of red color that often run through it.

The sixth layer in the foundation is sardius, a brilliant green stone with great clarity, shown here incorporated into a ring. The sardius also is found in bright reds and is associated with the blood of Christ, when it is used in some Biblical references.

The seventh layer of the foundation is made of crysolite, yet another green hued gem stone of the magnesium iron-silicate family. It is also found in clear stone formations.

The eighth layer of the foundation is constructed of Beryl; it is another green, pink, or clear stone that is polished to a stunning brilliance. The ninth layer of the foundation is topaz; here shown as a blue gemstone. Topaz can be brown, gold, green, or blue.

The tenth layer of the foundation is made of an apple-green stone called chrysoprasus; found in striated forms and in clear, green crystal layers.

The eleventh layer of the foundation is made of a stone called jacinth this is a beautiful golden quartz stone with remarkable clarity. The stone shown here has a deep wine color, but is often more yellow.

The twelfth layer of the foundation is constructed of purple amethyst, shown here in its unpolished state.

The twelve gates were made of twelve individual, huge pearls; and the street of the city was pure gold, but transparent as glass.

And the building of its wall [was] jasper; and the city pure gold, like pure glass: the foundations of the wall of the city [were] adorned with every precious stone: the first foundation, jasper; the

second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates, twelve pearls; each one of the gates, respectively, was of one pearl; and the street of the city pure gold, as transparent glass.

Revelation 21:18-21

(21:22-24) There is no temple in this city for the temple on earth was designed for the work of sacrifice, and there is no longer any need for sacrifice, but worship of God and the Lamb. Nor is there any need of the sun or moon, for the glory of God is the source of all light and the "lamp" *luchnia* is Jesus, the ascended Man, the Lamb of God. "And the Gentile nations on earth shall walk by means of its light" [the Shekinah Glory]. And finally, the kings of the earth who have understood and accepted the King of Kings as their own, will bring their glory to that light that "lights the way of every man."

And I saw no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty is its temple, and the Lamb. And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon that they should shine for it; for the glory of God has enlightened it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk by its light; and the

kings of the earth bring their glory to it.

Revelation 21:22-24

(21:25-27) The gates of the city “shall not be shut at all by day” and note, there is no night there ever.

Nothing common to man is ever found there, for all is made to conform to the New Creation, which is the ascended life of the Only Begotten Son of God. We know from John’s gospel that grace and truth came through Christ, so no thing that makes a lie is ever to be found there, and it is emphasized again that “only those who are written in the book of life of the Lamb may enter into the city.

And its gates shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not be there. And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations to it. And nothing common, nor that makes an abomination and a lie, shall at all enter into it; but those only who are written in the book of life of the Lamb.
Revelation 21:25-27

Revelation 22

(22:1) The angel-guide shows John “a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” just as Jesus promised that sunny day in the courtyard of the temple.

And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Revelation 22:1

(22:2) The **Tree of Life** is bearing fruit every month (suggesting the continuation of our calendar) and each month has its own fruit. While the fruit of the tree is apparently for sustenance, the **leaves of the tree are "for healing of the nations."**

In the midst of its street, and of the river, on this side and on that side, [the] tree of life, producing twelve fruits, in each month yielding its fruit; and the leaves of the tree for healing of the nations.
Revelation 22:2

(22:3-4) Every curse, by whatever authority, is lifted from the earth; and God's servants minister to Him with entirely open access; looking upon His face and bearing His mark upon their foreheads.

And no curse shall be any more; and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face; and his name [is] on their foreheads.
Revelation 22:3-4

(22:5) The glory of the Lord God will furnish all the light of the earth, and there will be no more darkness.

“And they shall reign to the ages of ages” confirms that this will not end forever.

And night shall not be any more, and no need of a lamp, and light of [the] sun; for [the] Lord God shall shine upon them, and they shall reign to the ages of ages. Revelation 22:5

(22:6-7) John’s angel-guide continues with “these words” *houtoi hoi logoi* are “faithful and true;” by picking up the same phrase from 21:5, the angel indicates that this applies not just to the visions here, but to the entire book. When he says that the “Lord God of the spirits of the prophets has sent His angel” there can be no doubt that this refers to God the Father. His special messenger (His angel) can be none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who was sent “to show to his bondmen the things which must soon come to pass. There is some question as to whether “behold, I come quickly” refers to (1) His response to being sent, or (2) to His future coming to take His Bride, or (3) to His return at the end of the tribulation to Mount Zion to the defeat of Antichrist and His enemies at Armageddon.

And he said to me, These words [are] faithful and true; and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show to his bondmen the things which must soon come to pass. And behold, I come quickly. Blessed [is] he

who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. Revelation 22:6-7

(22:8-9) Lest any doubt, John testifies that it was indeed him "I John" *Kàgo Ioannēs* "who hears and sees" *ho akouōn kai blepōn tauta* the things recorded in this book. It is his testimony that when he received these visionary messages he "fell down to pay homage" *epesa proskunēsai* (the first word, an aorist active indicative, which means that he dropped like a stone; the second word an infinitive of purpose, he did so to honor this messenger) at the feet of the angel who "showed" these things to him. When he did that he heard, "See thou do it not" *hora mē* (lit. "you stop that!" a strong negative active imperative). I am thy fellow-bondman *sundoulos*, and the fellow-bondman *sundoulos* of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book." It would be easy to conclude from the use of "fellow-servant" here for the Church, Israel, and the tribulation saints that we all have the exact same relationship to Christ. But that only looks at the saints' service to God the Father, not to positional truth, or our individual and personal relationship to God, after we are removed from this earth and assume our eternal destiny! "Do homage to God" *tōi theōi proskunēson* (lit. 'The God, you be worshipping') a phrase that is literally true wherever you are in time and circumstance, then, now, or in whatever time is to come.

And I, John, was he who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to do homage before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he says to me, See [thou do it] not. I am thy fellow-bondman, and [the fellow-bondman] of thy brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Do homage to God. Revelation 22:8-9

(22:10-11) In these closing remarks God's message and charter for the church is simple and direct. "And he said to me" *kai legei moi* ((present linear active; he kept on saying)—"Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book," indicating that this is intended to be shared and followed continuously. "The time is near" means that we must begin to act on these things now; not wait for some kind of 'sign.' The next statement is very important—"Let him that does unrighteously do unrighteously still" *adikēsatō eti* (first aorist **active** imperative-constative; the subject is acting out). Next, "let the filthy be made filthy still" *rupanthētō eti* (first aorist **passive** imperative-constative the subject is being acted upon). "Let him that is righteous" *ho dikaios* (lit. 'the righteous') "practice righteousness still" *dikaiousunēn poiēsātō eti* (aorist **active** imperative-constative); "he that is holy" *ho hagios*, is "to be made holy still" *hagaisthētō eti* (first constative aorist **passive** imperative). This is not a statement of the spiritual condition of the individual, but of the responsibility and focus of the believer who has knowledge. Leave

people alone as to their behavior; those changes are the province of the Spirit of God and the will of the individual; we are to concentrate on our witness, the testimony to God at work in our own lives. We are to focus on honoring God in our own walk, not wringing our hands over the walk of others, righteous or unrighteous.

And he says to me, Seal not the words of the prophecy of this book. The time is near. Let him that does unrighteously do unrighteously still; and let the filthy make himself filthy still; and let him that is righteous practice righteousness still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still.

Revelation 22:10-11

(22:12-14) "Behold I come quickly" is a call to attention. In Hebrews 11:6 we were told that "He is the rewarder" *ho misthapodotēs* and here "my reward is with me, to render" *apodounai* (to give back) "to every one as (according to) his work shall be." In Hebrews 5:9 Christ "became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation;" and in 12:2 He is the "author and finisher of faith" *archēgos kai teleiōtēs tēs pisteōs*.

The Last Beatitude (Blessing) of Revelation

"Blessed" *makarioi* "they that wash their robes" *hoi plunontes tas stolas autōn* ("the washers the robes of

them'); "that" *hina* "there may be the right of them" *estai hē exousia autōn* "to come" *epi* ('over') "the tree of life" and that they may "enter in by the gates" *tois pulōsin* (gate towers) "of the city." Now, don't miss this important distinction—the leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations (), and only those who have washed their robes ("in the blood of the Lamb" Latin Vulgate) have the authority (right) to dispense those leaves and fruit; because only those with robes washed (the 'overcomers') may even enter into the city where the Tree of Life grows.

Behold, I come quickly, and my reward with me, to render to every one as his work shall be. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the city. Revelation 22:12-14

(22:15) Outside all of this scene of blessing and provision for eternity are "the dogs;" the phrase is "Out, you dogs" *exō hoi kunēs* (an imperative) referring not to literal dogs, but to the morally impure (see Deuteronomy 23:18 'male prostitute'; 2 Kings 8:13 Hazael, a murderous man who abused his power as king of Syria; Psalm 22:20 "for dogs have surrounded me" (speaking of those religious evildoers who crucified Christ) and any, men or women, who assume the role of religious leaders. Also outside the city, and

thereby in hell, the place of burning and eternal torment, are "sorcerers" *hoi pharmakoi* drug users and traders, and "the fornicators" *hoi pornoi*, (people who trade in salacious materials) "murderers and idolators," and the final group who are excluded, "every one that loves" *pas philōn* (note that love is *philial*, from the soul) "and makes a lie" *kai poiōn pseudos*. The reason is clear; because Satan is the father of all lies and of the practice of lying (John 8:44).

Without [are] the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolators, and every one that loves and makes a lie.

Revelation 22:15

(22:16) "I Jesus" *Egō Iēsous* "have sent" *epempsa* (aorist active imperative-He did it at exactly the right time; He was the one who issued the command; it was a direct order) "my angel" to testify these things to you "for the assemblies" *epi tais ekklesiais* (not the seven churches only, but all churches. To "the root of David" *hē riza Dauied* (from Isaiah 11:1), is added "and the offspring" *kai to genos*, not referring to family or race (Robertson), but certainly in 'type.' It follows then that "the bright and morning star" *ho astēr ho lampros ho prōinos* (the star, the bright, the morning) is meant to be associated with Numbers 24:17 ("a star shall

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his root will bear fruit. Isaiah 11:1

come forth from Jacob") and Luke 1:78 ("the Sunrise from on high shall visit us").

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things to you in the assemblies. I am the root and offspring of David, the bright [and] morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; he that will, let him take [the] water of life freely. Revelation 22:16-17

(22:18-20) The testimony of Jesus, begun in verse 16 continues here—He speaks to "everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book" which looks beyond readers to any who hear of these things to come. The warning is clear and severe troubles are attached—"If any one shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues, which are written in this book" (speaking of the Revelation, not the entire Bible)—and that addresses **the sin of commission**, or adding to the word of God here. "And if any one take from the words of the book of this prophecy, (and that addresses **the sin of omission**, or leaving anything out of your testimony to the word of God here), God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book."

I testify to every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any one shall add to these things, God shall add to him the plagues

which are written in this book. And if any one take from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book. He that testifies these things says, Yea, I come quickly. Amen; come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:18-20

(22:21)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [be] with all the saints. Revelation 22:21

Subject Index	Page #
Abraham's Bosom	27
Altar of Incense	101, 125, 133
Ark of the Covenant	133
Ascended Jesus, the	50, 65
Babylon, burning	199
Bellett, J. G.	35
Brazen Altar, the	51, 101
Brazen Serpent	40
Bride of Christ, the	27, 115
Calvinism	15
Charismatic church	74, 86
Church in Ruins	69

Constantine	12
Darkness on earth, total	102
Deacons, qualifications	50
Denarius	100
Doxology, the	93
Durer, Albrecht	2, 89
Elders, qualifications	50
Ephesus, Church at	50
Evangelicalism and Law	55
False Prophet, the	164
Fig tree, type of the New Creation	117
Four Living Creatures	85, 90, 203
Gog and Magog	214
Great Hallel	202
Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew	110
High Priest, Illustrated	38
Hierarchy of Clergy	60
Humanism	58
Interlude of Grace	75, 121, 126
Islam, the rise of	104
Judeo-Christian ethic	60
Lamp, <i>luchnia</i>	4
Lampstands	47
Jasper stone	224
Lamb, standing as slain	
Letters to seven churches of Asia	33
Light, the garment of God	
Light, <i>phos</i>	34
Little Book (Scroll)	138
Lord's Day	31
Magnetic poles shift	184
Marriage Supper of the Lamb	13
Mary, <i>Mediatrix of all Grace</i>	148
Masonic works-salvation	64
Megiddo	183
Millennial Governance	
New Heaven and earth	217
New Jerusalem, Illustrated	224

Nicolaitanes	60
Oil Lamps, Illustrated	34
Only Begotten Son of God	124
Organizational Chart of Heaven	81
Overcomers	66
Given rods of iron	159, 210
Paradise	27
Paul's Great Commission	137
Pergamos	59
Philadelphia, the church	
Prayers of the Saints	93
Prayer to the Father	124
Rapture, the	15, 129
Reconciled to God	143
Revived Roman Empire	17
Sapphire	224
Satan, five "I wills"	140
Second Death, the	56
Solomon	111
Son of God, the	62
Temple, in Heaven	175
Thunders, seven	135
Tree of Life	53, 230
Tribulation Chart	130
Trumpet judgments, first	126
 Twenty-Four Elders, the	 118
 Two-edged sword	 59
Union with Christ	94
Upper Room-Pentecost	4
Urim and Thummin	38
Witnesses resurrected	
Wormwood	128
 Scripture Index	
Genesis 49:10	112
Leviticus 9:24	45

1 Samuel 30:6	
Daniel 7:3	159
Daniel 7:9-14	37
Ezekiel 28:18-19	153
Ezekiel 38 – 39	214
Isaiah 14:13-14	150
Isaiah 24:20	184
Joel 3:12	175
Matthew 15:24	113
Mark 11:12-14	117
Mark 13:37	113
Mark 15:24	113
Acts 2:1ff	
Romans 11:1-2	118
2 Corinthians 5:17	64
2 Corinthians 5:21, Chart	25
Ephesians 2:4-7	70
Ephesians 2:10	38, 186
Hebrews 4:12	39, 44

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